

Self-Actualization Scale For Needs Assessment (SASNA)

Needs Analysis Scaling Tool

Developed by
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Executive Summary

Abraham Maslow pioneered the work on human needs. Single-handedly he transformed the field of psychology that was in complete disarray about what was and what was not a “human need,” and provide an operational definition of a *need*, the reasoning that identifies why something can qualify as a legitimate *need*, and most important, a systematic order of the needs. The result was his 1941 “Hierarchy of Needs” which he re-edited in 1970 just prior to his death.

Now while that Hierarchy of Needs has proven valid over all these years, in itself, it has not been that useful for facilitating self-actualization. That’s why in Neuro-Semantics I created the *Self-Actualization Quadrants* (2005) and then the *the Matrix-Embedded Hierarchy of Needs*. These Neuro-Semantic models were obviously developed from the original work of Abraham Maslow.

The *Matrix-Embedded Hierarchy* expands Maslow’s original work making it more dynamic and alive and it does this by putting the Matrix Model inside of the hierarchy. This recovers the one thing Maslow missed in his model— the construction of meaning. He put meaning into the model, but he did so as one of the B-values and left out the most important and dynamic facet of a human being—*our ability to create meaning*.

So now with the *Matrix-Embedded Hierarchy*, we are now able to understand, recognize, and work with *the human needs that drive us*. After all, we are a needy species. Biologically we are animals and all of our lower needs are animal needs. Accordingly, Maslow recommended, “Be a good animal; have healthy appetites.”

Needs are simply *the requirements for life and for effectiveness*. As you learn to effectively understand your needs and cope with them, you move on to the next level of development. This is the first requirement for self-actualization—having a healthy biological foundation with sufficient physical energy, emotional energy, and personal (or “spiritual”) energy.

What follows here is a strength-based model, what Tim and I have designated: *The Self-Actualization Needs Assessment Scale*. This scale enables you to look at yourself (or another person) through the eyes of your strengths and potentials. It enables you to identify strengths, talents, and resources that can be tapped and more fully utilized for self-actualization. The following tool provides a way to use the Hierarchy of needs for *needs assessment* for coaching and training in service of self-actualization.

This *Self-Actualization Scale for Needs Assessment* is designed to answer the question that Tim asked that originated the study that culminated in this tool, “How can we use the Hierarchy of Needs for facilitating and enabling self-actualization?” Self-actualization means being “the best you” that you can be, it means finding and unleashing your highest values and visions and your best performances and achievements. And this allows you to be “fully alive, fully human.” It means *being* what you are and when you do, you are authentic, congruent, and alive with integrity.

As an assessment tool, you should be able to do the *first level analysis* by yourself. For deeper analysis, we recommend that you ask a Certified Meta-Coach to facilitate the process with you.

How to think about and Use the Assessment Tool

1) Start at the bottom and work up.

Begin with the survival needs and work up the diagram. The diagram of the pyramid is made up of many continua of needs, several in each category (survival, safety, social, and self). Use the framework of each line as a continuum that measures your *overall, global, or general sense of efficiency in meeting your needs*. How are you doing? What is your overall sense? Are you getting by? Then you are in the middle. If you are *not quite getting by*, there’s some stress and strain in getting your needs met effectively, then you are on the left side—in the Red Zone. If you are not only getting by but doing pretty good, then you are to the right of the middle, in the Green Zone.

2) Think of the continuum as a measurement of your overall coping with your driving needs.

The continuum goes from the far left side and gauge several stages in the process of handling your needs: dysfunction, distortion (coping is at extremes of too much, too little), not quiet getting by. The Red Zone is where the *deficiency needs* are crying out that you are just not satisfying/ gratifying the needs well. You are either not using “true gratifiers” (Maslow) or the gratification is too much, too little (the “extremes”) or completely distorted and creating all kinds of human dysfunction—neurosis and psychosis.

