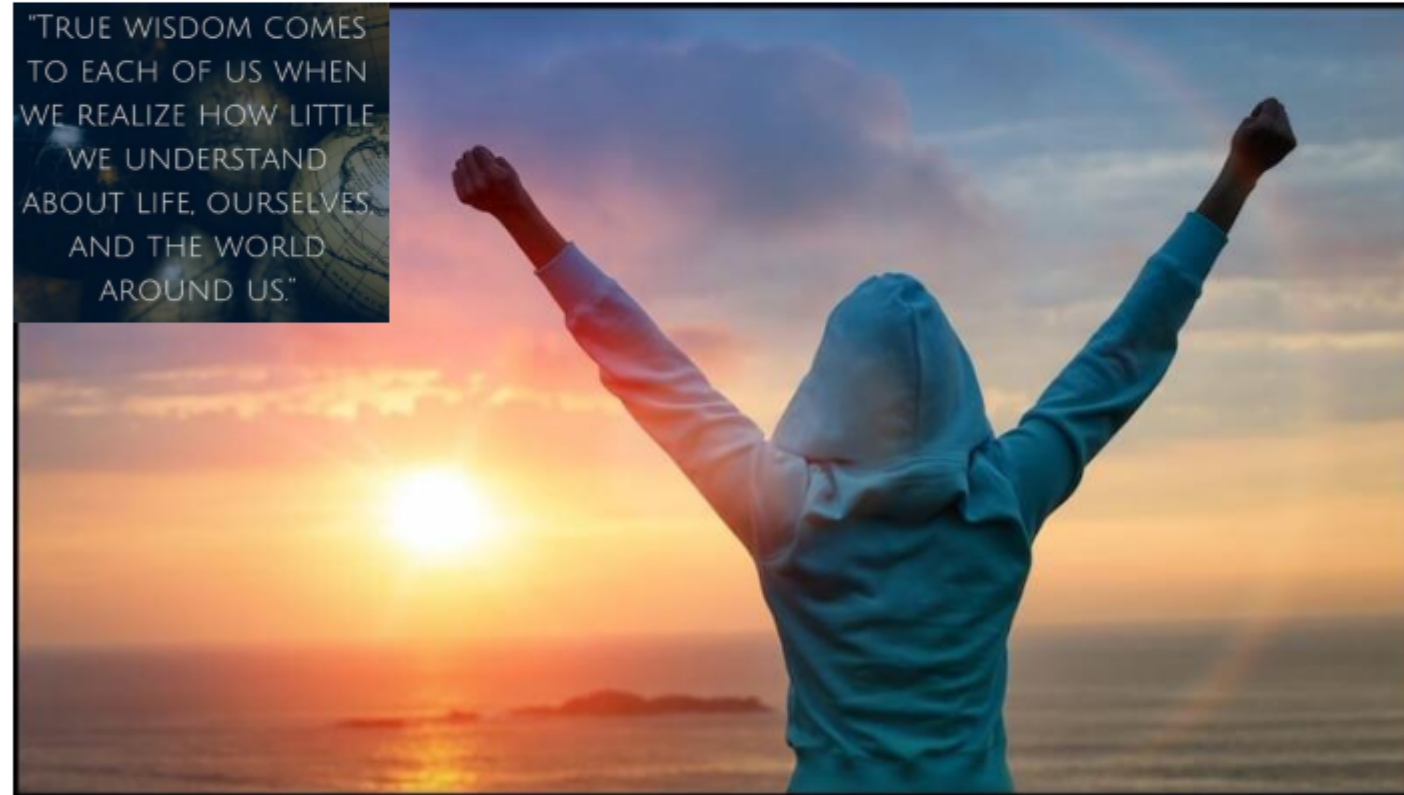


Understanding the self



LESSON 1

Introduction to Understanding the Self



The self

"WHO AM I?" often a very easy question to answer, given you know your name, age and address, but what if you are asked to rate from a scale of 1 to 10 how well do you "fully" know yourself, your strengths, your weaknesses, your likes and viewpoints, how would you answer? _____ (Rate yourself from 1 being the lowest to 10 being the highest meaning you are confident you already know yourself and place your rating on the blank.)

