



The Whole Spectrum: Biological to Spiritual

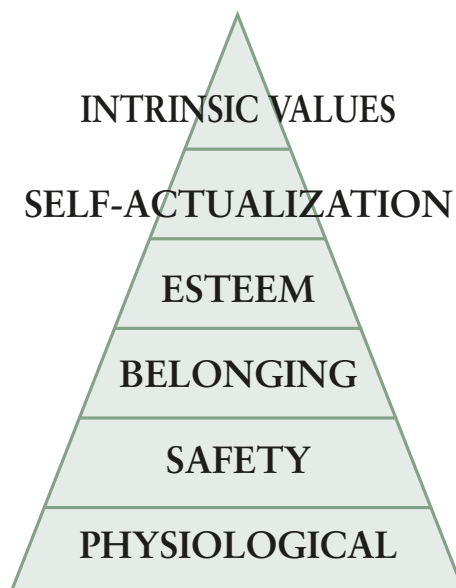
Hazel Skelsey Guest

The categorisation of Body/Mind/Emotions/Spirit can be seen as a currently fashionable way of describing human beings in terms of four quite distinct components. These are loosely related to Carl Jung’s Four Functions, namely sensing/thinking/feeling/intuiting respectively, which again are distinct. Their separateness in the popular psyche is in no way diminished by the well-known fact that emotions have their physiological correlates, nor by the extensive research carried out since the early 1970s on the physiological correlates of transcendental meditation. This paper aims to show that they are aspects of our being which are inextricably linked in a continuum. Two systems will be used to justify this thesis, the first of which is already well-known in a curtailed form. Editorial note: Network Trustee and founding member Geoffrey Leytham working in the psychology department at the University of Liverpool was one of the first in the UK to recognise the significance of Abraham Maslow’s work and had an extensive correspondence with him.

Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham H. Maslow (1908-1970), well-known psychologist, was elected President of the American Psychological Association in 1962. He is known worldwide for his Hierarchy of Needs.

Some readers will be surprised to see Intrinsic Values at the top of his hierarchy of biologically-rooted motivating needs when many textbooks and tutors of business and management courses represent the hierarchy as having only five levels, from Physiological to Self-Actualization. This is because his seminal paper on the subject (Maslow, 1943) did indeed contain only those five levels. The paper was an immediate success worldwide and his five levels became enshrined in the



required reading for students on business and management courses, in spite of the fact that the paper did acknowledge that something was missing.

After its publication he spent some twenty-five years exploring what motivates self-actualisers, including examples of transcendence/peak-experiences (Maslow, 1968, 1970). His problem was that he recognised this was in the spiritual realm, and for him that meant it could not be the result of biological evolution and therefore did not belong in his hierarchy.

Eventually he was persuaded that spiritual motivations which transcend self-interest, such as compassion, the pursuit of justice or truth, ethical considerations, the love of

beauty, and religious beliefs, are potential in every human being even if not actualised, and therefore must be biologically-rooted in the species. So finally he added Intrinsic Values to his Hierarchy (Maslow, 1967,1976; Guest, 2014). Shortly afterwards he died with the result that his, by now well-established, earlier version which had Self-Actualisation at the top, lives on in the literature of psychology and business studies, with his amended version mainly confined to publications related to humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

Ken Wilber is one of the well-established authors to include Maslow's sixth level, referring to it as 'self-transcendence' rather than 'intrinsic values' (Wilber, 2000, chart 7), and thereby emphasising that this level of motivation not only transcends self-interest but also tends to evoke peak-experiences.

The Hierarchical Structure

By tracing the evolution of species from the very earliest life forms to *homo sapiens* it is not difficult to justify the order in which Maslow's six levels of motivation gradually emerged, starting at the bottom of the chart and working upwards.

He was of the opinion that we are distinguished from the most advanced of non-human species by being the only creatures that can be motivated by Self-Actualisation and Intrinsic Values (Maslow, 1987, p57). Here I have to disagree with him. Self-Actualisation is about being truly who we are and living life to the full, and our close relationship with domestic dogs and cats gives us the impression that they are indeed fulfilled at this level if living within a loving and caring family. However, I doubt a dog's obedience is due to an ethical sense of right and wrong but rather to a desire to please its owner. As for dolphins and whales, we know too little about them to be able to judge, so we are still justified in claiming to be the only species that is capable of being motivated at the spiritual level, namely Intrinsic Values.

