

Developing Soft Skills and Personality
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Lecture - 05

Aiming for Excellence: Developing Potential and Self-Actualisation

Hello there. Welcome to the NPTEL mooch course on Developing Soft Skills and Personality. I am Ravichandran from IIT Kanpur so I am introducing the course to you. We are here in the first introductory module, but then slowly I have started introducing you the main concepts of the course also. This is week 1 and this is Module 5. Now in this lecture I am going to focus on making you move towards excellence, and then towards that step I just want to realize your potential, what are your true potentials and I will just give you tips and suggestions for developing your potential.

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Now, before we start like I do in every lecture I just want to make a quick recap of what we did in the last lecture. In the last lecture so I told you that I need not teach you soft skills very explicitly, but implicitly also I been teaching some skills in the past two three lectures and particularly I been teaching something on self management then about emotional regulation and also about time management skills.

Now in the previous one particularly I was focusing on the self management skill set, and then if you look at this skill set there are about hundred of them and many more, but

then I focused on 9 core important self management skill set which are; the first one self-awareness, self confidence, mind-set particularly; growth mind-set and fixed mind-set, optimistic mind-set and then pessimistic mind-set, emotional balance stress healing, coping with failure patience, tolerance and stress shoddiness, perceptiveness and last but not the least spiritually intelligent.

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The slide is titled "Towards Excellence" and contains the following text:

- Excellence is an outstanding feature; possessing good qualities in high degree.
- Some are gifted with many talents and excel in many fields.
- Are you confident that you are excellent in any one aspect of your life or career?
- How do you rate yourself? How do people rate you? Poor, Average, Above Average, Good, Very Good, Outstanding/Excellent?
- If you want to excel in something, what do you need? Do you have it in you?
- Identify 5 traits in you that will certainly take you to excellence such as: Focused, strong will-power, highly determined, very optimistic, dedicated, punctual, etc.
- Are there other traits pulling you down from achieving excellence?
- Laziness, postponement, addictions (drbg, TV, internet), low self-esteem, self-doubts, negative thinking, etc.

As a said I will be spending more time elaborately on these ones. Currently for this particular module and this particular lecture I just want to focus on developing your excellence. Now then you have to move towards excellence what are the things that you will keep in mind. First what is excellence? Excellence is an outstanding feature it is indicating that your possessing good qualities in high degree.

Now, some individuals are very different they are multi talented and they are excellent in many aspects of life, whether it is sports or academics or in business or in personal life every where some people are quite excellent, but all individuals or excellent at least on field or other. Now it is high time that you ask the question what is it that you are so excellently doing if people are talking about you and then they say very good things about you, they identify you as a very outstanding person in what aspect of your life, where will they say that you are really excellent, you are an outstanding person or you are an outstanding student or you are an outstanding teacher, an outstanding doctor, an excellent engineer, an excellent social worker, an excellent player such as you could

been excellent cricketer, excellent swimmer. So, where are you excelling? Now identify at least one core area where people will say that you are excellent.

And then if you have if you are just identifying that you also ask about yourself and then try to rate how would you rate yourself as a person in an overall sense. And then how somebody rates you the way they look at you, the way they look at your work. Would they call you like poor, average, above average or good, very good, excellent, outstanding, distinguished? So, how would they classify you? And in some cases they think that you are really distinguished, but then in your opinion you think that you are not really that distinguished, and you may think that you are just above average. What is it in your life you think that you are actually excellent? What is that accepting you; you think if you are not excellent now you can reach that to that level of excellence? Is there a creative self that is there in you that can paint so much so better you can become an excellent painter? You can become an excellent poetry writer, you can become an excellent novelist or as I said any technical aspect of your life that can make you reach excellence. Think about it there is no hurry even you just make up us of this video and then write in your note book. What do people tell about me how do they rate me how do I rate about myself, where do I think that I am really excellent?

Now, if you think that you are really excellent or you can even achieve excellence in a particular area. Then let us ask the next question if you want to excel in something what do you need, what kind of qualities that you need? Obviously the qualities that I talked about before or the once you meet. But the next question is do you have those qualities in you. Do you have that driving you to achieve that excellence? Now the next one is as kinds of self assessment mechanism in your note book just try to identify five of your traits in you that will certainly take you to excellence; 5 qualities 5 traits.

