

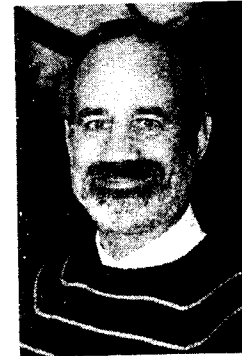
AIDS may thus be a tragedy for the patients, and an opportunity for the psychiatrists.

In sum, the fact that a criminal sexually violates his victim does not make the criminal a sexual offender in need of medical (psychiatric) treatment; the fact that a woman contracts to be artificially inseminated with the sperm of another woman's husband and create a baby for him and his wife does not make surrogate motherhood a medical matter to be decided by doctors, and the fact that the prospect for a painful and lingering death from AIDS makes a person depressed does not make his depression a disease or efforts to erase it a treatment. Although we often consult physicians to help us cope with activities requiring the use of our sexual organs, sex is too important to be left to the doctors. Free people in a free society must never forget or forsake the adage that the expert must be on tap, not on top.

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A DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-ACTUALIZATION: Evidence from Case Studies



THOMAS P. BRENNAN is currently the assistant director of the Circuit Court of Cook County Social Service Department in Chicago, Illinois, where he has been employed since 1972. He received his Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Northwestern University in 1987. There he came into contact with Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Personality Disintegration through the coauthor of this article. This ended a 20-year search for a conceptual framework that integrated for him the many paradigms and practices of personal growth, clinical perception, and spirituality—and placed them on a continuum. He has interest in furthering our understanding of personal growth and spirituality as well as of high-functioning people. This article, based on his dissertation, is a manifestation of this interest.



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Gifted Education edited by N. Colangelo and G. A. Davis). The connection between giftedness and self-actualization is fairly obvious.

Summary

This study presents a theoretical framework for personal growth leading to self-actualization, and case studies of individuals engaged in such growth. Maslow's description of self-actualizing people and Dabrowski's theory of emotional development are brought together for this purpose. We show that self-actualizing people can be found by means of an instrument for assessing levels of emotional development. People who are assessed at or near Dabrowski's Level 4 meet the criteria of self-actualizing growth. The degree of self-actualization can be assessed with the intensive interview guide developed for this purpose. The interview guide successfully met the objectives of this study. We have found that our self-actualizing individuals share a number of characteristics in common. They have a similar outlook and concern for humanity and its future. They have intensity, energy, and the persistence to work toward high ideals and a capacity to inspire others toward similar ideals. In their life histories, they share childhood giftedness, emotionally difficult and disruptive life experiences, and intense life-affirming experiences.

Maslow left us no case studies of self-actualization. Since then, only two cases have been described, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Piechowski, 1978) and Eleanor Roosevelt (Piechowski & Tyska, 1978), and both are historical persons no longer living. The challenge of finding living individuals who are well on their way in the self-actualization process is yet to be met. The lack of in-depth case studies has led to the loss of understanding what Maslow discovered in his study of self-actualizing people. Misinterpreting and distorting the original meaning of the term (Geller, 1982, is a good example), the critics of self-actualization saw it only as an asocial self-centered individualism.

The error of such a mistaken conception of individualism has been forcefully shown by Waterman (1984) who reviewed the controversy over the psychology of individualism, including self-actualization. He pointed out that the critics describe people who are self-centered and self-protective, who seek their own competitive advantage, and who gloat over their successes. By contrast, the supporters of individualism describe people who contribute to the well-being both of the individual and of society and who are attuned to meeting society's needs as well as finding personal fulfillment. It is in the latter group that Waterman places self-actualizers. If both the critics and the supporters of individualism

were to assess the level of functioning of their exemplars, they would come to the realization that each is describing a different species defined by two widely different levels of functioning. The purpose of this study was to find the people who fit Maslow's definition of self-actualization and to examine them through in-depth case studies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Two sources converge to provide the theoretical basis for this study. The first is Maslow's description of the characteristics of self-actualizing people (Maslow, 1950, 1954, 1970, 1971). The second is Dabrowski's theory of emotional development (Dabrowski, 1967, 1970; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977a, 1977b).

Dabrowski described personality development as a progression of five ascending levels (Dabrowski, 1967; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977a; Piechowski, 1986). Development occurs through the breakdown of a lower-level structure and its replacement by a higher one. It is a process of gradual transformation of the psychological structure from a lower to a higher level, from simple to more complex, from automatic and unconscious to deliberate, self-chosen, and conscious. The first level is characterized by self-serving motivations, self-protectiveness, manipulation, conflict with others, possessiveness, superficial attachments, and lack of perception of others' emotions. There is not much of an inner psychic life. In the next level, Level 2, an inner psychic milieu begins to develop. There can be a sense of inner fragmentation ("I feel split into a thousand pieces"), oscillations of mood, vacillations in action, and switching from one opposite to the next, or a superficially integrated world view of relativism and submission to mainstream values and conventions. The self derives its definition from fulfilling the expectations of others. Personal growth in this level is most often the struggle toward emancipation of an individual sense of self.

