



Self-Actualization

The Science of Resilience

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Definition

Personal growth and the experience of reaching our full potential can be useful when facing adversities and building resilience. Personal growth, which is also called psychological transformation or self-actualization, is a phenomenon focused on developing one's psychological growth (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983). It involves "working on self, one's emotional development, internal change and struggle, and the methods of bringing change in oneself" (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991, p. 55). Senge (1994) called "a discipline of personal growth and learning" as personal mastery (p. 25). Dhiman (2007) expands the definition into "a quest for finding authenticity, meaning, and fulfillment in one's life, both in the personal and professional realm" (p.25). Johnston (2003) argues that the primary goal of personal growth is self-actualization, which manifests as wanting *to* "be more" rather than to "have more" (Johnston, 2003, p. 26).

It is difficult to define self-actualization as it is an abstract concept. Ford (1991) cited Rogers's (1959) definition of actualizing tendency as:

The inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capacities in ways which serve to maintain or enhance the organism... [this tendency involves] development toward autonomy and away from heteronomy, or control by external forces... It should be noted that this basic actualizing tendency is the only motive which is postulated in this theoretical system. (p. 104)

Maslow and Lewis (1987) defined it as "people desire for self-fulfillment, namely, the tendency for them to become actualized in what they are potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is" (p.22). It is experienced in a "fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption" (Maslow, 1965, p. 111). Taormina and Gao (2013) argue that Maslow's definition is unclear and, instead, define self-actualization as "the process of a person becoming what he or she really and uniquely, that is, idiosyncratically, is (where idiosyncratic refers to 'individual disposition; a peculiarity of constitution or temperament particular to a person')" (p. 160).

Self-actualization is an ongoing process. Every single growth choice moves a person closer to actualization (Maslow, 1965). It shares similar meaning with other concepts, such as self-realization, and self-fulfilment (Das, 1989; Maksimenko & Serdiuk, 2016). Maksimenko and Serdiuk (2016) define self-realization as "the process of actualization and implementation of individuality of a person, his/her internal positive and creative pursuit of development, psychological maturity and competence" (p. 93). Self-realization is rooted in Eastern philosophy and focuses on knowledge and skills cultivation throughout life (Das, 1989). Self-actualization and self-realization both involve the same process. Both aim for the continuous growth of a person. However, while self-actualization focuses on one's inner subjective level of personal

potentials, self-realization focuses on the external and practical manifestations of the drive on one's behaviour and activities (Maksimenko & Serdiuk, 2016).

Researchers identified wisdom as an ultimate trait of actualized individuals (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Ardel, 2003; Stutler, 2011). Westrate and Glück (2017) define wisdom as “a body of experience-based knowledge about the fundamental issues of human life that is both broad and deep, and implicit and explicit” (p. 800). Wisdom involves an expression of one's cognitive, affective, and reflective resources in life (Ardelt, 2003). Self-reflections support growth in terms of wisdom through exploring previous experiences (Westrate & Glück, 2017).

Theories of Personal growth and Self-actualization

Brennan and Piechowski (1991) use Dabrowski's theory of emotional development to explain the progress of personal growth. According to Dabrowski's theory, the transformation is gradual, in which the lower-level structure is replaced by a higher one. The five levels of Dabrowski's theory of emotional development are (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991):

1. Level 1: not much of inner psychic life, level 1 is characterized by “self-serving motivations, self-protectiveness, manipulation, conflict with others, possessiveness, superficial attachments, and lack of other's emotions” (p. 45).
2. Level 2: the beginning of psychic milieu shows in the form of inner fragmentation, switching sides, and submission to mainstream values. At this level, personal growth is finding one's sense of self.
3. Level 3: a realization that the self is vulnerable yet autonomous, which creates internal conflict. Personal growth happens in the form of moral questions and conflicts.
4. Level 4: a person becomes what Maslow defined as self-actualized, with a sense of autonomy and an internal hierarchy of values (p. 46).
5. Level 5: a person find harmony and become *selfless*, with their focus on humanity.

Three areas of personal growth are intellectual growth, spiritual growth, and creative expression. Personal growth is characterized by greater flexibility, creativity, openness, self-acceptance, and the feeling of responsibility in contributing to the growth of others (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983; Brennan & Piechowski, 1991) [See our write-ups on Flexibility and Creativity]. Personal growth cultivates life talents or *excellences*. This transformation leads toward self-actualization and greater satisfaction in life (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983).

Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow studied the foundation of self-actualization at around the same time. Both argue that living organisms have tendencies influenced by their environment to improve themselves and express their potential. Rogers' theory of personality sees the actualization tendency as one basic motive of a human being. Rogers argued that experiences are subjective phenomena that construct realities for individuals and determine their behaviour. Individuals' experiences are valued positively or negatively. The need for

positive regard influences a person's behaviour and their internalized self-worth. An individual self-actualizes when they start developing their autonomy and shift away from the influence of external forces (Rogers, 1963). In his [1959/1963] works, Rogers explains that self-actualization is a subsystem of mastering one's tendency or actualization (Ford, 1991).

Malsow (1970) posited a motivational theory (Maslow's theory of needs) that aims toward self-actualization. The five stages of needs are: (1) the physiological needs (e.g. water, food, rest); (2) the security and safety needs; (3) the belongingness and love needs (e.g. friends, intimate relationships); (4) the esteem needs; and (5) self-actualization. Self-actualized people contribute to and are devoted to a cause outside their own, or their calling, as a way to find *being values* in life (Maslow, 1965). Maslow (1967) listed fifteen *being values* or meta-needs: truth, goodness, beauty, unity and wholeness, dichotomy-transcendence, aliveness/process, uniqueness, perfection and necessity, completion/finality, justice, order, simplicity, richness/totality/comprehensiveness, effortless, playfulness, self-sufficiency, and meaningfulness. Maslow also defined the concepts of D-Needs (deficiency needs), which is the motivation for the first four needs, and B-needs (being-needs), or growth needs, that push people to self-actualize by growing, expressing themselves, and opening themselves to new possibilities. B-needs are actualized when the deficiencies have been satisfied. B-needs motivates people to gain *being values* (Maslow, 1970). Below are fifteen characteristics of self-actualized people (Maslow, 1970):

- Efficiently and fully accept reality and can handle uncertainty
- Can appreciate and accept other people and themselves as they are
- Think and act simply, spontaneously, and are not easily affected
- Focus on the problem and are not self-centred
- Have a good, atypical sense of humour
- Perceiving life objectively
- Highly creative
- Resistant to enculturation
- Identify with all mankind and have concerns for humanity
- Have a deep appreciation of daily life experiences
- Engage in strong interpersonal relationships with a few people
- Experience peak, transcendental experience
- Have a sense of detachment and a need for privacy
- Are democratic
- Have strong ethical and moral values

Self-actualizers also tend to be open to experience and self-reference (Beaumont, 2009).

Heylighen (1992) argues that to satisfy one's needs, a person has to be competent (materially, cognitively, and subjectively). However, Maslow's theory lacks the fundamental factors of temporal factor and cognition. Therefore, Heylighen (1992) redefined self-

actualization as “the perceived competence to solve these basic problems in due time, where the required time depends on the (subjective) urgency of the need” (p. 50). The specific time a need is fulfilled is crucial for constructing an intelligent, goal-directed action theoretical model.

From a different point of view, Krems and colleagues (2017) also made an argument regarding Maslow’s theory of self-actualization. They propose that self-actualization is not a person’s distinctive final drive, but a benefit experienced when pursuing the fundamental motive of status-seeking and esteem. Pursuing self-actualization is one of the ways to fulfill biological and social outcomes. Krems and colleagues (2017) also found that life history (e.g. age, sex, relationships, and parenting status) influences a person’s view on self-actualization. For example, men, especially young ones, tend to pursue self-actualization with the pursuit of social standing and esteem as their motive. Other factors that influence self-actualizing tendencies are racial/ ethnic identity and cultural competence (Atkinson, 2004; Kim & Omizo, 2006).

Taormina and Gao (2013) extend Maslow’s (1987) definition of self-actualization that they perceive as subjective, idealized, and more oriented toward something outside oneself instead of focusing on one’s inherent values. They explain that self-actualizing (being what a person really wants to be) needs to focus on satisfying the needs and less on the outside world. After fulfilling basic needs, a person can work on fulfilling the needs of psychological safety and security. Once a person feels safe and secure, they can focus on satisfying the belongingness needs. Fulfilling belongingness involves social interactions that bring out self-esteem. As a part of a group, one also needs esteem from others. Self-actualization can be realized after a person has fulfilled their esteem needs and found a place among other people (Taormina & Gao, 2013).