The continuum on the right side of the middle gauges the stages beyond “Getting by:” getting by pretty well, doing very good, optimizing your coping skills (having some expertise in them), to maximizing them (being absolutely masterful in handling them). No one is completely at the right hand of the continuum. “Masters” can move there from time to time. It is the ideal of where you can reach in terms of effectively gratifying your needs. When there, your consciousness, emotions, and energies are completely freed from that driving need so that you have all of that available for moving up the hierarchy and into the human self-actualizing needs at the top.

Dysfunctional	Extremes	Not Getting By	Getting By	Getting by	Doing Good	Optimizing	Maximizing
Neurotic	Too much	Cravings,	Doing Ok	Well –	Thriving	Super-Thriving	At one’s very
Psychotic	Too little	Dissatisfaction		Normal concerns		Feeling Good	Best

3) *Mark your default point and your range.*

Without identifying any particular context, answer it globally or generally for your life. (We will use various contexts later). Put a check (or tick) where you basically are today. Then put brackets [around where you move back and forth—the range of your coping gratifications]. The check is your default point (use one color for this). The brackets is your range (use a different color for this).

4) *Sort for Quantity and Quality.*

As you think about gratifying each need —note *the quantity or amount* (i.e., number, volume) of how many gratifications there are for the need— this is the *quantity*. Then note the *quality* of those gratifications (from low to high; from poor to excellent, from inhuman to highly humanizing, whatever qualities you like to give the experience). For *Quantity* use a “**V**” which stands for “volume” of (i.e., amount, times, how often, degree, volume, etc.) and “**Q**” for the Quality of the experience.

For example: Under sleep: how many hours do you get and what is the quality of the sleep. Under food: how much do you eat, how often, how many calories— and what is the quality of that food (junk food, healthy). Under safety: what is safe, what is not? How many threats to your physical well-being? Thefts in your neighborhood, break-ins, car-jackings, murders. Stability: how often do things change, quality of those changes.

5) *At the top identify your highest life themes, visions, and meanings.*

Above the “lower needs” (the animal needs, Maslow) are the “higher” or human needs. These self-actualization needs is where you truly live the *human life*. Here you can live for contribution, justice, fairness, music, beauty, mathematics, making a difference in a given area, health, spirituality (as you define it), excellence, honor, loving, etc. What do you live for? What is the highest meaning and vision of your life? What do you seek to actualize? Identify 3 of your top ones and put them in the three circles at the top.

Deepening the Analysis

By using the *Needs Analysis Scale* you can achieve numerous degrees of analysis, depending on how deep you want to do a needs analysis with yourself or a client. You can use the Hierarchy Needs Analysis in numerous levels to go deeper and deeper with each new layer of analysis. A Meta-Coach can facilitate this for a deep analysis.

1) *First Analysis*: First use the tool to get a general picture of your coping skills as you to gratify the basic human needs that drive you. Here are essential questions to ask after you complete the diagram:

Where are you overall?

How are you gratifying your needs? Doing what? How coping?

Do you live in the Red Zone mostly or in the Green Zone mostly?

Is there a particular level of need (survival, safety, social, or self) that you could address that would provide a real unleashing of potentials?

What have you discovered from this first level analysis? What are you aware of?

Are there any strong areas of deficiency?

Are there any strong areas of optimizing or maximizing that gives you a real resource?

Is there any need that you are not gratifying effectively that's serving as an interference to your self-actualization?

Did you leave any of the need continuums blank? Why?

The relationship between Volume— Quality in fulfilling your needs: Notice where you put the V and the Q for each need:

Is the Quality always beyond (and higher) than the Volume?

Is the Quality always before (and lower) than the Volume?

Do the Q and the V shift around depending on the need?

Is the Quality and the Volume always or usually together?

2) *Second Analysis*: Next explore your (or another person's) thinking, understanding, believing, deciding, etc. that sets up the standards of evaluation that you or the other person uses:

What do you think or believe about X? (Any continuum need)

How accurate do you judge your thinking and understanding?

What evaluations have you heard from others about need X?

What does it mean to you to "get by?" How do you feel about that?

How stressful is it when you are not "getting by?"

How stressful when you are in the Red Zone?

