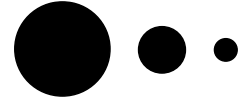
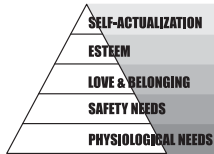


# THE GROWTH MARATHON

— One Stride At a Time —



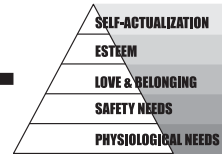
**GROWTH  
NEEDS**



## ON MOTIVATION PT.2

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# WHAT DRIVES US ?



**DEFICIENCY  
NEEDS**



• ● ● **THE GROWTH MARATHON** ● ● ●  
————— **One Stride At a Time** —————

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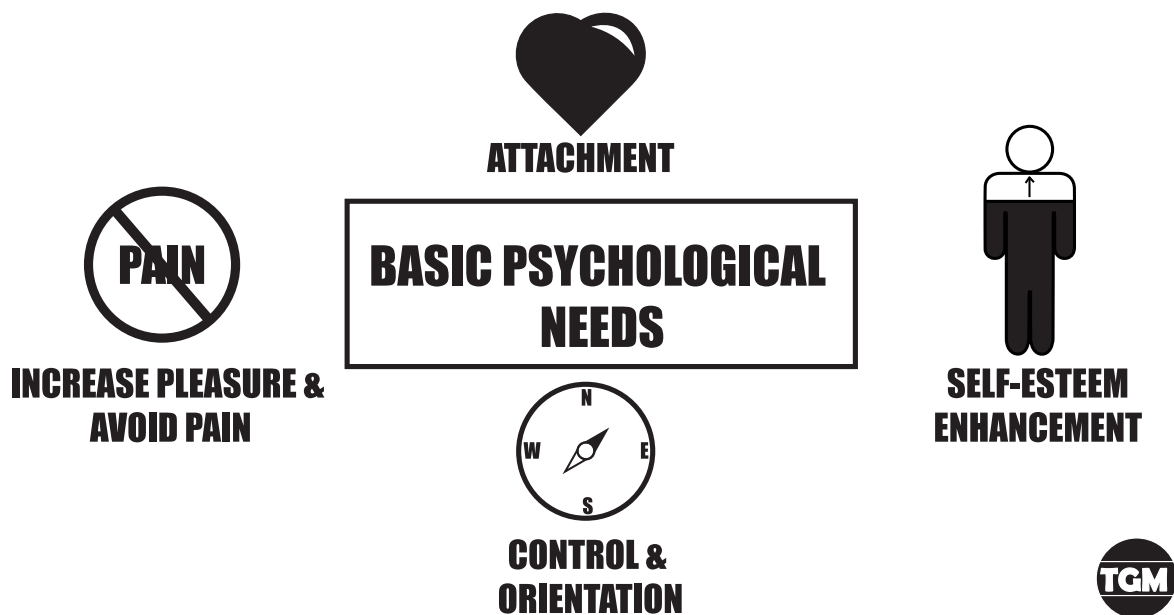
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The [previous article](#) on motivation provided a brief introduction to the topic. In this one, we'll have a look at basic psychological needs, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and 5 ways to ensure you stay motivated.

## Basic psychological needs

It's simple to know when we are not satisfying our physical needs. There are clear physical cues. We can be thirsty, hungry, sleepy etc. But what about psychological needs? Do we have a way to assess the satisfaction of such needs? Psychological needs bring a similar sense of unease as physical needs when they are not satisfied, typically in the form of unpleasant emotions. It does not seem like depriving ourselves from satisfying our psychological carries direct fatal consequences (which might be why we typically don't address them early enough).

There is a multitude of theories concerning the different psychological needs and how they are categorized, but it seems like one that is well-founded (with empirical data) is the one from [Klaus Grawe](#). It touches on 4 basic psychological needs.



## The need for attachment



### **ATTACHMENT**



When we are young (toddler and younger), we rely a lot on those around us for our survival. The level of attachment and trust we build with them shapes us for the rest of our lives. If we can count on them, we develop a foundation of trust in them and other relationships in general. If we lack such attachment in our early years, Grawe indicates that “the chances of developing an attachment disorder or psychological disorder are higher later in life”. Grawe places the need for attachment as the centerpiece of our neurological needs.