People who have satisfactions in all five needs have better overall well-being and positive affects (Taormina and Gao, 2013). Fulfilling the esteem needs depends on emotional support from the family, personal values (traditions), and anxiety/worry. The more anxious a person is, the less likely they are going to be satisfied. Family members foster safety and security, love, emotional and physiological supports, and a sense of belonging for children. These feelings engender self-esteem and improve children’s social competence. By following ideas that society perceives as significant, a person can get the supports needed to meet their self-actualization needs. This idea came from collectivist cultures, which tend to see Maslow’s (1965) theory that emphasized listening to the self as more individualistic and unhealthy (Francis, 1992). However, Greene and Burke (2007) argue that the goal of self-actualization is to be a “better” self by being self-less-actualization. They explain that the idea of self-actualization is to move one’s focus and concern to other people and actualize their selfless self. Maslow’s concept of self-actualization correlates with Kohlberg’s (1981) post-conventional morality cycle (D’souza & Gurin, 2016). D’souza and Gurin (2016) explain that self-actualization and the post-conventional morality cycle both focus on selfless actions and improvements of social contracts and universal morality principles.

Self-actualizers get personal satisfaction from working on personal growth and social improvements that lead to a state of excellent (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Stutler, 2011). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) explain that peak experience that fosters excellence, or what Maslow defined as self-actualization, involves the most positive human trait: wisdom. They define wisdom as “an expert knowledge system concerning the fundamental pragmatic issues of existence” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 11). Wisdom encompasses transformations in three dimensions of life: the cognitive, the reflective, and the affective (Ardelt, 2003). Wisdom utilizes both cognition and motivation for the benefit of individual and collective excellence. Self-reflections foster growth of wisdom through explorations of one’s experiences (Westrate & Glück, 2017).

Self-actualization, or advanced self-development, is one of the two components of personal wisdom, with self-transcendence as the other component. Self-transcendence is a person’s ability to see past themselves with a broader sense of meanings and connectedness to the world. Some researchers see self-transcendence as an outcome of self-actualization. Both self-actualization and self-transcendence involve higher cognition, deeper self-reflection and insights, and openness, which are the attributes and sources of wisdom (Beaumont, 2009; Balter & Staudinger, 2000).

All theories of positive functioning above reflect changes in wellness over time. Ryff and Keyes (1995) identify six multidimensional models of well-being that includes components of positive psychological functioning: “positive evaluations of oneself and one’s past life (Self-Acceptance), a sense of continued growth and development as a person (Personal Growth), the belief that one’s life is purposeful and meaningful (Purpose in Life), the possession of quality relations with others (Positive Relations With Others), the capacity to manage effectively one’s life and surrounding world (Environmental Mastery), and a sense of self-determination (Autonomy)” (p. 720). They found that purpose in life and personal growth components decline with older age while environmental mastery and autonomy improve with age. They also found a difference in aspects of positive functioning across gender. Richardson & Waite (2002) explain that self-actualization, wisdom, and altruistic behaviours influence resilience [see our write-up on Altruism for more on its relationship to resilience].

Relationship to Resilience

A person’s skills, traits, beliefs, and attitudes work as internal development resources when facing adversities (Porter et al., 2019). Self-actualizing, or continuous personal growth works as a factor in building resilience (Lewis, 2012). Palmer (1999) relates Maslow’s self-actualizing behaviours with flourishing resilience, in which an individual steadily grows and maintains relationships with their environment. The individual continues to utilize effective cognitive and behavioural coping strategies that integrate their skills while maintaining reciprocity with their environment. A person with flourishing resilience has a sense of

coherence in life and a steady life force (Palmer, 1999). Joseph and Linley (2005) explain three facets of growth in adversity: actualizing the self (self-improvements), enhanced collective-self, and changes in life philosophy, which all lead to better psychological well-being.

Actualizing the Self

Tendencies for continuous improvements influence a person's sense of responsibility to aspire and overcome adversities. Malanowski and Wood (1984) found that self-actualized teachers were less likely to experience burnout at school. Teachers who had fulfilled their needs were less pressured and had better emotional intelligence. Self-actualization also helps students with a disability in coping with difficulties at school. Students with a disability who are aware of their situation and self-actualize at school show significant improvements, reflected in their grades, their decision-making autonomy, and freedom in expressing themselves (Sebag, 2010).