So, it could be something like that I have noted; focus, discipline, determinant, strong will power or very optimistic, dedicated, punctual etcetera, but you just you do not immediately write whatever I have mention here, but just think about what is it that is making you excellent. And if you have to achieve that what are the qualities that you having you write that.

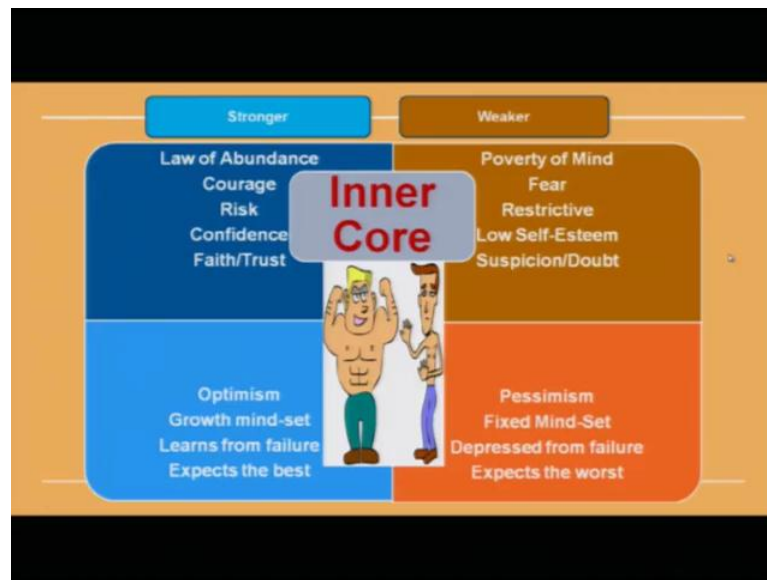
Now, if you think that you are lacking in some of this positive qualities and then you can clearly identify that some negative qualities or over wailing some of the positive qualities

that you must possess. What are those negative qualities? What are those limitations? Can you identify 5 of them? Is it something like laziness? Do people tell you that he is excellent but lazy or he is outstanding postpone he is very good in delay. So, all are like negative but then they are optimistically pricing you.

Addictions it could be some kind of cigarette or drug or even watching movies endlessly on TV or social media face booking and all that. There is like just for fun you do it for half an hour or something and then just you make that your entire life and then you spent 24 into 7 sitting before this media and gadgets and then you just completely lose yourself before that and you lose control. Now is that a limitations in you that is stooping you to reaching the level of excellence ask yourself, where is it that your just getting bog down. What is it that is preventing you? Could it be low self esteem? Could it be self doubts, like thinking that oh that guy can be excellent, but how can I become excellent like him or her, or just your own negative thinking? So, that is coming in your mind no your now good not like that person.

So, ask yourself and then just identify those ones then write it, and then do one more small task ask a very close friend or well wisher or a neighbor or a senior person just ask the person what that person thinks that you having you the good qualities the traits that will make you become an excellent person, and then the limitations which actually bring you down. What is it in their perception? Sometimes you may not have real perception about you and what others tell about you could be much more relevant for you. Just find out this is the first step if you want to reach towards excellent, you should be aware of yourself what are your merits, what are your limitations and what are not just merits, but those excellent qualities that will ensure that you will definitely become an outstanding person.

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Having identify that let us put to the next concept that I want you to become very clear. The way I approach this soft skills, if something not as I was telling from the beginning that is a kind of cosmetics touch in you that outside appearance you try to change and then by which you try to make people believe that we have a very strong personality; now I want to use an inner core approach I want your inner core to be strengthened stronger so that it exudes outside so people can see clearly what is happening inner by the way you are expressing it outside.

Now, what do I mean by this? What mean to tell you is there are two ways; you can make your inner core very strong or it you can make you inner core very weak. There are two approaches, so if you follow the one that I am going to list it this side the left and side you are going to become stronger and stronger and your inner core is becoming stronger and stronger. Now if you are this kind or even if you have some symptoms of this you need to know that you are only become weaker and weaker as for as your inner is concerned.

Look at this what will make you stronger the law of abandons, this means believing that the inverse is wealthy that the world is full of recourses and riches and then it is not only you it is going give for everybody and whatever you need to get you will get. So nobody can stop it. There is no need to join the rat race, no need to fight, no need to compete. If only you develop your inner core so everything else will comes to you automatically.