3) *Third Analysis*: Another analysis can be around the thinking style used to create and evaluate the need and ways of coping with it. Examine the thinking and evaluating by the list of Cognitive Distortions to detect to what extent they play a role in how you think and cope:

Cognitive Distortions

1. Over-generalizing

2. All-or-nothing thinking

3. Labeling

Advanced Cognitive Styles

Contextual thinking

Both-and thinking; in-between thinking

Reality-testing thinking

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 4. Blaming | Responsibility thinking |
| 5. Mind-reading | Current sensory information |
| 6. Prophecying | Tentative predictive thinking |
| 7. Emotionalizing | Witness thinking or non-emotionalizing |
| 8. Personalizing | Objective thinking |
| 9. Awfulizing | Meta-cognitive thinking |
| 10. Should-ing | Choice thinking |
| 11. Filtering | Perspective thinking |
| 12. Impossibility thinking: Can't-ing | Possibility thinking |
| 13. Discounting | Appreciative thinking |
| 14. Identifying | E-prime / dis-identifying thinking |

4) *Fourth Analysis*: For this analysis, imagine yourself “in the shoes of someone who knows you very well.” Now fill out a second Pyramid Assessment *from that second-position perspective*
 How does that compare to your first Assessment?
 What insights or awareness does this give you?

5) *Fifth analysis*: Another level of analysis that you can use is that of contexts. If you use a specific context: work and career, home, relationship, hobby, sports, leadership, management, etc., then what new or different information emerges?
 What contexts are important to you? Identify one and fill out the Needs Analysis again using that context.
 What new awarenesses or insights does this elicit for you?

Self-Actualization Assessment Scale

Developed by Dr L.Michael Hall & Tim Goodenough

Meta Needs

- Cognitive needs: to know, understand, learn
- Contribution needs: to make a difference
- Conative needs: to choose your unique way of life
- Love needs: to care and extend yourself to others
- Truth needs: to know what is true, real, and authentic
- Aesthetic needs: to see, enjoy, and create beauty
- Expressive needs: to be and express your best self

Self

- Importance of your voice and opinion
- Honor and Dignity from colleagues
- Sense of Respect for Achievements
- Sense of Human dignity / Value as Person

Social

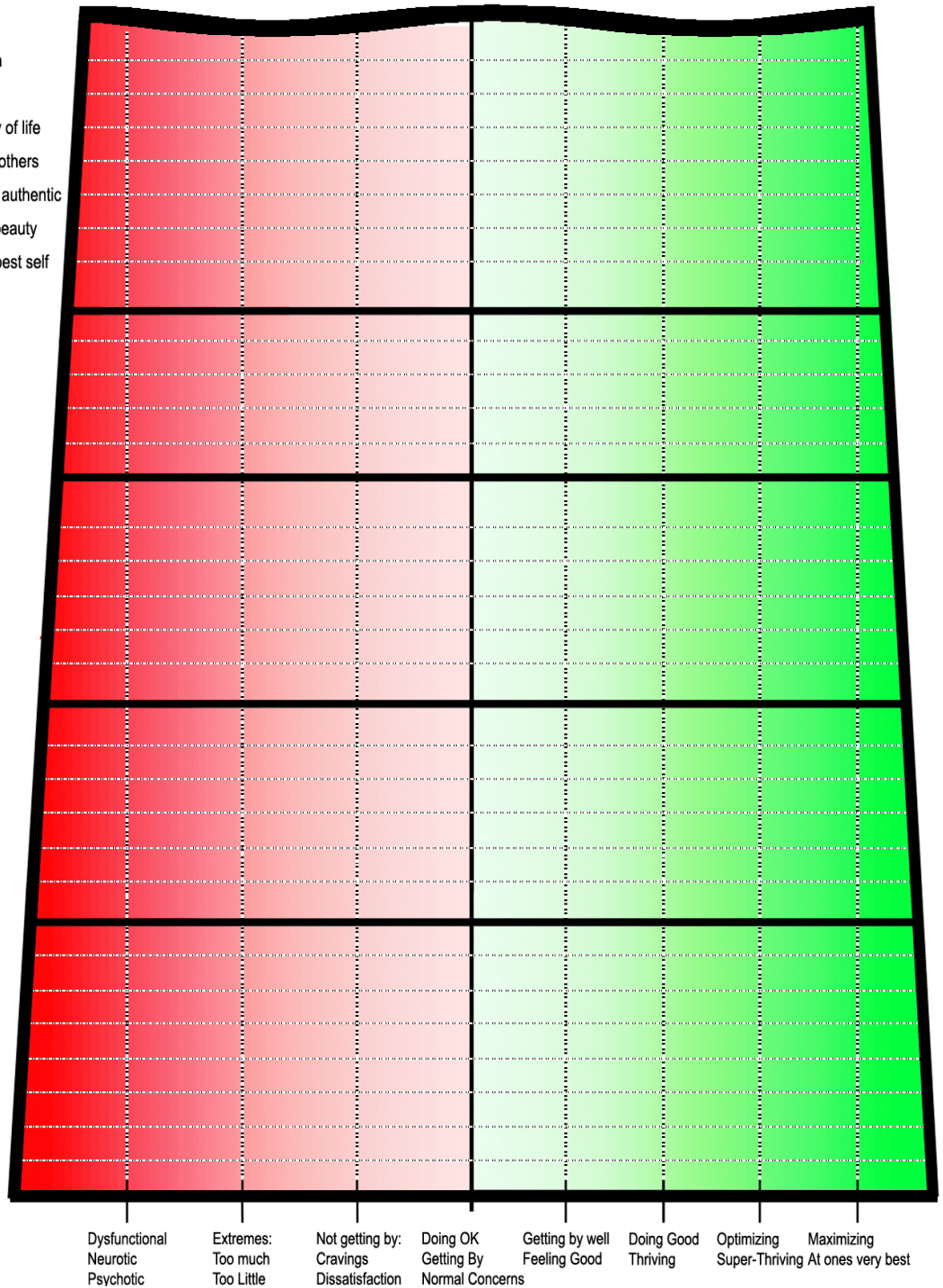
- Group Acceptance / Connection
- Bonding with Partner / Lover
- Bonding with Significant People
- Love / Affection
- Social connection: Friends / companions