Self-actualizers' competence also helps them in choosing better coping strategies to overcome stress (Maksimenko & Serdiuk, 2016). Pursuing personal goals is associated with happiness and self-realization. For example, self-realization, in the form of pursuing academic goals, helps university students face academic stress. Self-realizers utilize adaptive coping strategies, such as information-oriented style coping, and are less likely to use avoidant coping in stressful events. Higher stress levels are related to psychological and physical symptoms (Miquelon & Vallerand, 2006; Beaumont, 2009). Self-actualizers are able to transcend and find meanings in the situation. They thrive in challenges and face them with wisdom, thus gaining subjective happiness in a stressful situation (Beaumont, 2009).

Forgiveness, gratitude, and an enhanced spirituality from cognitive improvement help people to cope with life stressors. For example, chronic pain patients and physicians having made a serious mistake found that finding wisdom helps them to cope with their situation (Plews-Ogan et al., 2019). Plews-Ogan et al. (2013) found that actively choosing to make positive improvements help physicians cope with having a serious mistake. Physicians who recognized the impacts of the situation, learned about their mistakes, accepted ambiguity in life, and found meanings in their circumstances actualized themselves and were better able to recover from the stress. Wisdom, in the form of personal strength, a sense of humility, compassion, and openness to new experiences, improved the physicians' adaptive coping strategies and prevented them from using negative coping. For example, it stopped them from engaging substance abuse or quitting their careers as their coping strategies.

Pursuing personal growth and professional ambitions helps child who experience commercial child sexual exploitations face their exploitation and recovering from the trauma. Realizing their potential builds their strength and resilience to survive and helps them in transitioning from being victims to being survivors (Laser-Maira et al., 2019). Self-actualization through empowerment programs and volunteerism can help youths to discover, evaluate, and improve their resources to integrate into society (Lo et al., 2009). Vocational training to

improve unemployed youths' work skills gives them the motivation to find employment (Ngai, Cheung and Yuan, 2016).

Enhanced Collective-self

Collective self-improvement (e.g. expressing compassion and sympathy to others) helps people to cope with life stressors. Reflections and self-examinations can shift the focus from self-centeredness, increase empathy, and engender compassion (Plews-Ogan et al., 2019). Acceptance of one's vulnerability and a willingness to find support and to give social support for others also improves one's ability to recover from a traumatic experience and face future events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). For example, self-actualization helped South Asian women migrants who experienced intimate partner violence find their true potential. Living in a new country fostered critical awareness of the self and their collective-self; it helped them realize their potential, autonomy, and freedom. They perceived their situation as a problem they need to solve and decided to leave their spouses (Ahmad et al., 2013). Ahmad et al. (2013) found that to cope with their situation, the women focused on self-actualization by staying busy through work, volunteering, hobbies, and life-building skills training. They also focused on connecting with the community and working with community organizations to stop transgenerational abuse. These activities show the transformation in their collective self.

Plews-Ogan et al. (2013) found that physicians who made a serious mistake cope with the experience through sharing it in a support group and helping others with similar experiences. Doing selfless actions and shifting the focus from themselves gave them positive meanings of the experience and of their life, which helped them to cope and heal. The same resilience is found in adults that survived daily violence as children (Palmer, 1999) and commercial child sexual exploitation survivors (Laser-Maira et al., 2019). Their continuous growth and willingness to be a better person built the strengths and resilience they needed to heal from their traumas. They found stability through education, training, and empowerment programs. These activities helped them build meaningful relationships with significant others and with people from their community. Helping others with similar experience gave them a new self-perspective and motivation (Laser-Maira et al., 2019). By maintaining continuous self-improvement and doing meaningful activities, they found a sense of life, values, and meanings (Palmer, 1999).

Change in Life Philosophy

Self-actualization, in the form of acceptance and finding meanings in an experience, helps people in adversities. In adversities, a person who realizes their strengths and is able to actualize themselves can grow and flourish (Webster & Deng, 2014). Reflections, self-examinations, and cognitive growth help a person in finding a deeper truth and comprehending the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and existential aspects of life (Plews-Ogan et al., 2019). Finding meanings and goals fosters optimism, self-esteem, and hope to cope with a stressful situation (Webster & Deng, 2014). For example, Plews-Ogan et al. (2019) found that

chronic pain patients who had better life appreciation were also better at achieving relief from pain, which in turn gave them better appreciation in life, creating a reinforcing cycle. Meaning in life engenders a feeling of gratitude towards life itself that helped these patients heal, improved their sleep, and helped them feel better about themselves.