The contrary view the opposite view that can make you weak is the thinking what we call as poverty of mind. The mind thinks that resources are scars so it as to be (Refer Time: 11:43) or not shared or snatched away from somebody. So, you have to be in the rat race, you have to fight, you have to compete, you have to kill, and you have to beat each other to get something from the other person.

Poverty of mind thinking that I cannot have enough, so in order to have enough I have to actually blender take from somebody else. In the other case law of abandons believes that I give and then in giving I get something more and the other person also believes because that the universal laws is that there is so much of resources everywhere in the world. Now this side again you have courage. So you can take decision, you can make choice in your life using courage or if you want to make the inner core weak you use fear to make decisions in your life.

Remember whatever decisions you make out of fear you will definitely regret, and when you regret you will worry why you did not do that thing using courage and when you worry you kill your body mind energy you do not live any more. So, this side if you look at it you use courage you risk and then you have the confidence and then you have the faith or trust in people in things in an outer spiritual being that you believe that will help you. You believe that the entire world will conspire to help you to get things. You believe that the outer force that is there in the universe will help you if you try to help yourself.

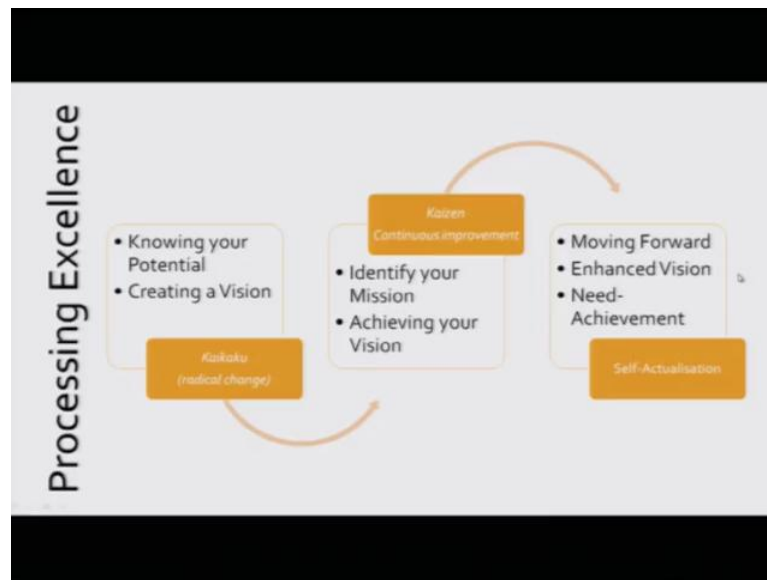
Now on this side you are afraid, so you are restrictive, you are afraid of taking risk, you restrict yourself, you have lot of inhibitions, you suffer from those self esteem and you have suspicion and doubt. You do not have faith, you do not trust people, you suspect people, and you doubt people now this will weaken your inner core. Now some other set optimism will make you stronger, pessimism will make you weaker. Growth mind-set will make you stronger that you are willing to change, we are willing to adopt and we are willing to learn from failure. Now this set fixed mind-set so thinking that I will not learning because I know everything, and I cannot learn anything from other person because keys after all inferior to me and superior to me. This kind of thinking rigidity of thought is not going to take you anywhere.

And. In fact, this side if at there is a failure the person with growth mindset be learn from failure, whereas the person who has this fixed mind-set will actually be feeling depressed from failure. He is completely bog down so he will not be able to bounce back. So, this side the person overall expects all the time the best to happen. The very incorrigible optimist he thinks that if their day is back today I will become better tomorrow, if tomorrow is not better he thinks that day after tomorrow will still become better for me, I will be happier all the time.

Now this side this person always expects that the worst thing will happen to me. He believes in luck, but this side the person believes in work and he thinks that he can make his luck. Now you have to first ask yourself where you fitting are you stronger already, or are you weaker like already forming this side of the inner core. Now within these two choices the one you make this side will make you stronger. So, just give a thought to it and then in case you have the weaker kind of set of thinking that you have in your mind try to remove them. You will not be able to remove them immediately, you have to give it is own frequency, you have to reduce the number of times that you are afraid reduce that do the things that you are most afraid again and again so you will gain confidence you will come this side.

