



Flourishing in the New Year

As we enter a new year, we find ourselves in a space where we can finally catch our breath and take stock of the previous. For many of us, there will be a strong desire and drive to shift gears from surviving to flourishing (and even thriving).

Exploring our experiences and reflecting upon what is most present in our mind, is a great place to start. Understanding what our needs are and how they can affect our motivation and wellbeing is essential to implement actions that will allow us to flourish and thrive in the new year.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Every person has a universal set of core human needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a theory of motivation that discusses such needs.

Maslow's model delineates between needs that drive motivation when deficient, such as economic instability or resource insufficiency, (needs 4 & 5), and needs that stem from a desire for personal growth and fulfilment, such as seeking greater connection, meaning, and purpose (needs 1 – 3).

Maslow's model proposes that an individual must, for the most part, experience each need as being sufficiently met before one's actions can be directed towards the next need. Maslow's five levels of needs are:

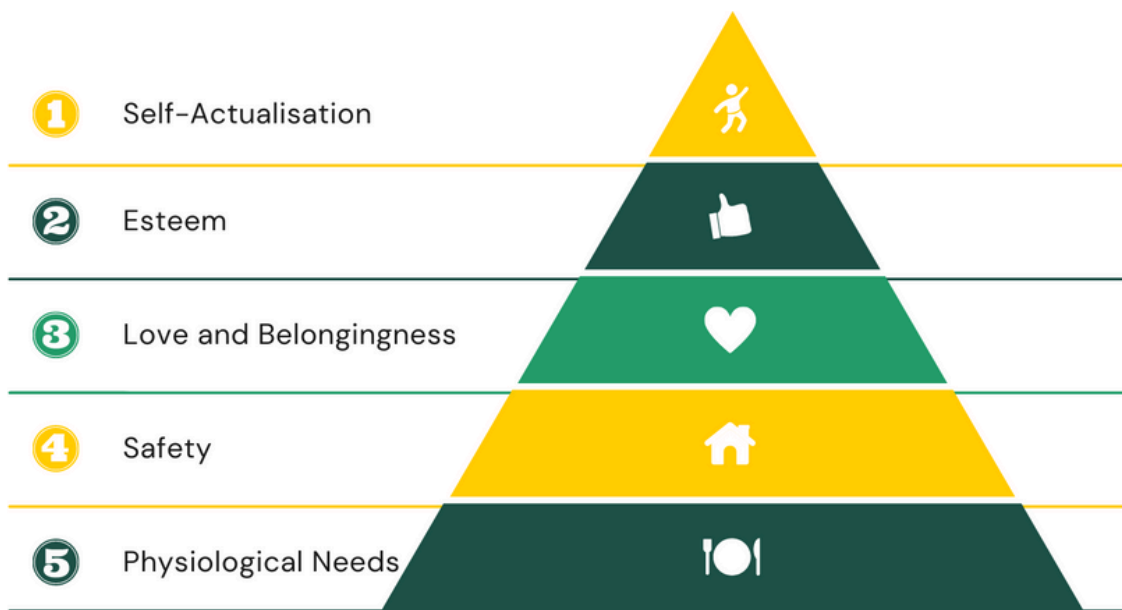
5. Physiological Needs: Biological requirements necessary for human survival (i.e., air, food, sex, shelter, clothing, warmth, sleep, etc.). If these needs are not satisfied, we cannot function optimally.

4. Safety: When security and safety become salient. People want to experience order, predictability, and control in their lives. These needs can be fulfilled by family and society, and may include emotional and financial security, law and order, social stability, and health and wellbeing.

3. Love and Belongingness: The social need to feel loved and protected. Belonging refers to the human emotional need for interpersonal relationships, affiliation, connectedness, and being part of a group. Examples of belonging needs include friendship, intimacy, receiving and giving affection, and love.

2. Esteem: the need to experience self-worth, accomplishment, and respect. Esteem needs are separated into two categories: esteem for oneself and the desire for reputation or respect from others

1. Self-Actualisation: This is the realisation of a person's potential, self-fulfilment, personal growth, and peak experiences. It is the desire to accomplish everything one can to become the best they can. Everyone will perceive or focus on this need differently.



Building your Wellbeing

Although we may understand what our needs are, we still must understand how to convert this knowledge and awareness into action.

Building upon Maslow's need for self-actualisation is Dr Martin Seligman's PERMA model. The PERMA model proposes five building blocks that enable flourishing and wellbeing: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement.

In essence, it's a model that encourages us to look at what is working well. It asks us to be present in every interaction we have and actively make choices around how we show up.

Positive Emotion:

Consider how you feel and evaluate your experience of happiness. Positive emotion is not about denying challenging emotional states; it's about choosing actions steered by the positive emotions lying in the experience. This supports and directs you towards flourishing.

Engagement:

Purposefully choose to be present, connect, and immerse yourself in an activity or experience that you have passion for or have strength in. This can enrich and enhance your wellbeing.

Relationships:

By nature, humans are social beings who seek connection with others. Essential to our wellbeing is having positive relationships; however, relationships are dynamic and have inevitable highs and lows. Positive relationships are those in which you give yourself and, in turn, receive back a connection that feeds your sense of self, builds you up, and makes you feel good about yourself.

Meaning:

Discover a way of being and showing up in the world where you are connected to a meaning and/or purpose that is greater than yourself. This purpose guides you through your life with intention and supports you through both the positive and challenging times.

Achievement:

Actively choose to take stock, reflect, and savour your achievements. This is not a process of comparing yourself to others or your expectations of self. Rather, it is about sitting in your experiences and acknowledging what you have accomplished.

Final Words

Whatever your need is for the new year – whether it is to challenge yourself with a new interest or hobby, or connect more with your friends and family – consider how the PERMA model can help you build your needs and set yourself up to flourish.