Self-actualization, such as in the form of racial storytelling, has been found to help scholars of colour confront their racial haunting and empower them with freedom and self-liberation. Revisiting memories and analyzing the issues provides them with the category of identities influenced by psychosocial and discursive relations. Self-actualization rebuilds their view of societal discourses, unjust policies, and racism (Johnson, 2017).

Maslow pointed out that confrontations and tragedy often trigger self-actualization (Joseph & Butler, 2010). Traumas trigger self-evaluations of one's coping ability; facing difficulties builds individuals' strength and resilience to face future events. People who change their views in life to be more positive are better at understanding their trauma and have a better sense of control in their life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). For example, Sutler (2011) found that powerful imaginations and unusual intellect in gifted girls triggered their need to grow and self-actualize. The girls in this study faced adversities from different traumas and stress that triggered positive disintegration. They chose different books from what other girls were reading, critically analyzed them, and apply the information to their lived experience. Sometimes the questions these girls asked and their need to find answers were too intense and were misunderstood by their teacher. The disequilibrium of not understanding challenged them to find the answers and brought them joy. Having alone time to find and frame problems in books and real-life provided them with the opportunities to engage in intellectual, imaginal, and emotional domains. This activity built their resilience, protected them from enculturation, gave them a sense of autonomy, and made them better decision-makers. They learned to identify injustice and fairness in the world and found a split between what is and what ought to be. They acknowledged their imperfection and showed acceptance towards situations while still trying to improve them. Their emotional intelligence and intellectual and imaginal curiosity helped them to find kinship with humankind. Critical inquiry of the world and their life and comparing it to the fiction books they read provided the girls with peak and flow moments (Stutler, 2011).

Improving

Maslow (1965; 1971) offered some ways for people to self-actualize:

- Engage in a positive, selfless moment or activities where people devote themselves fully to a moment and the experience of it.
- Life is a process of choice. "Make the growth choice instead of the fear choice a dozen times a day to move a dozen times a day toward self-actualization" (Maslow, 1971, p. 111).

- Acknowledge and be true to yourself, for example by listening to yourself and not social cues, authorities, or traditions.
- “When in doubt, be honest rather than not” (Maslow, 1965, p. 112).
- Do the activities above each time a choice comes up and listen to yourself at each moment.
- Self-actualization is not an end state but a process; it means working on and practicing the things you want to do.
- Discover things you do not like to do. Breaking up an illusion and a false notion and identifying things you are not good at is part of identifying and discovering yourself.
- Identify (alone or with the help of a counsellor) small peak experiences in your life.
- Open up to yourself and find your defence mechanisms. Self-actualization means giving up your defences and re-learning to see meanings in aspects of life.

Greene and Bruke (2007) propose several other options to work beyond Maslow’s ideas in pursuit of self-actualization.

- Learning through art. Art is a positive outlet for expressing people’s feeling.
- Learn to think in and deal with polarities. Realizing that sometimes there is no right way to solve a problem encourages people to find more creative strategies to deal with the problem.
- Provide tools and environments that stimulates autonomy, individuality, and initiative.
- Engage in ethical and spiritual discussions.
- Find meanings of an event and practice making sense of those meanings by connecting multiple meanings.
- Accept the reality and work on your emotional intelligence.
- Be a role model.
- Fulfill lower-level needs and be aware that they are important for achieving self-actualization.

Dhiman (2007) explains that achieving self-mastery is done through an understanding and awareness of a person’s life purpose. Finding meaning in life diminish the sense of inner emptiness or existential vacuum, which can be a source of depression, aggression, and addiction. Each person's life meaning is different. The difference between what one is and what one wants to become is a dynamic that keeps people moving in life. Dhiman (2007) lists three ways of discovering meaning in life based on Victor Frankl’s (1984) work:

- Create and do meaningful activities that requires commitments and your full attention. Accomplishing them will give you a sense of achievements and accomplishment.
- Experience the goodness, truth, and beauty of nature and culture, and loving other people.
- Find the meaning of suffering. Sometimes, sufferings are unavoidable and when it happens, perceive it as a way to transform yourself and the event into positive

experiences and achievements. When suffering is avoidable, then right thing to do would be remove it.