The condition of entry to Level 3 is a sense of self that may be vulnerable and threatened, yet deep down is autonomous. The hallmark of this level is "internal conflict." Here, at first a vague but gradually stronger and clearer experience of a vertical split within the self makes itself felt: the lower versus the higher (in the

sense of an inner ideal); or "what ought to be" versus "what is" (in the sense of an objectionable state of affairs of failing one's ideals, falling short of one's potential, perceiving oneself lacking in empathy or helpfulness, and so on). This level often involves very strong negative judgments of oneself that grow out of continuing self-scrutiny against cherished values and ideals. In this level, moral questions become important and may be intensely felt.

In Level 4, we encounter fully grown self-actualizing people. This level is characterized by inner autonomy and governance by an internal hierarchy of values. It so happens that Maslow's composite picture of self-actualizing individuals fits exactly Dabrowski's construct of Level 4, a concept of the kind of people who have developed a strong sense of universal values and whose extraordinary sense of responsibility leads them to take up tasks for the sake of others (Piechowski, 1978). Maslow (1970) pointed out that these people are strongly focused on problems outside themselves. They focus on problems rather than on the protection or enhancement of their own egos. They perceive tasks to fulfill because they respond to the need or urgency of the times. Eleanor Roosevelt's life is an outstanding example of self-actualization (Piechowski & Tyska, 1982).

Finally, the highest level, Level 5, is characterized by a harmonious unity and integration guided by a "personality ideal." This level epitomizes universal compassion, service to humanity, and the realization of timeless values.

The structure of each level is made of what Dabrowski called dynamisms. Dynamisms are intrapsychic processes that shape development; they are both the movers of inner psychic transformation and the inhibitors of lower-level behaviors and propensities (i.e., what is to be left behind or eliminated if one is to attain a higher level). Each level is characterized by a different constellation of dynamisms (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977a). The dynamisms with their definitions are listed in the appendix (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977a, pp. 44-45).

There are both unilevel and multilevel dynamisms. When unilevel dynamisms (Level 2) emerge, they are not transformative, only disintegrative in respect to the structure of Level 1. They drive a wedge into this structure by introducing indecisiveness and changeability. At Level 2, the person's inner psychic milieu has no stable organization. Feelings of ambivalence and the opinions of

others exercise great influence over a person's mind. In contrast, multilevel dynamisms emerge as new and distinct dispositions whose function is evaluative (critical reaction to the world and strict self-judgment) and transformative, that is, directed to the task of inner change (Piechowski, 1975). Most Level 3 dynamisms are special forms of inner conflict generated by self-evaluation and self-judgment. The conflict is between higher and lower principles, between the undesirable "status quo" of one's inner self and the desired possibilities of "what ought to be"—a self in line with one's higher values. Such conflict motivates inner transformation in the direction of ultimate values and timeless ideals. In contrast, unilevel inner conflict is not transforming but results only in a reshuffling of one's values and attitudes. An example of a multilevel dynamism is hierarchization, a critical perception and evaluation of the principles and behaviors in one's milieu as well as in oneself. Hierarchization evokes a recognition of the urgency of moral imperatives. Another example, frustration and anger with the "status quo" describes the dynamism of dissatisfaction with oneself. Positive maladjustment, another dynamism, is the process of making oneself independent from social opinion, an expression of a strong protest against social conventions and compromises that violate intrinsic ethical principles.

Level 4 dynamisms provide deliberate direction to inner growth and thus are consciously transforming. For example, one such dynamism, "third factor," represents choice and decision in setting and following internal standards. These internal standards serve as the guiding principles that enable one to affirm and select positive over negative elements in both the internal and external milieus. Self-control, self-designed methods to safeguard inner equilibrium (Dabrowski's term for this is "autopsychotherapy"), and development of methods directed at enhancing personal growth are examples of other dynamisms.

Personality ideal is the principal dynamism in Level 5, the ideal by which a person lives, is inspired and fulfilled. It is the sole unifying factor at that level. In his conception of Level 5, Dabrowski (1967; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977a) gave a detailed map of what Kohlberg (1981) was trying to get at in his idea of a seventh stage of moral development.

In summary, the multilevel dynamisms are advanced emotional and cognitive factors that guide the transformation process to a

higher level of development (i.e., self-actualization and beyond). Piechowski (1978) showed the close correspondence between these two theoretical frameworks—Maslow's and Dabrowski's. The line of attack in this study was to search for self-actualizing people by identifying persons who meet the criteria of Level 4 in Dabrowski's theory.

METHOD

Subjects

The aim of this study was to identify subjects who would manifest multilevel development. The method was to choose individuals who would be the richest sources of data (Sarris, 1978). Homstrum (1972, p. 183) called them "strategic cases" because of their potential to reveal the most about special situations, contexts, or types of personality development. The search for individuals who would be the best candidates of advanced multilevel development, and consequently of self-actualization, was guided by our knowledge of the characteristics of multilevel development as described by Dabrowski. A pool of 21 subjects was established by nomination. From this pool, four subjects, one man and three women, aged 38 to 58, were chosen for the study. They were administered a structured interview guide and their life histories were recorded.

