

## APPENDIX A

## The Elements of Human Fulfillment

According to famed researcher Abraham Maslow, human fulfillment is based on the following characteristics, which describe his studies of self-actualized people:

*Growth-motivated rather than deficiency-motivated.* As Maslow stated, “The motivation of ordinary men is a striving for the basic need gratifications they lack. But for self-actualizing people, motivation is just character growth, character expression, and maturation.” Simply stated, fulfillment rests in the ability to distinguish between living and preparing to live.

*Good sense of reality.* Self-actualized people, says Maslow, have “an unusual ability to detect the spurious, the fake, and the dishonest in personality. . . . They are far more apt to perceive what is there rather than their own wishes, hopes, fears, anxieties, their own theories (prejudices) and beliefs or those of their cultural group . . . unfrightened by the unknown. . . . Doubt, tentativeness, and uncertainty, which are for most a torture, can be for some a pleasantly stimulating challenge, a high spot in life rather than a low.”

*Acceptance of self and others.* Human fulfillment is characterized by a relative lack of crippling guilt, though self-actualized people do feel bad about the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be; the ability to see through unnecessary guilt and anxiety; the ability to accept the frailties and imperfections of human beings (in other words, the ability to see human nature as it is instead of as they would prefer it to be); a relative lack of disgust and aversion toward average people; a lack of defensiveness, and distaste for such artificiality in others; and an unusual lack of hypocrisy, game-playing, and attempts to impress others.

*Honest authenticity and naturalness.* Self-actualized people have a tendency toward unconventional thinking, though not necessarily unconventional behavior; an internalized code of high ethics (not necessarily the same as those around them); and a superior awareness of who they are, what they want, and what they believe.

*Commitment and problem centering.* Self-actualized people have a strong sense of purpose outside themselves—a “task they must do.” They are concerned with the good of mankind, and work for that which they love; they have a great sense of care for others. They see problems as a stimulating challenge rather than an intolerable dilemma.

*Autonomy.* The self-actualized have a greater sense of “free will”; they are less dependent on or determined by their circumstances or other people. Self-movers, they

are self-disciplined and have a sense of determining their own destiny through their personal choices.

*Independence and resistance to enculturation.* Human fulfillment is characterized by relative independence from the need for approval, respect, and even love; the tendency to act conventionally in affairs regarded as important or unchangeable; and patient entrepreneurialism in wanting to change the status quo for the better.

*An element of detachment and privacy.* Self-actualized people practice objectivity; they are able to withstand personal misfortunes without reacting as violently as most would.

*Continued freshness of appreciation.* The self-actualized have, as Maslow states it, “the wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again (with newness), freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder, even ecstasy, however stale these experiences have become to others.” They avoid taking things for granted; instead, they “retain a constant sense of good fortune and gratitude for it.”

*High energy levels, peak experiences.* “Their energy is not supernatural,” Maslow says of the self-actualized; “it is simply the result of loving life and all the activities in it. They don’t know how to be bored. . . . They are aggressively curious. They never know enough. They search for more and want to learn each and every present moment of their lives. . . . They are mystic, with peak experiences of transcendence of self; they have a sense of limitless horizons opening up to vision, coupled with ecstasy and a transforming feeling of strength.”

*Deep interpersonal relations.* Human fulfillment is characterized by the capability of more fusion, intimacy, and obliteration of ego boundaries than seen in most people. The self-actualized tend to be kind to—or at least patient with—almost everyone, particularly children, yet they often have few profoundly close relationships because of the time required to maintain them. When they express hostility, it is not toward someone’s character but to achieve some good end.

*Democratic character structure.* The self-actualized are oblivious to barriers of class, education, politics, or race; they possess a certain sense of humility that allows them to learn from anyone and to be aware of how little they know when compared with what could be known.

*Discrimination between ends and means.* Ethically, the self-actualized believe that means are subordinated to ends, but means are usually enjoyed as ends in themselves. Simply, the self-actualized appreciate the process of doing for its own sake.

*Philosophical, unhostile sense of humor.* Humor for the self-actualized is usually directed at self or at people who are trying to be big when they are small; humor extends to work—which, though taken seriously, is approached with a sense of play. They find that humor often has an educational function beyond the simple value of laughter.

*Creativity.* The self-actualized are often not creative in the usual artistic forms; their creativity is more a process and attitude than a product. Their creativity extends to a way of approaching all of life; they find fresh, direct solutions with naive newness.

*Guiltless acceptance of sexuality.* For the self-actualized, sex is fused with love and full of underlying intimacy; they do not usually seek sex for its own sake. There is a paradox: They seem to enjoy their sexuality far more than average, yet consider it much less important.

*Resolution of complementary opposites.* Finally, the self-actualized seem to enjoy—even thrive on—differences rather than fear them. They creatively seek overarching principles that make seeming opposites synergic (complementary) rather than antagonistic; peak experiences often occur during the resolution.

*Source:* Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954).