Interventions

The Most Meaningful Thing Exercise

Michael Ray (2004) designed The Most Meaningful Thing Exercise, an exercise to help people discover their highest goal in life. The first thing to do in this exercise is to identify one's highest goal, which is done by:

- Recall and re-live the experience of the most meaningful thing you did during the last week. Try to identify what made the experience meaningful.
- Find the answer to why the experience is meaningful and important to you.
- Then find the reason why the answer to the previous question is so important to you.
- Keep asking the reason why it is important to you on each answer you give until you get a one-word answer.

Ray (2004) explains that the one-word answer is your '*Self*' that has been guiding your choices in life. Then, commit to the highest goal by:

- Live for the highest goal beyond your passion and success. Do not stop at lesser goals.
- Travel your own story. You can create it by paying attention to important moments in your life. Get along with your highest goal and keep improving your highest goal.
- Live with the highest goal. Because everything in the world is a connected system, you can't beat it, you can only join it. And the best way of joining it is to live with heuristics - generalizations or rules of thumb for learning and discovery. Enliven your journey with the "live-withs" - such as Pay Attention, Ask Dumb Questions, See with Your Heart, or Be Ordinary. (p. 14)
- Find true prosperity. Find what makes you feel rich and give you a sense of self-worth. Keep finding the things that will help you through your life, even if it is not easy.
- Turn fears into challenges. Set a goal to beat the fears and turn them into opportunities for personal growth.
- Listen to your heart and treat other people with compassion. See people from different perspectives and build connections with them. Your networks will help you to reach your highest goal.
- Experience a dynamic balance by organizing your life and also use intuitive decision-making.
- Become a leader that inspires creativity and achievements in others. (Ray, 2004)

Resilience Education

Richardson and Waite (2002) built a program that aims to help foster a drive to pursue self-actualization, altruism, wisdom, and spiritual harmony. This program involves a five-day progressive training held over several weeks (around five weeks) and targets adult participants. The objective of the program is to create experiences that help participants identify, nurture, and utilize their resources and strength for daily activities and coping.

1. *Discovering personal-innate resilience* (Day-1): introduces the concept of resilience from various perspectives (psychology, collective unconsciousness, philosophy, theology, biology, etc.) to the participants. Participants explore their self-nurturing energy and utilize it to improve their creativity, social interaction, and overall daily life. Participants also explore their moral values and are encouraged to see from the outside of their moral values. It aims to generate a feeling of freedom, self-esteem, and control. They answer the question “who are you at the very core of life” to help them identify their strengths, potentials, and talents.
2. *The path with heart* (Day-2): participants learn about mind-body connections, how to control their emotions, identify their skills, and utilize them in the resilience process for daily challenges. Participants then learn about finding meanings in disruptions, taking chances, and how to deal with undesirable behaviours to obtain wisdom.
3. *Personal resilience skills* (Day-3): assesses participants’ readiness for life changes and explores ways to enhanced creativity.
4. *Building constructive relationships* (Day-4): participants learn the foundations of positive relationships: trust and trustworthiness, communication, looking past difficulties, and moral values. It aims to improve participants’ relationships with their family and community members.
5. *Resilient relationships* (Day-5): participants learn to engage with other people in their life to make an impact upon their world. Participants work in groups and engage in common cause, share their worldview, and explore each others’ resources for decision-making and team-building (Richardson & Waite, 2002).

After the program, participants reported a better sense of control and peacefulness in facing life challenges, rediscovery of a dream, hope, and life purposes, a decrease of fear, and better compassion to other people (Richardson and Waite, 2002).