Subject 1 is in his middle 50s, a social scientist, married for over 20 years, with two children. He was born in Europe and lived through World War II there. Leaving his country of origin, living as a displaced person, seeing the blindness of the government officials to the inevitable invasion, he tried to understand it: "I have to always look at the life I was leading partly from outside; and, therefore, I had to make sense of it." His father was a man of the world who liked art and good company. His mother was intellectual and emotionally distant. He spent his childhood very much alone, without playmates. He felt marginal. Being intellectually precocious, he found solace in reading. Because of his father's position, he came into contact with many highly placed and brilliant people. There were again many changes in his adolescence as his family went through many reverses, from a life of privilege to poverty. He

started to earn his own living at the age of 16 and eventually emigrated to America, where he worked his way through college. For a time, he was undecided whether to pursue art or psychology. On completing his Ph.D., he chose to teach at a small college that gave him the freedom to develop his ideas without the pressure to conform to mainstream research. Later, he was invited to join the faculty at a prestigious university.

Subject 2 is in her late 50s, a psychiatric nurse, and divorced after 20 years of marriage. She has two children. She divides her life into three stages: childhood, raising a family, and voyage of self-discovery. At the age of 5, she lost her mother. Until then life was full of warmth and love. She visited her mother in the hospital during the 2 years of her mother's illness. Since then, hospitals have for her a pleasant association of loving times spent with her mother. Soon after, she got a stepmother and "there was no more loving, touching, holding." Being Jewish in Nazi Germany, she felt different from other children and knew she was not liked because she was Jewish. In the late thirties when she was 13, the family emigrated to America. Once here, she read the German and English classics (in German) for enjoyment. After graduating from high school, she worked during the day and studied acting at night over strong objections from her parents. She asserted herself. Later, she entered a nursing program. She then married and devoted herself to raising her two children. Her husband was aloof and uninvolved, which adversely affected the children. It was a difficult and painful time of turmoil for her: "This psychic pain is worse than any physical pain I have ever experienced." She entered psychotherapy while continuing to work with psychiatric patients. She pondered, "How could I be competent at work while I was disintegrating? I suppose I am a natural to work in psychiatry. . . . I have an intuitive talent to relate to others." But periods of depression continued until her "mystical experience" on a trip to Israel. She said that, since then, this has been "the most wonderful stage of my life. I see myself in a period of tranquility, a period of great inner peace."

Subject 3 is in her middle 30s, a doctoral student, divorced with four children. She also divided her life into three periods: until age twenty, marriage, and after divorce. She grew up with strong traditional religious values. Her father was a minister, a real goer and doer, very much a public person. Her mother was just the opposite, a private person, by nature a writer, dreamer, and teacher,

locked into the duties of a mother and minister's wife. She remembers in her first elementary grades her mother's frustration and being the target of her anger. Their home was visited by interesting people, some from foreign countries. This enriched her childhood and developed an international awareness in her. She was an avid reader. She had intense feelings and the capacity to be totally engrossed in whatever she was doing, which was unlike others her age; it made her feel different. The lack of emotional openness in her family was difficult for her. Even as a child she could see beyond the norms, behaviors, and rituals; she saw the outward reality as a sham, "a house of cards." It was like having two kinds of consciousness, and at the age of 11 she suffered numerous anxiety attacks on this account, extreme claustrophobia and terror of the dark: "There was a lot of sheer terror for me when I would move between these two consciousnesses. When I could see the world as I could really see it—the whole vastness of it and the truth behind things. Then, sometimes I could just be living in this world that other people live in and accept it as normal, as though they were not hanging on the edge of this little planet upside down in this vast space. I mean that was the cosmic nature of what I was feeling, and it was frightening. . . . I had nowhere to be safe." Outwardly, she did well in school, in work, and in church. School was easy for her; she was placed in an accelerated program, but her exceptional intelligence was not fully recognized nor nurtured. College shook the foundations of her religious faith. By the end of the second year of college, she was, in spite of her values, in the midst of an unplanned pregnancy. She married and dropped out of school. She felt disconnected from the person she was before, she felt dead inside. Her husband was abusive and sadistic. She came close to suicide. She continued being the victim and took care of the children. She described the first 6 years of her marriage as a period of disintegration followed by the beginning of a rebirth. Participating in a church group brought on a reawakening of her inner self and a healing: "Like the top of my head was being opened and there is this golden light which is not just a light but a lighting substance and presence and flowing. And I was overwhelmed with a sense of love." From that time began her spiritual rebirth: "Slowly the new structures arise. I begin to live, to feel, to do art, to experience joy, to love, to be. I can feel my spirit, and feel with my spirit. Spirit is

no longer a concept but a very tangible mode of being. . . . I was dead, but now I am alive. . . . I am becoming a new creature—more whole than the first structure of me." Several profoundly spiritual people helped her in this process. Eventually, she grew strong enough to ask her husband for divorce, and also strong enough to go against the way she was raised: "It wasn't like the whole thing was revealed at once. The first decision was to make a choice for life. The second decision was commitment to truth. . . . And that led to the separation and divorce. . . . I felt alone, and it felt good—to make a good strong decision alone." After the divorce, she worked on construction as a hard hat and lived with her children in an empty unfurnished apartment because they had nothing at that time. Later, she entered graduate school.