Very little attention is given to the understanding of one's self, oftentimes it is just a thought that passes by in a day or before you sleep. Instinctively, people would just say, I am who I am, or I am like this because I am this way, but the interesting thing is the Self is one of the most complex notions there is. There is more to you than what it seems. The Self can be viewed differently from different perspectives, it is dynamic and ever changing. The self is one of the most interesting topics that people talk about every day and a journey that will last a lifetime.

So what really then, is the *Self*?

Nature of the Self

Have you ever asked yourself, 'Who am I really?' Am I a friend, a lover, a professional, a good son/daughter, a student, a passenger or a patient? The truth is you can be all that. You can be a son-a daughter, can be a friend, you can be a successful professional and or the other way around, it all depends. **All your identities, everything you believe yourself to be, are practically true in itself. But how do we really know which is true and which is just a play of personas?**

In this world, many people surround us. We show different sides of ourselves depending on who we are with. Though we all apparently look similar, yet we all are unique in our own ways. The uniqueness gives us an identity. Your Personal Identity or the understanding of who you are, influences everything you do. Understanding the self is an exploration that does not merely end by the end of the semester, it is a lifetime process. The concept/identity of the self has a dynamic characteristic which means that it often changes and evolves over time.



According to Dr. Paul Thagard (2014), "*The Self is a system of social, psychological, neural, and molecular mechanisms*". In his article he explained that the Self is a product of a complex process of combinations and integration of traits and characteristics from various possible sources. Some of these traits/aspects are acquired consciously and voluntarily, while others are acquired unconsciously and involuntarily.

The Self is a key construct in several schools of psychology (the systematic study of human behaviour and mental process), referring either the cognitive and affective representation of one's identity or the subject of experience. The earliest formulation of the self in modern psychology is from the distinction between the self as **"I" (Self-Concept)**, the subjective **knower**, and the self as **"ME" (Self-Awareness)**, the object that is **known**. The known consists of thoughts and beliefs about ourselves (i.e. the self-concept; who we are). The knower on the other hand is the processor of information (i.e. what we are becoming) this nature is called the Duality of the Self, a concept introduced by American philosopher and psychologist, and the first educator to offer a psychology course in the United States, William James.

Human infants have a rudimentary or undeveloped self-concept, developing at about age 2 years. This paves the concept of Tabula Rasa or Blank slate by John Locke. He believed that at a young age, individuals rapidly develop the different aspects of physical, mental and psychological qualities, implying that the best way to train up a child is when they are of younger age, this way it is easier for them to carry on specific behaviors when they get older, because as they grow older the self-concept becomes more complex. Studies show that the concept of self evolves from being concrete and focused on observable characteristics, to being more abstract and focused on psychological characteristics during the course of childhood and adolescence. The Self-Concept Evolves.

Humans are not the only species that has a sense of the self. Chimps and Orangutans also have a rudimentary self-concept. Some people have a clearer self-concept than others. **Self-concept clarity** is defined as the extent to which knowledge about the self is clearly, or consistently defined. People who are low in self-concept clarity are more likely to be neurotic, have low self-esteem, and less likely to be aware of their internal state (Campbell et.al, 1996).

The definition of the self is complex, this is because it serves a number of adaptive functions. It has a managerial function, an organizational function and an emotional function.

Managerial function: Informing us of our relationship to the physical and social world, organizing our behaviour, and helping us to plan for the future.

Organizational function: Acting as a schema that helps us interpret and recall information about ourselves and the social world.

Emotional function: Helping to determine our emotional responses.