Art Therapy

Eaton et al. (2007) reviewed the efficacy of art therapy and found self-actualization as one of the supported outcomes. The unstructured and unconstrained concept of art therapy provides a person with the temporal freedom to self-actualize (Eaton et al., 2007). Manheim (1998) analysed the relationship between a three-dimension art experience and personal growth and development. A three-dimensional artwork provides a surface, volume, and mass as tangible qualities that stimulate thinking and flexibility. After an 8-week course, students

reported self-actualizing creativity and life enhancement. They experienced growth through openness to new experiences and better emotional well-being. Reynolds (2000, 2002) analyzed the effect of art therapy on women with chronic/ fluctuating depression and women with chronic diseases. She found that art therapy (e.g. needlecraft) promoted self-actualization and helped them manage their depression or cope with their illness. Needlecrafts gave them a meaningful escape from life stress, had a calming effect on them, and improved their perceived self-control and autonomy. The activity built their self-esteem by giving them evidence of mastery, achievements, and a tool to express their creativity. The art itself symbolizes their suffering and transformation to a new positive, stronger person (Reynolds, 2000; Reynolds, 2002).

Assessment

The Measure of Actualization Potential (MAP; Lefrancois et al., 1998; Leclerc et al., 1999; Appendix A)

- 27 sentence-completion items describing characteristics of self-actualizing individuals: openness to experience (17 items) and self-reference (10 items)
- Each item is measured on 5-point scales (1=*very little*, 2= *a little*, 3=*somewhat*, 4=*very much*, 5=*enormously*) with relevant descriptors for each of them
- The final score of the MAP is between 1 to 5 from adding the item scores and then divide them by the number of valid responses
- Cronbach's alpha: .87

The Five Need Satisfaction Measure (Taormina & Gao, 2013)

- Consists of six components: satisfaction of the five hierarchical needs, anxiety/worry, family emotional support, life satisfaction, traditional values, and demographic
- The first four needs measurements consist of 15 statements each, which are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=*completely unsatisfied* to 5=*completely satisfied*
- The self-actualization measurement consists of 12 items that are measured on a 5-point agree-disagree scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 5=*strongly agree*; see Appendix B for the Self-Actualization questionnaire components)
- Cronbach's alpha: .81 for physiological needs; .87 for safety-security; .90 for belongingness; .91 for esteem; and .86 for self-actualization

The Short Index of Self-Actualization (Jones & Crandall, 1986; see Appendix C)

- A 15-item scale for measuring an index of self-actualization
- It is measured on a four-point scale (*agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and disagree*)

- Does not detect differences based on need deficiencies (e.g. college students vs homeless groups) (Sumerlin & Bundrick, 1996)
- Cronbach's alpha: .65

Revised Brief Index of Self-Actualization (Sumerlin & Bundrick, 1998; Appendix D)

- A 32-item measurement with four factors: core self-actualization, autonomy, openness to experience, comfort with solitude
- Measured on a 6-point scale ranging from 1=*strongly agree* to 6=*strongly disagree*
- Cronbach's alpha: .86

The Three-dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS; Ardel, 2003)

- A 39-items scale consisting of three dimensions of wisdom: the cognitive (14 items), the reflective (12 items), and the affective (13 items)
- Wisdom is viewed as the transformation of the cognitive, reflective, and affective dimensions of life
- Items are divided into two groups: Items that included the word *I*, *me*, or *my* are measured on a 5-point scale (1=*definitely true of myself* to 5=*not true of myself*); all others are measured on a 5-point scale (1=*strongly agree* to 5=*strongly disagree*)
- Cronbach's alpha: the cognitive dimension (.78 and .85), the reflective dimension (.75 and .71), and the affective dimensions (.74 and .72)

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Appendix A: The Measure of Actualization of Potential

Leclerc et al. (1999)

1. I am a person who values him/ herself _____
very little a little somewhat very much enormously
2. I can express my emotions in any circumstances _____
with great difficulty with difficulty somewhat easily easily very easily
3. I can predict my reactions _____
very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
4. I believe _____ that life is good for me.
very little a little somewhat strongly very strongly
5. I adapt to change _____
with great difficulty with difficulty somewhat easily easily very easily
6. To know my worth, I base myself _____ on what other people think.
very little a little somewhat very much enormously
7. Whatever happens to me, I trust my feelings _____
Very little a little somewhat very much enormously
8. I feel I am _____ responsible for my life
hardly at all not very somewhat very extremely
9. For me, the present moment counts _____
very little a little somewhat very much enormously
10. I know my strengths and limitations _____
very little a little somewhat very well extremely well
11. I am inclined to follow other people's example _____
Very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
12. I listen to my emotions _____
very little a little somewhat very much enormously
13. I _____ try to put myself in other people's shoes in order to understand them.
very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
14. I believe _____ that people are basically good.
very little a little somewhat strongly very strongly
15. I can act spontaneously without losing control _____
with great difficulty with difficulty somewhat easily easily very easily
16. I insist on making my own decisions _____
very little a little somewhat very much enormously
17. I _____ share my joys and sorrows with a confidant.
very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
18. When thinking about my past life, I _____ suddenly understand why certain things happened.
very rarely rarely sometimes often very often