Subject 4 is in her mid-40s married a second time with children, and is presently in graduate school. Like the first two subjects, she is also an immigrant. Growing up, she felt deprived, awkward, different, isolated. She tried to please and be accepted; and, to do this, she denied her Jewish heritage and her intelligence. Her first marriage ended in abuse and divorce. Her second marriage is harmonious and loving. Through psychotherapy she has been searching for answers to the many questions she had about herself. She has been successful in her field through teaching and program development.

These life histories share several distinguishing characteristics. There is first the evidence of childhood giftedness in their early extensive reading and also in their intensity, sensitivity, and deeper perception of reality. They all saw themselves as different, which is an experience few gifted children escape. They all experienced a good measure of affective undernourishment. All experienced forms of rejection and hostility either because of war, the extended anger of a parent, or physical abuse by a husband. They all experienced periods of instability and disorganization because of war, emigration, or divorce. They did not run away from issues but faced them and worked toward resolving them. Individually, their lives are very different, but they all strive for personal growth. The great obstacles they encountered seemed to enhance their opportunities for development. For each of them, there were triggering events and helpers who entered their lives at critical times. Each was ready and receptive to their input.

Assessment of Developmental Level

All subjects in the nomination pool were administered the Definition-Response Instrument (DRI). The DRI is a six-item, free-response questionnaire developed by Gage, Morse, and Piechowski (1981) for assessment of the level of emotional development. Because Dabrowski's theory offers rigorous criteria for assessing level of emotional development (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977a, 1977b; Piechowski, 1975, 1978), the DRI can be used to assess self-actualization (Level 4).

Interview Guide

The purpose of this investigation was to study multilevel development, that is, how the individuals came to achieve their present level of emotional functioning, how they maintain this level, and how they intend to continue their growth. Multilevel growth is represented in Dabrowski's theory by Levels 3, 4, and 5. Each of these levels has a characteristic set of dynamisms. To obtain a detailed picture of a person's developmental level, an interview schedule was developed to elicit material manifesting these dynamisms. To this end, clusters of questions were designed to elicit expressions of specific dynamisms. For instance, for the dynamism of "hierarchization," the subjects were asked: "Do you feel there are both higher and lower principles guiding you?" For the dynamism of "self-control," the subjects were asked: "What place does discipline play in your life? Does self-control relate in any way to your own personal development? Does self-control come easily or does it create difficulties?" The interview schedule of question clusters is given in Brennan (1987).

Method of Analysis

Analysis of the dynamism interview material proceeded along two lines. First, content analysis focused on the theme as the unit of analysis (André, 1982; Bogdan & Bilken, 1982; Holsti, 1968). Asking the question "what are the data saying?" leads to the identification of themes. Second, the portions of the material in which a theme was identified were analyzed further for dynamisms and characteristics of self-actualization (for details, see Brennan, 1987).

TABLE 1: Distribution of DRI Scores

Level Score	Level	Number of Subjects
1.0-1.5	1	0
1.6-2.0	1-2	3
2.1-2.5	2	9
2.6-3.0	2-3	4
3.1-3.5	3	2
3.6-4.0	3-4	2
4.1-4.5	4	1
4.6-5.0	5	0

To obtain a profile for each subject, the theme expressions were matched with 30 descriptors of Dabrowski's levels (6 for Level 2, 7 for Level 2-3, 11 for Level 3, 10 for Level 4, and 4 for Level 4-5).

RESULTS

The level scores of the 21 subjects are presented in Table 1. The levels and scores correspond as follows: a score 1.0 to 1.5 = Level 1; 1.6 to 2.0 = intermediate Level 1-2; 2.1 to 2.5 = Level 2; 2.6 to 3.0 = intermediate Level 2-3, and so forth. Nine subjects scored 2.6 or better—that is, they are assumed to be engaged in multilevel development. The level scores for the four main subjects were Subject 1—4.1, Subject 2—3.9, Subject 3—3.9, and Subject 4—2.4. Subject 4 provides the contrasting comparison between unilevel and multilevel development, between the potential for self-actualization and its partial or full realization. The following sections summarize the findings according to themes, dynamisms, and self-actualizing characteristics.