Safety

- Sense of Control: Personal Power/ efficacy
- Sense of Order / Structure
- Stability in Life
- Career / Job Safety
- Physical / Personal Safety

Survival

- Money
- Sex
- Exercise
- Vitality
- Weight Management
- Food
- Sleep



Some Background for Understanding the Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow organized human *needs* using a hierarchical structure that is known as the Hierarchy of Needs. These include the following. The first group of four are the lower needs, the animal needs—the higher intelligent animals have these needs as we do. These are driven by *deficiency*—by lack. When you do not adequately gratify them, the deficiency creates energy, motivation, emotions, etc. leading to coping behaviors. When they are gratified, the drive goes away. The higher needs are the growth needs that make us truly human and are not driven by deficiency at all. The better the gratification, the more the drive grows and increases. These make a person richer, fuller, and more self-actualizing.

- 1) **Survival Needs:** List: food, water, shelter, clothes, money, procreative sex.
- 2) **Safety Needs:** List: physical safety, order, structure, control.
- 3) **Social Needs:** List: love, affection, connection, bonding, part of a group, approval, acceptance.
- 4) **Self Needs:** List: importance, dignity, value, worth, respect, status, honor.
- 5) **Self-Actualization Needs:** excellence, exploration, contribution, legacy, justice, fairness, democracy, wonder, etc.

Exploring Human Needs

After you have filled out the *Pyramid Assessment Tool*, you can use it to explore in more depth your needs or the needs of a client.

1) *Health and Vitality.* Identify the health and vitality of each need: What level of health and level of vitality do you feel with regard to this need?

- 1) How strong is your need or drive for X? 0 to 10, how intense?
- 2) Is the drive or need at a level that you can handle? How dominating is it?
- 3) How often do you think about your drive/ need? (Hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
- 4) Are any of the needs that stress you? How much stress does it create for you?
- 5) Does the way you gratify the need create a leash? How does it leash you and prevent you from reaching your higher potentials?
- 6) What activates the drive or need in you? How does it get amplified?
- 7) How do you experience it?
- 8) Are your coping skills able to effectively gratify your needs and leave you with energy and vitality for the purpose of your life?