The order of appearance of these needs in the evolution of species is repeated in the development of the human embryo and young child, which may be why we experience these motivations as having an order of priority. When two urges of comparable strength are experienced simultaneously, that which is lower on the chart tends to take precedence over the higher. People give up their careers to care for a sick loved one (Self-actualisation v Belonging), potential whistle-blowers can be deterred by threats (Intrinsic Values v Safety), and whatever else one is doing will be abandoned temporarily in order to relieve oneself (predominance of a Physiological need). The only exception to this pattern is if the higher need is stronger than the lower, for example people persecuted for failing to change their religion (Intrinsic Value v Physiological and Safety).

This prepotency of the lower needs means that those fortunate persons who manage

to live their lives at the level of Self-Actualisation or Intrinsic Values, must already have their lower needs satisfied to a large extent. Although wealth does not necessarily bring happiness, it certainly can help.

It was precisely this principle of priority which made Maslow's theory an immediate success with business managers because it gave them ideas about how to motivate their work forces to become more productive: provide adequate breaks, the right tools, safety precautions, working in teams, rewards for good performance, and compassionate leave.

Destructive Aspects

Each one of these motivating levels of need has its destructive side. For example, at the Physiological level is the drug addict's need for another fix, under Safety there are phobias, Belonging can give rise to possessiveness and discrimination, Esteem can mean choosing the wrong people as role models, Self-Actualisation may be expressed in the form of greed or tyranny, and Intrinsic Values is where we find terrorism backed by religious ideology.

Religions recognise the dark side. Some have deities with mixed characteristics. In others God is good, which requires the existence of a satanic figure to account for evil at the spiritual level.

The notion that our needs must be all good because they are natural, and that higher needs are necessarily an advance on the lower ones, is both simplistic and dangerous. Management courses which have taught that Self-Actualisation is the highest motivation to which one can aspire, may have inadvertently encouraged their students to aspire to becoming rich financiers by using those dodgy practices which brought large banks to their knees in recent times.

0: Neutrality	
-1: Self-Assertion	+1: Exploration
-2: Attack	+2: Co-operation
-3: Retreat	+3: Participation
-4: Self-Abasement	+4: Generativity
-5: Despair	+5: Emancipation
-6: Depersonalisation	+6: Transpersonalisation

Without the spiritual sixth level, Intrinsic Values, ethics is not taken into consideration.

Deficiency needs are another destructive aspect. These occur when a person has experienced traumatic deprivation in a basic need at some time in the past. The endeavour to fulfil that need then stays with them with the result that they are forever pursuing it to excess, even when it is actually being satisfied. They are stuck in a groove. For example, the person who clings obsessively in a relationship probably has a deficiency need for Belonging, and someone who is forever trying to prove himself in spite of

success, probably has a deficiency need for Esteem.

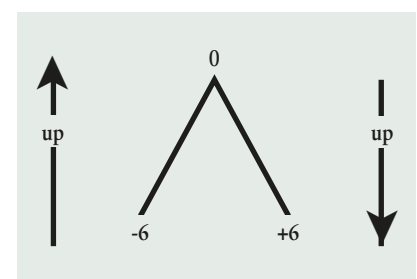
This kind of vulnerability is at the root of the radicalisation of prisoners in our jails. Many a convict feels that he does not belong. The mere fact of his having been arrested and imprisoned reinforces this impression. Then along comes a group of men calling him 'brother' and inviting him to join them. At last he has a 'family' to which he belongs. Next they boost his own self-esteem and encourage his esteem for their leader by emphasising toughness. The crime for which he was incarcerated is treated as a qualification for a future role of violence in which he can self-actualise because that is what he is good at, and to justify this role he is taught their version of ideology which now becomes his guiding intrinsic value.

The grooming of vulnerable young girls for sex follows a similar pattern, based on their need to belong. If they do reach a point at which they realise their error, they feel there is no-one to turn to for help because of their all-pervading sense of not belonging, reinforced by a lack of self-esteem.

Ian Marshall's Scale of Responses

We come now to the second of the two systems. The Jungian psychiatrist Ian Ninian Marshall (1931-2012) is known for his co-authorship of several books with his wife Danah Zohar. What is not well-known is that in the late 1960's and early 70's he developed a therapeutic system called 'Sequential Analysis', which used a skin-resistance meter as a monitoring device (Guest, 1990). One small part of the system is his Scale of Responses (Guest & Marshall, 1997).

By interpreting each of the thirteen items as broadly as possible, this covers all possible responses to stimuli of whatever kind.