Summary by Theme

Nine themes were identified in the total material: benefit to humankind, philosophy of life, personal growth, self-acceptance, decisions for self, relationships, solitude, responsibility, and physical well-being and energy. Some themes are common to all four subjects; some are shared by two or three. Examples are provided for some of the themes; if dynamisms are manifested in the excerpts,

they are noted in parentheses. In some instances, we refer to a *precursor*. This term designates an expression of a dynamism in its incipient form.

The theme *benefit to humankind* comprised expressions that focus on problems outside of oneself, that stem from the person's sense of a mission in life, of having a task to fulfill for the sake of others. This theme can be equated with problem centering, one of the strong characteristics of self-actualizing people (Maslow, 1970).

Regarding this theme, three of the subjects saw the necessity of overcoming evil in the world in some fashion, but the same perception did not emerge with Subject 4. Subjects 2 and 3 believed in direct work with others. Subject 1 chose to serve others in a more indirect fashion, namely through his research

to figure out what makes humans act in destructive and self-deceiving ways, how to prevent that from happening, and how to achieve an understanding that will allow man to evolve in harmony with himself and the universe. That is about the highest level of principle that you can think of. I would like to think that anything I do relates to that goal.

In Maslow's words, this goal is outside himself, which means that he has taken it up because of its importance and urgency, not because it might make him famous and serve his ego. This is the self-actualizing characteristic of problem centering (Maslow, 1970). He has taken on this task out of his concern for the welfare of humankind (dynamism of responsibility and empathy).

The theme *philosophy of life* consists of principles guiding one in how to live. Here belong expressions of the values one lives, perspectives on humankind, spiritual and religious frames of reference, and principles of universal interrelationships. As the essence of their philosophy of life, some form of inner guidance provides direction for each of the four subjects. For Subject 1, it is a Zen paradox—an informal, personalized way of achieving “the committed but detached attitude as taught by yoga, Zen, and Christianity: That you should always act as if the whole universe depended on what you do; but, at the same time, know that whatever you do is ridiculous and does not matter.” This paradoxical principle of taking one's responsibility with utmost seriousness but laughing at oneself is an ideal that he tries to realize in his life (responsibility). This ideal may be taken also as a clear expression of what Dabrowski called “Personality Ideal.” The attitude of Subject

1 conveys very clearly the self-actualizing characteristic of lack of ego involvement. For Subject 3, the guiding principle is her inner voice. When she was younger, her rich inner life and startling realizations were unsettling to her. Her inner voice helped her to gradually develop confidence in her own judgment.

The theme *personal growth* comprises statements about working on self, one's emotional development, internal change and struggle, and the methods of bringing change in oneself. Subjects 2, 3, and 4 used the language of personal growth, whereas it was virtually absent with Subject 1, who considers it self-indulgent to spend time on self-oriented issues.

Of the four subjects, Subject 3 is the most illuminating in describing personal growth. She sees as her highest calling a responsibility to the growth of her own self, a precondition of her being able to contribute to the growth of others.

I guess the responsibility to self is to me the highest religious calling, to live out life. We were created for God's pleasure, and I see his pleasure in our living out all the possibilities created in us and for us. So that becomes an act of worship. Becoming most wholly and truly what the blueprint or design was for our lives and to not fall short of the creation.

There is a kind of self-absorption that doesn't go any place. You really meet a lot of people that are at that point. In my own situation, there is a sense that I am enacting a larger program in my own self-growth. As I fulfill this blueprint for my life, I feel that the end result down the line is that I will more effectively make the contribution to the purpose of the world—to other people's growth or whatever the contribution is to be made, to other people's feelings. So there is a kind of detachment which I see. The absorption is not with the self. I feel like I'm “flowing with the flow” in growth. Certainly, I am conflicted, I do agonize, and I must make decisions. But underneath that, at a still deeper level, I am just trying to get to the middle of the river.

She feels that her life is unfolding in a yet unspecified but definite direction. She is preparing for her life's task; she is enacting something that goes beyond herself (this points to the presence of the dynamisms of hierarchization, identification, precursor of inner psychic transformation, and precursor of responsibility). In this inner process, she maintains a detachment, an objectivity toward herself. Trying to get to the “middle of the river” is her effort to reach the center of her being, her true self.

A significant part of personal growth is *self-acceptance*. It comprises expressions of trust in the unfolding process of personal growth, the opening up of oneself, and full recognition of every facet of oneself. For many people, not all that one is aware of is accepted. This does not appear to be the situation, at least in intent, with these four subjects. At the same time, being aware and accepting all parts of oneself does not mean condoning one's less desirable traits.

Subjects 1 and 2 achieved a level of self-acceptance in which most internal conflicts are resolved and the resulting integration has a strong degree of harmony. They have faced the dark side of their personalities; they do not ignore or deny any aspect of themselves. Subject 3 has crossed the psychological barrier to realizing the value of self-acceptance, and she is in the midst of her struggle for full self-acceptance. Subject 4 is beginning to confront that very barrier.