2) *Meanings:* Identify the meanings informing and governing each need:

- 1) What do you think about need X? [X being any of the needs]
- 2) What do you believe about the need and what do you believe about your coping behaviors?
- 3) What is your criteria and standards for making the evaluation about it that you did?
- 4) Do you experience or seek to experience “the meaning of life” through any of the lower needs? If so, which one? (Example, money, status, friends, acceptance, etc.)
- 5) At what level do you find yourself most frustrated?
- 6) What need level do you feel stuck at? Which seems to prevent you from going after your dream and unleashing your highest and best?

3) *Semantic over-loading*. Identify if there is any semantic overloading of meaning creating distortions of the need:

- 1) Is there any need that you have given *too much meaning*? Too much importance? If so, which one?
- 2) Is there any need that you have given *too little meaning*? If so, which one?
- 3) Do you have any limiting beliefs about that need? Has anyone suggest that you might?
- 4) How much of your mental and emotional time do you think about that need?
- 5) Do you engage in psycho-coping behaviors? (Psycho-eating, psycho-spending, psycho-sexing, psycho-saving, etc.)
- 6) Are you facing any negative behavior consequences from your eating, exercising, earning, saving, relating, etc.? (example: health problems, relationship, career problems)
- 7) What happens to your needs under some/moderate stress?
- 8) What happens to your needs under major stress?

4) *Contexts*: Explore the semantic environment around the need:

- 1) What are your meanings and beliefs about the context of any given need?
- 2) In what contexts do you thrive?
- 3) In which contexts do you just get by and need more effective ways of coping?
- 4) In which contexts do you struggle to even get by meeting your needs?

5) *Skills*: Explore your skills for gratifying (satisfying) the needs:

- 1) With any given need, how do you gratify this need? How else?
- 2) How effective are you in these coping skills?
- 3) Which skills need improving or changing? Which are excellent?
- 4) How extensive is your repertoire of skills for gratifying any given need?
- 5) What are your very best skills in meeting your needs?
- 6) How often do you use your coping skills to satisfy the drive or need? How often do you forget to use them?

6) *Peak Experiences*:

- 1) Have you and do you still hear your true voice? What is it? What message summarizes the highest value and vision in you?
- 2) Do you express your true voice? How true are you to your inner calling?
- 3) How often do you experience peak experiences? (Daily, weekly, monthly)
- 4) What are your five highest self-actualizing needs?
- 5) What do you feel that you were born to do? How much have you actualized that today?
- 6) Now that you know your strengths and resources for unleashing potentials, what does that open up for you?
- 7) How else could you use your strengths to unleash more potentials?

End Notes

1) You can find Maslow's best work in *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1965) and *Motivation and Personality* (1954; 1970). And you can find the Neuro-Semantic models that have extended and expanded Maslow's work in *Unleashed!* (2007), *Self-Actualization Psychology* (2008), and *Unleashing Leadership* (2009).

Also see www.self-actualizing.org. Neuro-Semantic trainers and coaches (Meta-Coaches) are part of a new Human Potential Movement focused on *actualizing excellence in individuals and organizations*. See www.neurosemantics.com.

2) The Neuro-Semantic models that expand and extend Maslow's original work are the following.

The Self-Actualization Quadrants: Based on the axes of meaning and performance.

The Matrix Embedded Pyramid of Needs: Based on the hierarchy of needs and the Matrix Model of Neuro-Semantics (2002). This turns the pyramid into a volcano of energy enabling a person to find and actualize his or her highest and best.

The Self-Actualization Matrix: A matrix of meaning frames that develops self-actualization in terms of its meaning, intention, and state as well as self-actualization for one's identity (self), capacities (powers), relationships (others), time, in different domains (world).

3) The Hall / Goodenough Self-Actualization Scale for Needs Assessment is designed for as a tool for Meta-Coaches, a tool for identifying where a person is strong and skilled in meeting the basic human needs that drive us and where a person may need coaching. The Scale enables you to identify areas that will facilitate the unleashing of potentials.