19. I _____ give my life meaning by the way I look at things.
 very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
20. I usually get over major setbacks _____
 with great difficulty with difficulty somewhat easily easily very easily
21. Criticism _____ prevents me from doing what I feel like doing.
 very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
22. When I am with other people, I _____ show the real me.
 very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
23. I am _____ inclined to get involved in important causes.
 hardly at all not very somewhat very extremely
24. I succeed _____ at giving meaning to life.
 With great difficulties with difficulty somewhat easily easily very easily
25. In difficult situations, I _____ remain true to myself.
 Very rarely rarely sometimes often very often
26. I express my opinions _____
 with great difficulty with difficulty somewhat easily easily very easily
27. I can be interested in other people's problems without thinking about my own _____.
 with great difficulty with difficulty somewhat easily easily very easily

Appendix B: The Five Need Satisfaction Measures: Self-Actualization Satisfaction Scale

Taormina & Gao (2013, p. 117)

“How much do you agree or disagree that the following statements describe you:”

	1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>	2 <i>disagree</i>	3 <i>Neutral</i>	4 <i>agree</i>	5 <i>Strongly agree</i>
I am totally comfortable with all facets of my personality					
I feel that I am completely self-fulfilled					
I am now being the person I always wanted to be					
I am finally realizing all of my innermost desires					
I indulge myself as much as I want					
I am now enjoying everything I ever wanted from my life					
I completely accept all aspects of myself					
My actions are always according to my own values					
I am living my life the way I want					
I do the things I like to do whenever I want					
I am actually living up to all my capabilities					
I am living my life to the fullest					

Appendix C: The Short Index of Self-Actualization

Jones & Crandall (1986)

No.		1 <i>Agree</i>	2 <i>Somewhat agree</i>	3 <i>Somewhat disagree</i>	4 <i>Disagree</i>
1	I do not feel ashamed of any of my emotions				
2	I feel I must do what others expect me to do				
3	I believe that people are essentially good and can be trusted				
4	I feel free to be angry at those I love				
5	It is always necessary that others approve of what I do				
6	I don't accept my own weaknesses				
7	I can like people without having to approve of them				
8	I fear failure				
9	I avoid attempts to analyze and simplify complex domains				
10	It is better to be yourself than to be popular				
11	I have no mission in life to which I feel especially dedicated				
12	I can express my feelings even when they may result in undesirable consequences				
13	I do not feel responsible to help anybody				
14	I am bothered by fears of being inadequate				
15	I am loved because I give love				

Note: agreement with 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 15 is scored as self-actualizing; disagreement with the remaining items is scored as self-actualizing

Appendix D: Revised Brief Index of Self-Actualization

Sumerlin & Bundrick (1998)

	1 <i>Strongly agree</i>	2	3	4	5	6 <i>Strongly disagree</i>
I like to be alone with my own thoughts.						
I fear success.						
I find that fear does not keep me from pursuing my goals.						
I do not put off work that would allow me to grow.						
I would prefer to be with my ideas than with my Friends at times.						
I have the strength to face the Future.						
I am a person with lots of curiosity.						
I organize my thinking about the future						
I like my own company.						
I get involved with causes.						
I have a special place that is just for me						
I have difficulty thinking of myself as a prominent person						
I look at a child and wonder what I could learn.						
I try things different ways just to see what happens.						
I think that what I am doing now will benefit humankind.						
I enjoy my solitude						
I enjoy my achievements.						
I dread the responsibility that goes with my own growth.						
I am a good problem solver.						
I know that there is a special contribution for me to make during my lifetime						
I like exploring new ideas.						
I fear that I will not live up to my potential.						
I regret that I am not doing all that I could toward my dreams.						
I prepare for my future.						
I feel uneasy when I am alone.						
I don't know why I work so hard because people are always working against you.						
I am unsure about what I really want.						
I am suspicious about the motives of others						
I am happy						

I am sensitive to the needs of others						
I give of myself to others.						
I question "why" when someone is friendly to me.						



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