Subject 1 provides an illustration of the theme of self-acceptance. Although the excerpt is not taken from the dynamism interview or the life history, it is included because of its poignancy and centrality to his experience. It appears that, beginning in his adolescent years, he has always been in touch with his inner self. Asked to write a response to the stimulus "inner conflict," he described an orientation that he espoused from those early years.

Remarkably little [inner conflict] ever since as a teenager I decided that it was a waste of time to struggle with myself. I found that the way to avoid conflict was to admit to myself whatever I thought or felt, even if shameful or embarrassing, and then to reason it out within myself which desire or thought should have priority and why. This way no part of me felt left out or short-changed and decisions were reached by consensus rather than conflict.

This basic self-acceptance provided him with a manner of handling inner conflict ever since. He made a choice to be attentive to and to accept all parts of himself. This involves critical self-evaluation (subject-object in oneself) and making decisions in keeping with his own inner standard. Approaching self and life in this fashion, he has been able to live according to his values: being involved but with a detached commitment, fostering harmony, using energy efficiently, and avoiding clashes with opposing forces (because he feels that open conflict rarely leads to harmonious resolution). The modus operandi of self-acceptance manifests a

TABLE 2: Dynamism and Precursor Summary

Level	Subject Number 1	Subject Number 2	Subject Number 3	Subject Number 4
4 and 4+	26	20	11	2
Precursor	1	0	6	3
3-4	0	0	6	0
3	1	8	6	2
Precursor	0	0	0	3
2-3	0	0	1	2
2	0	4	5	15

confidence in his own development (autonomy); and, because of the way in which he deals with all aspects of himself, it constitutes a program of systematic development (education of oneself).

The other themes that emerged from the interview material were *decision for self* (turning points in life, critical decisions that have changed and deepened the direction of their lives), *relationships* (patterns of relationships with mates, family, co-workers, students, and clients), *solitude* (need for solitude, meditation, and time for inner work), *responsibility* (fairness, sense of ethics or justice, being accountable for one's actions, being reliable, taking up tasks on behalf of others, and importantly, having concern for the growth and personal development of others), and *physical well-being and energy level* (awareness and sensitivity to one's physical condition, attention to physical exercise, and personal level of energy).

Dynamisms

Each excerpt or theme expression was analyzed for the presence of dynamisms. The subjects' statements were matched with the description of an appropriate dynamism as defined by Dabrowski's theory. Table 2 provides a summary of the results. Subject 1's profile fulfills the criteria for Level 4, because almost all the dynamisms characteristic for that level and above are present and there are no others. Subject 2's profile comes close with all the Level 4 dynamisms present but there is also significant trailing of Level 3. But for both, most of their actual dynamism expressions are in Level 4.

The four occurrences manifesting unilevel growth in Subject 2's material are peripheral to her overall orientation and level of functioning. Subject 1 appears to be the more fully self-actualizing because he is functioning in a more harmonious manner than Subject 2 appears to be. Perhaps this impression arises only because he is more capable of articulating a well-developed philosophy of life. However, all the interview material collected here points to the fact that he indeed functions in the integrated and highly efficient manner of a bona fide self-actualizer. Furthermore, a definite personality ideal is explicitly present in his material, whereas in Subject 2's statements, it is present only by implication. In addition, a sense of harmony and balanced integration seems to permeate Subject 1's responses more completely than Subject 2's responses.

The dynamism profile of Subject 3 has certain atypical features. The developmental dynamisms are spread over three levels. Moreover, there is a strong showing of both the central dynamisms of Level 4 (inner psychic transformation, third factor, subject-object in oneself) and of the dynamisms of Level 2 (ambitendencies). One dimension of her life is still firmly rooted in Level 2—there are unilevel conflicts over interpersonal needs and relationships. The actuality of Level 4 is as yet only partially realized.

Subject 4, on the other hand, is predominantly rooted in unilevel growth. There is, however, sufficient evidence to place her in a region approaching the significant borderline of Levels 2-3.

Characteristics of Self-Actualization

This study was carried out on the assumption that Maslow's self-actualization and Dabrowski's Level 4 are different constructs of the same underlying phenomenon. Therefore, it is not surprising that the interview guide based on the descriptors of Level 4 also produced characteristics of self-actualization. However, the process of determining the completeness and justification for each characteristic was not as rigorous as was the process for determining the presence of dynamisms. The traits of self-actualization were identified in the material after the study was completed. These characteristics appeared for the most part in the response material of Subjects 1, 2, and 3 but rarely in that of Subject 4. For example, it is a self-actualizing trait to possess a more efficient

perception of reality and to have more comfortable relations with it. Subject 1's incentive for his research lies in his understanding of the dire consequences of the present trends in worldwide energy consumption. The originality of his approach lies in his efforts to find psychosocial rather than economic strategies to avert the inevitable energy crisis. Subject 2's hallmark is accurate intuitive insight. Subject 3 already as a child saw through the appearances of reality as a "house of cards" and this capacity to get to the heart of things has stayed with her.

