

PITTSBURGH PET CARE



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HUMAN MOTIVATION & NEEDS
QUICK REFERENCE

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Human Motivation

Motivation is a driving force which propels us to achievement; dictating how we behave. It is very complex and can come from many sources, both from within us and from around us. Most importantly, it is unique to each of us. While our past experiences can provide great insight into how we have been uniquely motivated in our lives, predominant motivational theories can also help us deeply explore how we are uniquely motivated.

The difference between motivation and inspiration

Notably, motivation differs from inspiration in several ways. The first of which is motivation is a component of inspiration, i.e., when one is inspired one is also motivated; however, when one is motivated, they may not be inspired. The second difference is motivation can come from within us (intrinsic motivation) or from around us (extrinsic motivation), while inspiration only comes from around us. And the third difference is in how motivation and inspiration affect our behavior. Motivation can drive both our normal every day behavior and behavior which goes above and beyond our normal every day behavior, while inspiration distinctly drives behavior which goes above and beyond our normal every day behavior. For instance, going to work to earn money every day can be attributed to our motivation to earn money, while, spending a summer building houses with Habitat for Humanity can be attributed to an inspiration to be a part of something greater than one's self and help others.

Sources of Motivation

The predominant theories of human motivation can be categorized into five types:

- 1) Equity theory which believes individuals are motivated to achieve equity and fairness if a difference exists between their rewards for actions and the rewards received by others for the same actions;
- 2) Expectancy theory which believes individuals are motivated to undertake actions which yield favorable desired rewards, satisfying a goal of the individual;
- 3) Goal-setting theory which believes goals motivate individuals through defining a desired outcome and the level of effort needed to achieve the desired outcome;
- 4) Need theories which believe there are inherent human needs individuals seek to fulfill, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs; and
- 5) Reinforcement theory which believes human behavior is directed by the consequences of those behaviors.

Human Needs

Needs are a key characteristic of who we are and can trigger emotional responses within us. If our needs are met, they can make us happy. On the other hand, if they are not met, they can evoke a strong unhappiness within us. Our needs help direct how we behave and the decisions we make.

Maslow's Theory of Needs

Need theorists believe human beings have needs we seek to fulfill. One such theorist, Abraham H. Maslow, presents there is an order to the type of needs humans seek to fulfill: 1) physiological, 2) safety, 3) belongingness, 4) esteem, and 5) self-actualization. His theory is often depicted as a hierarchal pyramid, as shown on the following page (with the definition of each type of need), and suggests that any level of need can only be met after the levels of needs below it have been met. Specifically, Maslow argues the top level of needs, self-actualization, can only be met after the four levels below it have been met. Notably, the suggested absolute presentation of the order in which humans seek to fulfill their needs is the most common criticism of his theory; however, Maslow's actual writings do present there are exceptions to the order in which we fulfill our needs. For instance, an individual's love for another (a belongingness need) can often override the need for their own safety (a safety need).

While Maslow's theory of needs can be used as a guide to discover our specific needs, it does not necessarily dictate we categorize our needs in this way, order our needs in this way, or resolve conflicts between our needs in this way. We are all unique!



1. Physiological – includes air, food, water, sex, sleep, other factors towards homeostasis, etc.;
2. Safety – includes security of environment, employment, resources, health, property, etc.;
3. Belongingness – includes love, friendship, intimacy, family, etc.;
4. Esteem – includes confidence, self-esteem, achievement, respect, etc.; and
5. Self-actualization – includes morality, creativity, problem solving, etc.