The Scale of Responses is like a step-ladder going from -6 at the bottom, through 0 to +6 at the top, which has been folded in half to reveal pairs of opposites. For example ± 6 are the egoless pair. Transpersonalisation occurs when one has transcended the ego, and Depersonalisation when the ego has disintegrated. The signs for plus and minus do not indicate 'good' and 'bad'. Rather plus shows that one accepts the current situation to some extent, while minus indicates some degree of non-acceptance. Every one of these responses is appropriate in certain circumstances.

± 1 : establishing the nature of a situation
± 2 : functioning with, or against, others
± 3 : totally involved in, or withdrawn from, the situation
± 4 : feeling extremes of capability
± 5 : extremes of the spirit
± 6 : ego-less states

Neutrality is no response at all, which is not the same as deliberately ignoring things although that may be what it looks like to someone else. Apart from Neutrality these responses to situations can be active or passive, overtly expressed or just inwardly felt. They are how one actually feels and not how one is pretending to feel.

Normal Position

Everyone has their normal position on the chart. This is their most frequent response. We can all recognise the shy person at -3: Retreat or the bossy one at -1: Self-Assertion. Movement away from one's normal position usually occurs one step at a time, up or down or across to the opposite. So we tend to find a given individual's responses cluster within a section of the chart.

During meditation there is a gradual transition, one step at a time, from one's normal position towards +5: Emancipation, or possibly an altered state of consciousness at +6: Transpersonalisation.

LSD is associated with ± 6 and heroin with ± 5 . Because the latter is physiologically addictive users tend to stay in or close to -5 until the next fix sends them into its opposite at +5.

Bereavement is a situation in which one is suddenly plunged down the chart to somewhere low on the left-hand side. Probably -5: Despair. Temporarily this is one's new norm. Recovery takes a long time because it requires a slow climb step by step up the chart, -5 to 0 and then +1, +2 to wherever one's eventual new norm will be. Friends of a bereaved person often make a mistake when stage -2: Attack is reached and anger is expressed. This can take many forms from a threat to sue the hospital to criticism of relatives for not showing more concern, and even anger directed at the dead person. It is vital to allow this stage. Any attempt to

dampen it will only send the subject down again into -3: Retreat. Each stage of the bereavement process must be fully expressed in order eventually to reach a satisfactory new norm.

Recovery from an accident follows the same path. If the accident causes unconsciousness then there is a brief moment of disorientation at -6: Depersonalisation while recovering consciousness, followed by a slow climb up the ladder.

Other Patterns

'One-Step-Up' is a manipulator's weapon and is very difficult to counteract, because the victim has responded automatically before realising what is going on. If A appears to be exactly one step up on B then this drives B down a step. An accomplished manipulator will then follow the victim down to the next stage, being one-up yet again, and so on. For example a shy child at -3: Retreat is criticised by an adult at -2: Attack, which sends the child down into -4: Self-Abasement ('It is my fault'). The adult now makes no approach to the child who perceives this as -3: Retreat, which once again is one-up on the child who descends into -5: Despair.

By contrast 'The Knight's Move' should be in every counsellor's and psychotherapist's toolbox. If person C is at $-n$ then person D can contain the situation by being (or appearing to be) at $n+1$. Obviously this rule cannot be applied when the client is in -6: Depersonalisation, which is the kind of situation Stanislav Grof addresses when dealing with spiritual emergencies (Grof & Grof, 1990).

Conclusion

Either one of these two systems is sufficient to demonstrate that Body/Mind/Emotions/Spirit are not four distinct aspects of *homo sapiens*, but are interlinked.

Maslow's motivation theory is based on biological evolution and its levels range from the physiological through the emotional and social to the spiritual. Marshall's responses all have their physiological correlates and range from the personal at 0 and ± 1 , through the interpersonal to the spiritual. Moreover, in both systems there are patterns of inter-relationship. Together these two systems demonstrate that, far from being separate elements in our being, the biological, physiological, emotional, social and spiritual aspects are inter-related and form a continuum (Guest, 2016).

Hazel Skelsey Guest read *mathematics at the University of Cambridge, UK in the 1940s, and later studied psychotherapy at the pioneering Centre for Transpersonal Psychology in London in the 70s. She lectured in mathematics at City University, London, volunteered as a student counsellor, and ran courses on Transpersonal Psychology for their programme of General Studies, the first courses on TP to be part of any degree programme in a British university. On retirement she moved to Cambridge to practise as a psychotherapist.*

This article is based on Hazel's book 'The Walrus's Handbook' which was published in Dec 2016 by Archive Publishing, Dorset, England. ISBN: 978-1-906289-29-4. See review in section below.

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