

Kelly Bailey

INDS726

Professor Bonnie Casamassima

13 September 2018

When Abraham Maslow presented his 1943 paper, “A Theory of Human Motivation”, and subsequently his 1954 book, “Motivation and Personality”, he laid out his theory on the topic: “The Hierarchy of Needs”. The steps of the hierarchy are: Physiological, Safety, Social Belonging, Esteem, Self-Actualisation. The general premise of the theory is rather simple: should anyone try to establish themselves in one of the higher tiers before a solid foundation is set with the baser ones, the scale will tip and the structure of that person’s life will crumble. However, if one moves between these tiers after first establishing a solid foundation of the baser needs, then they should reach the ultimate goal of Self-Actualisation. The breakdown of the needs are as follows:

- Physiological needs are the basics for life: water, shelter, food, air, sleep, clothing.
- Safety needs encompass a wider range of necessities such as Health/Wellness, Physical/Personal Safety, Financial Stability (employment, property, resources), and Emotional Security (morality).
- Social Belonging is broader still, with needs that include Family, Friends, and Personal (sexual) Intimacy.
- Esteem is much more cerebral, with Self- Esteem and Social-Esteem being represented in the need to be respected, to be valued by others, and the desire to be accepted.
- Finally, the ultimate goal of all of this is the realisation of these acquired needs. Maslow called it “Self-Actualisation”. Only at this level, according to Maslow, is one able to achieve their personal potential. His quote adheres to this thought,” What a man can be, he must be.” (Maslow, 1954)

For architects, designers, and city planners to only design for the lower levels of the pyramid, this could lead to frustration and regression of those who occupy those spaces. For instance: A simple log cabin, with a nearby stream, access to enough dry firewood, and

hunting/fishing/growing areas might suffice someone who is interested in “living off of the grid”, or a survivalist. However, this would not be ideal for someone accustomed to a large plot of land, public utilities, access to entertainment, infrastructure, and shopping venues. Covering only the basic, Physiological needs, although necessary, is indeed the lowest common denominator. The latter mentioned home-situation should cover Physiological, Safety, and Social Belonging needs, perhaps even moving into the realm of Esteem. Indeed, the basic needs of someone living in an arid environment differ greatly than those of someone living in a temperate forrest or seaside. Indigenous communities around the Pacific Northwest have very different housing needs than those living in the Tropics. Subsequently, those communities are vastly different in the way they function as well. The First Nations in Canada may use potlatch ceremonies as a way to bridge the divide between neighbouring tribes, yet the Seminole in Florida had nothing similar. The environmental situations of these two groups is very different, so their needs will be different as well.

Interestingly, in my own family history and upbringing, we have seen all of these tiers being met and to some degree, moved through. My great-grandmother lived with her four children in a single room shack in the middle of the Georgia woods. She raised her children during the Great Depression, with a stream for water, her itinerant logger husband would bring some staples every three months, and she and her children survived through her own ingenuity and determination. During WWII, she and her three daughters would work as many jobs as they could while her son went off to war. The financial boom after WWII allowed them to purchase property of their own, thereby moving from Physiological needs to Safety and Security. Her children all married and had children of their own, thereby fulfilling their needs for Social Belonging. Most of those children did not regress down the tiers, but were able to move forward toward the need for Esteem, and their children, my generation, have all made headway into the Self-Actualisation level as artists, athletes, professionals, parents, and academicians.

An architectural example of someone moving the levels of Hierarchy within their own society is Diebedo Francis Kere, an architect from Gando, Burkina Faso. At the age of 7, Francis was sent by his father to a city, far away from his family, for his primary education. 6

years later, at the end of his schooling, he earned a scholarship to study at the Technical University of Berlin. During his studies, he raised funds to establish a primary school in Gando so that the children would not need to leave Gando, making the community weaker in their absence. Since the creation of the primary school (2004), he has also designed and built a school extension, a library, teacher's housing, his "mango tree" project, a school garden and well, and a secondary school. His commitment to his community came with words and followed with his actions. After the residents receive their education in Gando's newly established schools, the use that education to better their community from within. Kere insured this when developed skilled labourers within the Gando community to build these projects. By teaching the community these various skills, it then allows the residents to stay within Gando and be paid for their work. They no longer need to leave to find jobs, thereby fulfilling the first two levels of the Hierarchy and moving well into the others. (Kere, 2013) This real-life application of the Hierarchy principles is world-changing, especially when used for the benefit of society.

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