THE SELF
Self Theory

emphasizes on the set of perceptions an individual has for the relationships he has with others and the other aspects of life significantly towards the Self theory.

comprises of four factors that are explained below:



HEALTHY SELF-IMAGE	UNHEALTHY SELF-IMAGE
Focus on individual's personal perspectives.	Consistently focus on their limitations
Not or influenced by other opinions or by societal standards.	Heavily influenced by other opinions of them
Optimistic outlook on life and more confidence in themselves and own ability	Persistently criticize themselves to judge most of their actions
Self-image is built upon a high self-worth	An unhealthy self-image is built by societal standards, expectations

Self-Image can be characterized as a set of beliefs about one's self. It is the impression you have of yourself that forms a collective representation of your assets and liabilities. In other words, your self-image is how you see yourself based on your strengths and weaknesses. One's self-image is not something that is based on reality; in fact, it is actuality, built upon your perception of reality and that is influenced by how you believe you're being viewed by society and other people.

According to Erik Erikson, identity is formed through a lifelong development usually unconscious to the individual and his society, i.e. an individual forms perception about himself unconsciously, according to the social circumstances.

So what does a healthy self-image look like? What about an unhealthy self-image? What's the difference? And what impact do both have on your life? Let's answer these questions by breaking down what it means to live with a healthy and an unhealthy self-image.

- **IDEAL SELF-** defined as the what an individual would like it to be.

LOOKING CLASS SELF- is characterized as an individuals perception of how others are perceiving his qualities or feeling about him. It is the perception of others perception.

- **REAL SELF-** is what others show you with respect to your self image. An individuals self image is confirmed when others responses to him and shares beliefs, perception about what actually feel about him.



SELF-ESTEEM

Personality and Social development refer to how a person’s sense of self or self-identity, relationships with others, and skills necessary for social interactions evolve. Personal or Self-identity explains how people describe themselves in terms of values, goals, traits, and perceptions unique to them. It is closely related to Self-esteem or how much people value themselves and their worth as persons.

Generally What Is Self-Esteem?

In psychology, the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. In other words, how much you appreciate and like yourself.

- Self-esteem is often seen as a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring.
- Self-esteem can involve a variety of beliefs about yourself, such as the appraisal of your own appearance, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors.

Why is Self-Esteem Important?

Self-esteem can play a significant role in your motivation and success throughout your life. Low self-esteem may hold you back from succeeding at school or work because you don't believe yourself to be capable of success.

