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Let us achieve towards self actualization

You may have noticed that your needs have changed from simple to complex as you grew up from a child to an adolescent. When you were a baby your parents provided you with food to satisfy your hunger and clothes to keep you warm. In addition to these when you could understand a little more you would have expected love, protection and to be provided with toys for your entertainment. Between childhood and adolescence other than education and self esteem you would have had other needs. Therefore human needs gradually change to higher needs over a period of time. When the basic needs are met, secondary needs arise and when these are met another level of needs arise.

In previous grades you learnt about basic needs, psychological needs and need of self-esteem.

This chapter will teach you about self actualization which is a higher need than self esteem. Self actualization is a complex concept but try to understand it as it will help you in your life.

The hierarchy of human needs

Abraham Maslow a psychologist who did a lot of experiments on human needs described the hierarchy of human needs shown below.

Diagram 2.1 - The hierarchy of human needs (Abraham Maslow)



What is self-actualization?

Principal :- Mr Suranimala, the day of our prize giving is getting closer, isn't it? Who is going to announce on that day? Who is going to prepare the invitation cards for our invitees? We need to have a pandal at the entrance and also have to decorate the hall. In addition, we need to have a pooja dance and some special items. What shall we do?

Mr Suranimala :- Don't worry about them sir I have organized everything. I have chosen Jagath from grade 9 to do the announcing. He is a good announcer. Jagath did the announcing at the flower auction held at the village temple recently. He is doing announcing at village functions, too. He also did the announcing at the last year's sports meet. He is capable of doing a good job.

I have asked Kumudu to be in charge of the invitation cards. She has started working on it. She does beautiful creations. Thamali and Thusitha of grade 9 will help her with it. They too can draw well and have nice hand writing. It won't be a problem.

I have chosen a few grade 10 students to construct the pandal and decorate the hall. Nimal, one student in this group is a sculptor. A few others will help him to do this. I have also made arrangements to get items needed to make it. They have already started on the work.

We will ask each grade to present an item. We will ask the grade nine students to do the pooja dance. There are some talented students in that grade. They will do a good performance.

Principal:- Mr Suranimala, Lal the student who won an all-island prize for creations should have a special place at the prize giving doesn't he? Let us make arrangements for the invitees to watch the model of the electric lift he designed.

Mr Suranimala:- Yes sir we'll do it that way.

Read the dialogue several times.

You would have noticed that teacher Suranimala identified each person's talents and given them fair opportunities to develop them further. After having read the dialogue you too should be able to identify people with different talents. Such abilities or talents can be divided into different groups.

- Physical skills
- Mental skills
- Social skills
- Aesthetic skills
- Behavioural skills



Figure 2.1 - Displaying Aesthetic skills



Activity

Identify your abilities. Identify the highest position you can attain by using these abilities. On identifying their talents make a list of highest positions your friends can reach.

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| ■ Professional singer | ■ Orator |
| ■ Professional artist | ■ Mathematician |
| ■ Professional dancer | ■ Script writer |
| ■ Professional sportsman | ■ Farmer |
| ■ Professional announcer | ■ Carpenter |
| ■ Writer / composer of songs, stories, poems | ■ Electrician |
| ■ Inventor | ■ Doctor |
| ■ Actor | ■ Engineer |



Figure 2.2 - Being a professional sportsman

By developing one or more of your abilities, you can be a professional in that field. Every person has talents that are unique to him. These abilities are inherent. According to the inherent strengths we have, we should identify a target and strive to achieve it without obstructing others. You can bring honour and glory to your community and the country by developing your abilities. The satisfaction, joy and pride you get by this is known as self actualization.

According to the above, self actualization can be explained in this way.

“self actualization is to use our creative abilities to serve the society to the maximum and lead a satisfying, righteous and peaceful life”

Despite having many talents we might not be able to identify them. If we are to identify our hidden talents we need to engage in different activities. There are times that we may not be able use our talents despite identifying them. This might be an obstacle to achieve self actualization. Therefore we should strive to identify our talents and look for opportunities to use them instead of waiting for such situations to arise. We should use our talents for the good of ourselves as well as others. The hallmark of people who have attained self actualization is the joy and satisfaction they receive for their good deeds.

Activity

Get together with your friends and list the professions they wish to be in. Identify the talents they have, to serve in the chosen profession.

The qualities needed to attain self-actualization

Despite possessing many talents one should have the following qualities to reach self actualization.

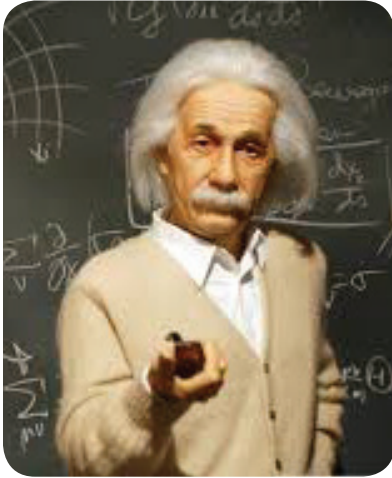


Figure 2.3 - Use talents for the betterment of Society (Albert Einstein)

1. Be a master in the area studied
2. Use talents for the betterment of society
3. Do not engage in social work expecting popularity
4. Be satisfied with what you have
5. Get used to a simple life style
6. Be a law abiding person
7. Respect others
8. Build good interpersonal relationships
9. Have good principles
10. Be sensitive and flexible
11. Good time management
12. Face challenges successfully

Although self actualization was described as a complex concept, at your age as well as an adult you can get close to achieving it.

Religious leaders such as Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, prophet Mohammed and special characters such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Arthur C Clarke, Dr. Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Abraham Lincoln are known to have had good qualities other than their talents and reached self actualization.

Summary

When human needs are rated, self-actualization is at the highest level.

Every person has inborn talents and abilities. These talents and abilities are known as the inner strength people possess.

Self-actualization is known as identifying our inner strengths and using them to serve the society to give us satisfaction and a peaceful life.

People who have attained self-actualization have had many special qualities.

By identifying the unique talents you possess and identifying a goal will help you towards self actualization.

Using good qualities and working with dedication and effort will help you towards achieving this.



Exercise

1. List the human needs in a hierarchical order.
2. Describe self-actualization in a simple way using your own words.
3. What are the qualities of a person who has reached self-actualization?
4. Make a list of the people who you think have reached self-actualization.
5. Make a chart of things you need to do to achieve self-actualization.