So, I will come back more about confidence and other things later. Right now just I want you to think it is important that to reach excellence you need to develop a very strong inner core.

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Now, towards developing a strong inner core I just want you to visualize the process of excellence that is built up on this inner core strengthening. Now if you look at it how I started in the first two three lectures and until now I am trying to tell you that first know your potential, develop your potential, know where you are strong, identify at least one area where you are very strong you are excellent. Now create a vision, whether it is going back to Steve Jobs talk or beginning with the end in mind I was telling you that think about what you want in your life at the end. What you want some important people in your life to talk about you at the point of your death. What is the vision that you have created for your life? And then follow that by identifying your mission that is in the step by step process by which you can achieve your vision.

Now, in between once you have created a vision remember this Japanese term [FL] which implies radical change. Once you have created a vision, for example I want to change the country. So, how would you like to do that? So, I would join administrative service fine so then you create a mission statement, so will practice I will prepare like this I will give the interview by this time, I will try to crack it in the first time if not I will try second time third time. So, we have the plan; vision and then mission.

Now that [FL] indicates their radical change. For instance, you go to completely a new job or completely new area in which you are posted so that is a radical change. Now when you create a vision for yourself actually you want a radical, change completely

different kind of transformation that is required in your life. Now, once you try that attempt it then go for tisane; that is continuous improvement which is literally meaning good change, but it continuous not as radical as the previous one but it is continuous. Every day you make some improvements, some change, and constant improvement on that, one centimeter improvement in the quality of change that you are making each day that also mater little bit every day.

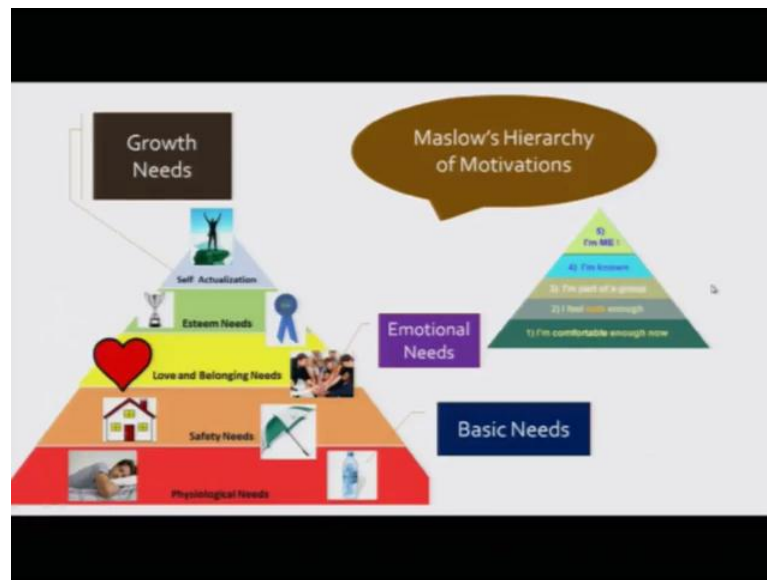
Now, once you do this then you try to do forward, you created a vision, you walked out a mission then you achieved your vision using that mission. Now what next, you need to move forward you need to go ahead. Now if you are able to reach from this level to the other level you can goes to many other levels. Now after those levels what that is next question, but first you try to reach other levels push yourself how far can you go? Now to do this you need to have an enhanced vision. First you thought that oh this is the mountain if I claim then that is the end of it. So, you claimed you reach the peak and after reaching the peck there is a Plato kind of space and you are walking around there and then suddenly you realize there is a higher peck than this.

And the vision from here is so beautiful, but you wonder that can you not go claim higher reach higher and then take a better view from that. So, you try to claim higher. Now the claim is tougher difficult the road is much more dangerous risky, but then the river is also higher so you are going to see things which you have never seen before. You are going to experience completely new things completely it is going to trends from you and take you to the next level.

Now at this point I just want to mention to you there is one aspect of motivation which writes us like David McClelland highlighted which they called as need achievement or NH trait. I will talk about this may be in the next lecture or so, but the at this point this need achievement is also close to what Abraham Maslow called as self-actualization.