The need for attachment is one of the earliest we build. If it is not fed correctly during our younger ages, it affects us negatively (trust issues, depression, inability to form long relationships etc.) in the later stages of our lives. Hence, it’s of high importance for us to form long and healthy relationships as we move through life. If it seems difficult, take some time and find out why.

## The need for orientation and control



### **CONTROL & ORIENTATION**



Who does not like having control of their life? I don’t know of such a person yet. A need that arises soon after the need for attachment in our life is the need for orientation and control. We want to be able to shape our lives independently. We want to be able to make our own decisions and affect our environment in specific ways. Clarity gives us a sense of control; I believe that’s why mapping out and planning what we want to achieve is so important. We are frustrated if we lack orientation and control in our lives, and motivated whenever we have.

If things are too unpredictable in our lives, it takes a toll on us mentally. From my experience and that of friends, lack of clarity and organization results in procrastination, unproductive actions, feeling overwhelmed, and more.

I believe we need some guiding principles in our lives to regain that level of control and orientation. Such principles combined with clarity will ensure we are always on the right track. Planning, journaling, feedback etc. have helped me

achieve better orientation and control in my life. Most self-help books talk about setting goals and planning how to attain those goals, but I never realized this was tied to this fundamental psychological need.

## The need for increasing pleasure and avoiding pain



**INCREASE PLEASURE  
& AVOID PAIN**



We are motivated to do what is pleasurable and avoid what is painful. This might be why procrastination is so prevalent. Working out is hard, studying for that exam is tough, and planning your budget for the month is not fun. Hence, we might want to avoid these. Something interesting though is that doing these will be painful at the instant, but pleasurable down the line. Our brains have not evolved yet to have delayed gratification as the default setting. Society and technology have changed at a faster pace compared to our brain's reward system.

For this specific need, we need to understand that delayed gratification will be more pleasurable than instant gratification and force ourselves to act accordingly (pleasure is nice, so discipline will be required). [James Clear](#) indicates we need to mix up a bit of instant gratification on the way, to ensure we are working in a way the brain likes, and not against it (you can't win in the long run by only going against your brain).

## The need for self-esteem enhancement



**SELF-ESTEEM  
ENHANCEMENT**



This is the yearning to perceive ourselves as competent and appreciated by others. It can be fulfilled in different ways, achieving a goal that seemed far-fetched, learning from your failures, being grateful on your journey etc. Sometimes this need suffers because we are trying to fulfill other needs. For example, you might work for lower pay than market value because of the need for attachment and control you feel at your current workplace. This might result in lower self-esteem.

## So what?

Satisfying psychological needs is similar to satisfying your physical needs, you feel good once they are satisfied. Our psychological needs might not be fulfilled every day, but make it a task for you to fulfill them weekly or bi-weekly to ensure you are in a great mental space. Reach out to old friends, make new friends, plan your week, achieve your goals, pursue delayed gratification but mix it up with some instant gratification to make it pleasurable.

It's crucial for us to be able to recognize which needs were not fulfilled in our childhoods (no one to rely on, trust always broken, goals never recognized, never provided structure to live an organized life etc.) and understand that even though that was the case in the past, we can seek the relevant help to fulfill those needs in our future.

Now we know about the needs, but the journey/route/path to those needs differs from individual to individual, I suspect this is because we all have different personality traits. The way an introvert fulfills the need for attachment will not be the same as an extrovert for example. You can check [minddoc.de](http://minddoc.de), they have interesting material on understanding and identifying your needs. I think it's a great first step to start moving towards psychological well-being.

Let's move to one of the most famous theories in positive psychology.

## Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow is probably one of, if not the most famous name in motivation psychology. I have heard about "Maslow's Pyramid" numerous times in my life, and never bothered to look into it, but as I got interested in motivation, I had to touch on this theory.

Let's start with the concept of the hierarchy of needs. It might or might not seem weird to put needs in a hierarchy. It seems logical to me to do so because some needs are more urgent and critical than others. For example, if physiological needs are not met in a matter of days, death ensues. Being alive is the first prize, always.