Another self-actualizing trait is to possess a quality of detachment and a need for privacy. These individuals have a facility for detaching themselves from the pressing demands of everyday reality to enter into peaceful solitude. All four subjects cherish solitude.

Mystic or peak experiences are yet another trait of self-actualization. Three subjects have given instances of this. Subject 1 described having "epiphanies" in adolescence and occasional peak experiences in adulthood as a result of listening to music, hiking, or participating in a religious ritual. Subject 2 described a religious experience that permanently lifted her from her depression. And Subject 3 repeatedly used the image of a "windswept pinnacle" to describe the heightened state of pure freedom and courage. In her life history, she also described physical healing in response to prayer.

Continued freshness of appreciation is one of the especially distinguishing characteristics of self-actualizing people. It goes with their naturalness and awareness of the moment. Subject 1 seizes every new insight or new way of looking at things; hiking and watching a sunset are opportunities for ecstatic experiences. Subject 2 savors every new personal encounter. Looking at the stars or watching the birds are profoundly moving to her. Subject 3 enjoys coming to new perspectives on growth and continually focuses on the positive; nurturing plants and working with the soil in her garden are for her a source of wonder and renewal. Subject 4 becomes excited over the prospect of continued personal growth and enjoys developing ties with challenging people as well as challenging herself.

This study suggests that there is a commonality possessed by all self-actualizers. The kindness and simplicity of Saint-Exupéry and Eleanor Roosevelt (Piechowski & Tyska, 1982) were also charac-

teristic of the four subjects of this study. Subjects 1, 2, and 3, like Saint-Exupéry and Eleanor Roosevelt, either have responded or are responding to problems basic to the human race. Each is guided by a personality ideal. The four subjects of this study all displayed an intensity and spontaneity that draws one to them, and one leaves them with a sense of excitement and optimism. They go beneath the surface of things. At the same time, as their life histories showed, they are not free of struggles and turmoil; but they were able to overcome the awesome negative influences of their environments. The same appears to have been true for Eleanor Roosevelt. To what can we attribute their victories? We can point to their abilities and their giftedness, yet the instances of gifted and talented people who succumb to unfavorable circumstances are numerous. We have to look at the strength of their developmental potential (Piechowski, 1986)—their intensity, their persistence in trying to make sense of things, their impressive energy, and their creative urge to shape themselves according to a high ideal.

In addition, there is commonality in the truths by which they live and inspire others. Saint-Exupéry and Eleanor Roosevelt each show a "life inspired by the highest human ideals" and that "the power to inspire is a transcendent quality" (Piechowski & Tyska, 1982, p. 151). With this in view, Maslow's distinction between the self-actualizing transceiver (the "seer") and nontransceiver (the "doer") diminishes and becomes less important. This study has provided three more models, presently living, who equally possess a deep source of motivation.

CONCLUSION

There has not been, until now, a method of identifying self-actualizing people. Maslow left no case studies, no instruments have been developed from individual cases of bona fide self-actualizers nor tested out on them. Our approach to self-actualization was to find living exemplars. As Daniels (1988) and Frick (1982) so rightfully stress, what ought to distinguish any theory of self-actualization must be its power to guide toward living and developing. We see this type of theory in Dabrowski's theory of emotional

development. The basic premises of the theory coincide with Frick's view of personality as "always evolving toward higher forms of development. . . . Personality development is movement toward increasing complexity, differentiation, and wholeness. It is a search for the realization of ultimate values" (p. 47). The demonstration that Maslow's construct of self-actualization and Level 4 in Dabrowski's theory have an exact correspondence (Piechowski, 1978) is of particular significance here. Dabrowski's theory outlines the developmental path and the transformations necessary on the way to self-actualization. The theory also offers rigorous criteria for assessing each of the five levels of emotional development. This made it possible to design a detailed and comprehensive interview guide in which the presence or absence of characteristics of Level 4, and hence of self-actualization, could be determined (Brennan, 1987).

Our success in finding self-actualizing people is the product of the particular fit between the two theories, Maslow's and Dabrowski's, and of the availability of instruments for assessing developmental levels. Out of a nomination pool of 21 subjects, we have found three with level scores at Level 4 (the level of self-actualization): 3.9, 3.9, and 4.1. But we did not know whether the level score guaranteed the full realization of Level 4 and self-actualization attributes. The interview guide was then introduced as the acid test. Not unexpectedly, behind the very similar level scores were substantial differences between the three subjects in the degree of their self-actualization. The interview openly defines for the subject the characteristics sought. Yet, the subjects do not always produce the "expected" response. If the person is not at a high level of emotional development, then the responses to the interview questions will not exceed their actual level of development. One of the four people we studied, Subject 4, was not self-actualizing. She was asked all the same questions, yet, she did not produce any material resembling the distinctly larger vision of life and the human community that was typical of the other three people who are self-actualizing.