Now, let us take a quick look at self-actualization then that is a core concept I want to introduce in this lecture I will continue with other related ideas in the next one.

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But what is self-actualization and why you need to know this. Now Maslow while talking about motivations the drive that we need the kick that we need to do things, he talked about this in his book theory of motivation and then he introduced this famous pyramid of motivation in a five stage. There are some limitations to this theory let us not worry about it now because that does not concern our core concept related to the cores.

Now, at the lowest level he was talking about physiological needs which he calls us basic needs and then next is safety needs. What does he mean by physiological needs? Such as our hunger, such as sex, such as sleeping such as drinking the basic fundamental animal instinctual needs which need to be fulfilled if at all you want to think better. And he says that man will work for this, so why will you motivated to do something. The first thing people will say I have to fill my stomach that what he say yeah not just feeling stomach, but then you also want to fulfill certain other needs related to your basic physiological functioning.

Now, the next level he says you will not be happy only by fulfilling that you will still as fair for higher needs, what are they? So, they can be classified under safety needs. Now you feel that you are just like an animal you are getting food you are just going on road and then you are getting food, you are working like a daily laborer, you are sleeping on road, but then when it rains or when it is getting hot or when it is suddenly there is thunder or something or snakes come when you are sleeping, so you want to be safe, so

you want to build house and you want to live in that kind of safe environment. So, not only you, you want the family members also to be kept in the safe environment. So, you go for safety needs.

Now once you reach that, once you have cross this basic level then you feel that you should also belong to your family you then comes this emotional need you want to be loved. You should note that although he is putting it in 5 stages you should know that there are many people who stopped the first basic physiological needs they are satisfied with getting food and then they do not think higher. There is next level people are satisfied with safety needs and then they stopped, they think this is enough.

The third need at an emotional level, so you want to be associated with all people and people should love and reciprocate your love also. Now it could be the love from partner, it could be the love from family; it could be the love from friends, whatever it is you want to belong to group belongingness, so if you feel that you are a part of them and then gaining or recognition by doing something and then appreciation from these people again motivating you. Now once you reach here there are many people who stop here like, boy finds a girl and then he falls in love with a girl and the girl is very attractive and intelligent and then he would do anything for her he will move mountains he will do all these things. So, he gets a good job he works hard to impress her, he got a bungalow and then after that they got children and then they educated the children. In the movie they show that they live happily ever after and the needs stops here that is love and belonging needs.

But Maslow says that one more step you will still go ahead that is for your esteem needs. You want not only that particular girl to love you or that particular man to shower love on you, but you want some kind of respect from the society that you belong to, the world that is surrounding you. Now again you will go one step higher may be you build small hospital in the vicinity, you donate lot of money to charity, so you help lot of children who are in poverty; you help them in their education. So, you do something on the other so you get a feeling that your esteem is elevated.

Now, here come the cracks of the theory. That up to here we all feel that yes we are there we are doing it, but Maslow goes one step higher from this basic needs emotional needs esteem needs and then he says there is this self-actualization need. Now this comes under

growth needs. Now again it is ironic, he is not treating the basic needs fulfilling your safety needs as part of the real creative growth that you need as a man. The actual growth need for him comes at the higher level which he calls us self-actualization need.

Now, quickly if I put it in a simple manner basic need you just think from your prospective, you think that I am comfortable enough now I have food ok so I am comfortable. Now in safety you feel; I feel safety enough my house is good lighting will not affect it rain I am protected. So, after that in the emotional need you get a feeling that I am part of a group they were accepting me and belong to them. In esteem needs you gain recognition you say I am known, people know me, so I am recognized, I am well known so people like me, I am respected everybody knows and then they give lot of love and respect.

In the final stage you start asking the question I have done all these things, but I do not know who am I and then you identify I me, it is me I am able to do this.

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Self-Actualisation

Highest level of need for personal growth & self-fulfilment

Realization and fulfilment of one's talents and potentialities

To actualise what one is potentially

Expression of one's creativity

Efficient perceptions of reality.