I'm not sure Maslow drew a pyramid and classified needs as seen on multiple graphics in literature. It seems to be more of a depiction of his ideas by those who learned his work, and as graphics are simple to remember, this became Maslow's signature.



have various relationships. Grawe calls it the need for attachment as described above. If you were starving right now and also felt lonely, which need would you want to fulfill first? The answer is simple on my side. Let me get some of that beef stew with some rice, please.

**Esteem needs:** Maslow saw this as the pen-ultimate need we want to fulfill as humans once we have more or less (we'll touch on the reason I say more or less a bit lower) fulfilled the rest of our needs. We want to grow, develop ourselves and have a constant impact. Maslow breaks this need into 2:

- Esteem for oneself *i.e.*, achievement, mastery, dignity etc.
- Reputation or respect from others (status and prestige). According to Maslow, reputation or respect from others is more important in children and adolescents. It precedes dignity or self-esteem.

**Self-actualization:** This is about achieving one's full potential. This is the ultimate need. Once you have more or less satisfied the other needs, what is left out there? Elevating yourself to your highest state. Maslow indicates that individuals can fulfill this need in very specific ways. For some it might be expressed academically (becoming the best academic one can be) in some it can be expressed creatively (producing the most intriguing pieces of work one can produce) etc.

In the initial stages of the development of his theory, Maslow indicated that needs at the bottom of the pyramid need to be fulfilled before one can attend to the ones above. Later in his career, he pointed out that it is not as black and white as he initially proposed. Once a deficiency need is 'more or less' satisfied, it goes away, and we move to fulfill the next set of needs. He also realized that the hierarchy is not as rigid as he once stipulated. Even the order can sometimes differ from individual to individual.

The above makes me think that a lot has to do with the personal traits of individuals. You must understand who you are, otherwise, all of this might be irrelevant to you. Maslow progressively indicated how his model is not extremely rigid over time, but I still think it can be used as a general guiding model. Some sort of groundwork on which individuals need to put their input to figure out if they follow that hierarchy to the letter or how that order is flipped with them. The only two needs I think don't alter that much from individual to individual (in terms of rank in the hierarchy) are self-actualization and psychological needs.

## How can you become more motivated?

To determine how to become motivated, one must understand what influences motivation. According to [positivepsychology.com](http://positivepsychology.com), motivation is influenced by the satisfaction of needs that are either necessary for sustaining life or essential for wellbeing and growth. This means that the more we satisfy these needs, the more motivated we are right?

Well, it depends, Maslow indicates that once you satisfy some needs (deficiency needs, like physiological needs for example), you get less motivated for the time they are satisfied. Let's take a simple example, when you are hungry and you





### **3. By being in the right environment**

Being in an environment where the behavior you want to engage in is celebrated will bring in that sense of belonging and value in yourself which will help motivate you.

If we have an environment not conducive to doing the activity we need, we exhaust our willpower over time and end up not doing that activity anymore. A simple example can be drawing. If you are in an environment where drawing is frowned upon, it can seriously affect your motivation to draw (unless you have a very solid self-drive). The same can be said about our relationships and how they affect our motivation. You want to learn how to draw? Join a drawing community. This will ensure you get the adequate external push to complement your motivation.

Our motives are constantly fluctuating, and at each moment in time, multiple motives are competing in our psyches, and the dominant one affects our behavior. For one to be dominant, you need to be in the right environment with the right circumstances around. You cannot be in a bar with friends and expect your motivation to work out to be the dominant one for example.

### **4. By testing ourselves just enough (Goldilocks rule)**

You want to engage in activities that are just above your current skill level. [Daniel Pink](#) suggests that by doing so you stay motivated in doing the activity. Activities that are too easy are boring, and activities that are too difficult are frustrating, resulting in decreased motivation. In everything you do, assess your current level, and ensure you always work at a level slightly above that level. This ensures you grow, and human beings get more motivated the more they grow.

### **5. By having purpose**

[Simon Sinek](#) calls it your “Why”. This is the reason you pursue a set of activities. It is typically bigger than ourselves. Once you have a purpose that aligns with what you value, you have a deep drive to achieve that purpose. This drive is your motivation. Without purpose, one haphazardly moves through life, being guided by their environment and conditions. Develop a strong purpose for yourself and see how far it carries you.