In sum, we now have available instruments for identifying people who are likely to be self-actualizing, and we also have a method, the interview guide, which allows us to probe the degree to which a person is advancing toward self-actualization as originally defined by Maslow.

APPENDIX

Definitions of Dynamisms

Level 2:

Ambivalences: fluctuations between opposite feelings, extremes of mood.

Ambitendencies: changeable and conflicting courses of action.

Second factor: susceptibility to social opinion, feelings of inferiority toward others.

Level 3:

Hierarchization: critical perception and evaluation; Level 3—individual values, Level 4—universal values.

Positive maladjustment: independence from social opinion; weak form—antagonist of second factor, strong form—protest against violation of intrinsic ethical principles.

Dissatisfaction with oneself: frustration and anger with *what is*.

Inferiority toward oneself: frustration with what is lacking; weak form—feelings of failure and inadequacy, strong form—frustration with not being all that one can become.

Disquietude with oneself: agitation and anxiety with “what is.”

Astonishment with oneself: surprise and shock in regard to “what is.”

Shame: embarrassment over one’s deficiencies.

Guilt: weak form—discomfort or anguish over moral failure, strong form—discomfort or anguish over moral failure coupled with reparation.

Level 4:

Subject-object in oneself: observation, critical evaluation, and reflection on oneself and others.

Third factor: choice and decision in setting and following internal standards.

Inner psychic transformation: inner restructuring: transcending age-related changes and one’s psychological type.

Self-awareness: knowledge of one’s uniqueness, developmental needs, and existential responsibility.

Self-control: regulating development and keeping in check interfering processes.

Education-of-oneself and self-perfection: programs and methods of systematic development.

Autopsychotherapy: self-designed psychotherapy methods and preventive measures.

Level 4-5:

Responsibility: taking on tasks for the sake of others and one’s own development.

Authenticism: pervasive—hierarchy of values in action.

Autonomy: confidence in one’s development, freedom from lower levels in oneself.

Personality ideal: the highest guiding principle.

Dynamisms operating across levels:

Disposing and directing center: stands for that factor or group of factors that directly guide behavior and its expression at any particular level.

Temperamental syntony: superficial, easy, and immediately expressed feeling of commonality with others. Strong at lower levels.

External conflict: conflict of interest with people, fault is never with oneself; at Level 3, conflict with others is over moral principle or human ideals rather than conflict of interest.

Inner conflict: in essence, it is conflict between “what is” and “what ought to be”; it appears most strongly in Level 3.

Identification: differs from syntony in that it is directed toward an individual, not a group, more differentiated than syntony; at Level 2 identification with one’s image of another without checking out if that image is correct; at Level 3, identification is more selective, more personal, and more directed toward deeper relationships and high ideals.

Empathy: growing understanding based on genuine acceptance of others as unique persons, combined with an attitude of helpfulness.

Creative instinct: at Level 2, creative pursuits are impulsive, spontaneous, and isolated from personality development; at higher levels, increasing concern with process of personality development, religious strivings, and self-perfection.

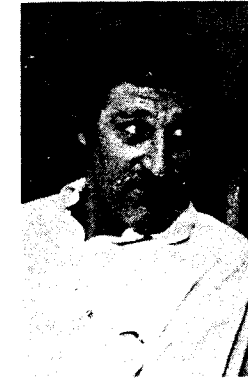
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INHERENT POTENTIALITIES OF ACTUALIZATION: An Initial Exploration



J. GUTHRIE FORD is presently on the faculty of Trinity University. There he strives to bring Rogers's person-centered educational approach into the classroom, a task particularly challenging in his Statistics and Methods course wherein young people find it easy to surrender their autonomy and "fall victim" to the unfamiliar and threatening environment. Guthrie's recent person-centered research efforts have two thrusts. One is to clarify some of the important central propositions of Rogerian theory; the other is exploration of the meaning of the inherent potentialities of actualization, the theme of the work before you. As mainstream psy-

chology comes more and more into "well-being" psychology, Guthrie hopes to participate as a conduit between humanistic and other camps, an integration he believes is long overdue in psychology. Actually, what he finds really challenging is acquiring a working knowledge of the bays and estuaries of the Gulf of Mexico, areas where he spends dawns pursuing the elusive redfish and speckled trout.

Summary

Biological factors are strongly emphasized in the actualization theories of Maslow and Rogers. Despite this emphasis, functionally nothing is known about the composition of the inherent potentialities of actualization. This study was intended to provide specific information about such potentialities. Toward that end, the study focused on the construct of the personality temperament, a trait having a significant genetic foundation. Using the temperaments of emotionality, activity level, and sociability, it was hypothesized that if these organismic potentialities were *not* actualized, then maladjustment would result, a deduction from Rogers's theory of personality. Degree of actualization was operationally defined by the discrepancy between retrospective parental recall of the participant's temperament profile as a young child and the college-aged participant's current self-perceptions of these temperaments. All temperament and maladjustment measures were taken by paper-and-pencil inventories, and