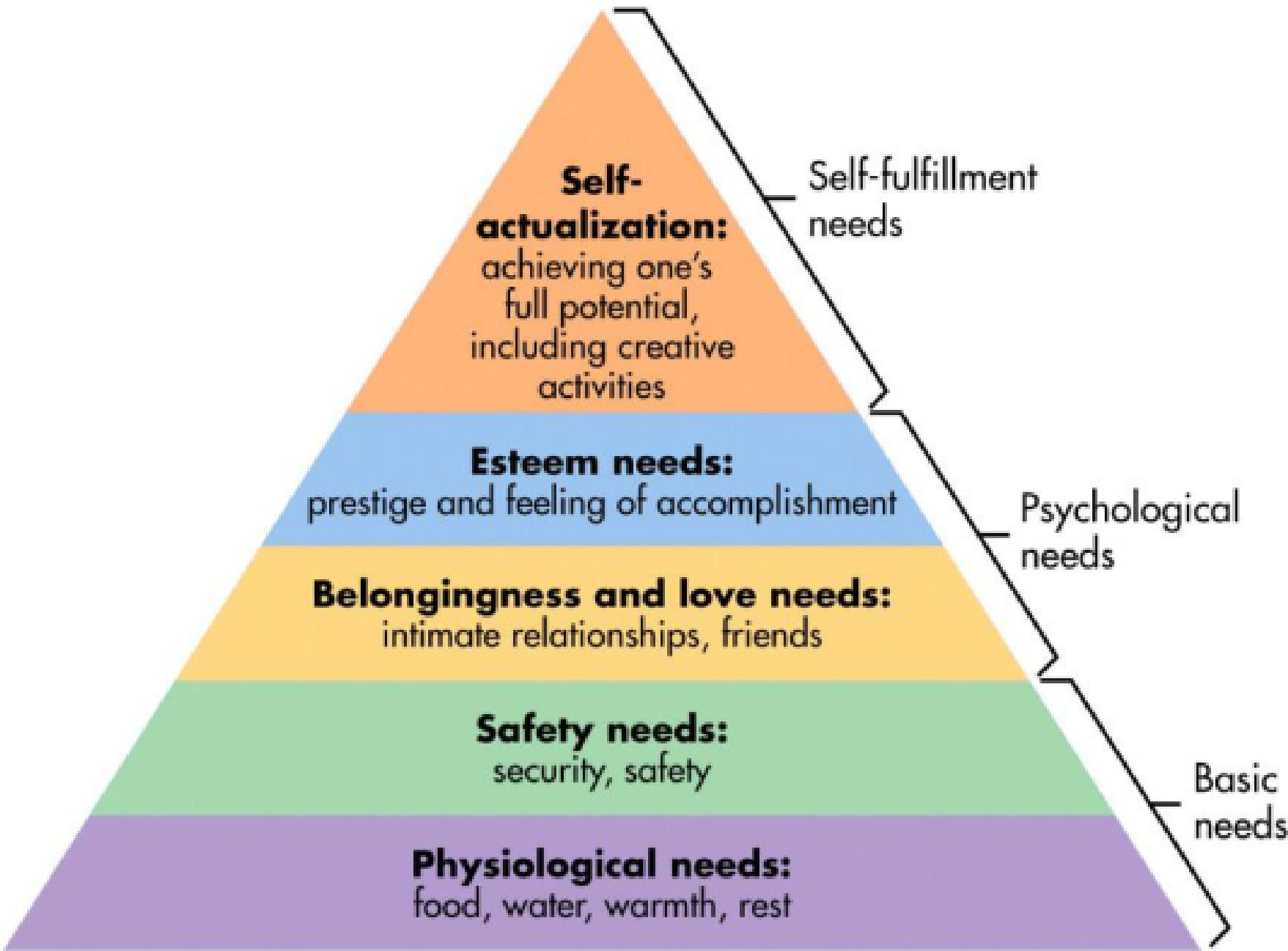
By contrast, having a healthy self-esteem can help you achieve because you navigate life with a positive, assertive attitude and believe you can accomplish your goals.

The need for self-esteem plays an important role in psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which depicts self-esteem as one of the basic human motivations. Maslow suggested that people need both esteem from other people as well as inner self-respect. Both of these needs must be fulfilled in order for an individual to grow as a person and achieve self-actualization.

It is important to note that self-esteem is a concept distinct from self-efficacy, which involves how well you believe you'll handle future actions, performance, or abilities.

MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.



Signs of Healthy Self-Esteem	Signs of Low Self-Esteem
Probably have a good sense of who you are You exhibit the following signs:	You may need to work on how you perceive yourself if you exhibit any of these signs of poor self-esteem:
Confidence	• Lack of confidence • Belief that others are better than you
Ability to say no	• Trouble accepting positive feedback
Positive outlook	• Negative outlook
Ability to see overall strengths and weaknesses and accept them	• Focus on your weaknesses
Negative experiences don't impact overall perspective	• Excessive feelings of shame, depression, or anxiety • Intense fear of failure
Ability to express your needs	• Inability to express your needs

THIS!

ons: Let's try a quick self-awareness activity. Name a famous person who you think has the same strengths and weaknesses that you do. On the Space provided below, list 5 strengths and 5 weakness. (10pts)

NAME OF FAMOUS PERSON: _____

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (5points each)

1. How do you think the famous person deals with his strengths and weaknesses?

2. Do you agree and handle yours the same way? Please explain.

3. Why is it important to know your strengths and weaknesses?

ASSESSMENT: 1.0 08/19/26

Assessment Instructions:

Kindly write your answers on one whole sheet of paper. After completing your work, scan the document and upload it to my OneDrive.

Please save the file using the following format:

LAST NAME 1.0 Assessment

Example: **GENTERONE 1.0 Assessment**

Make sure that your handwriting is clear and legible before scanning. Submit your work on or before the specified deadline.

Thank you, and good luck! 😊

NOTE: one drive link will be sent to the GC.