Comfortable acceptance of self and others

Self-reliant and independent

Uses own experiences for judgment

Natural and spontaneous

Continued freshness of appreciation

Maintain deep loving bonds

Comfortable with solitude

They can laugh at themselves

Humble

Have peak experiences

Spiritual enlightenment

morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

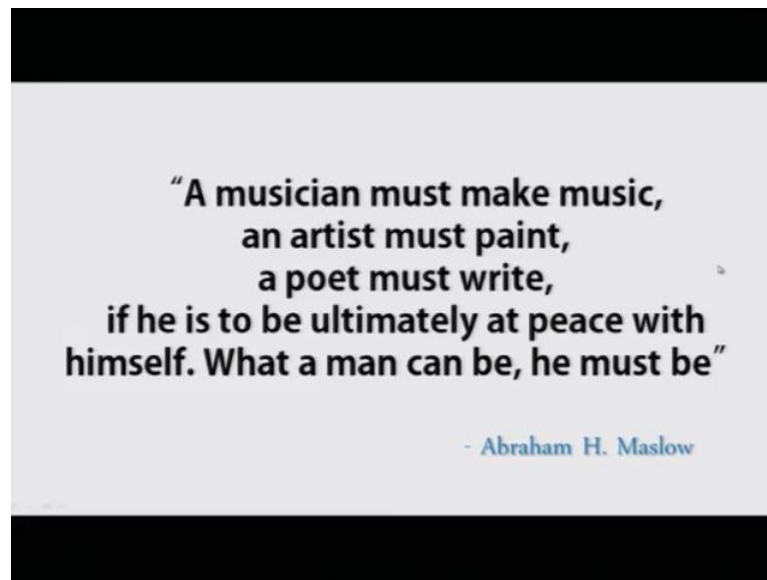
Now, more on self-actualization for Maslow it is a highest level of need for personal growth and self fulfillment. Realization and fulfillment of once talents and potentialities is what we call as self-actualization. In another way you can to actualize what one is potentially and authenticate that. Expression of one's creativity efficient perceptions of reality; that is they do not have distortion of reality they are able to see what is real and do not get clouded by any kind of elution's.

They are comfortable expecting themselves and others. They are self reliant and independent people, those who are self actualized they do not have to rely on other people and then they trust themselves and they are very independent. They are able to use their own experiences for judgment they do not have to go on seek somebody's opinion. So, they know how they can form judgment on their own experiences. They are very natural and spontaneous. They do not have any artificial kind of self, they are not hypocrites, they are very humble, they not pretentious and then they are very natural.

And then they have this continued freshness of appreciation. As if they see sunlight sunshine for the first time, as if they are smelling the rose for the first time. So, each day is new day, each day is newly lived newly experience, so they live a fresh everyday every movement. And in the borne, which they maintained sometimes they are with very few people, but then it is a very deep loving endearing borne that day try to maintain. And interestingly they can be in crowd, but at the same time they are very comfortable with solitude. So, I can connect to the universe when they self actualize.

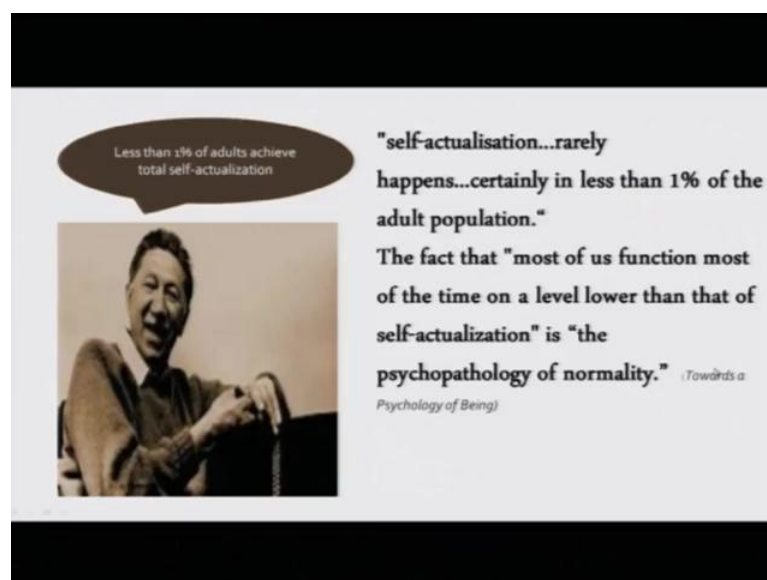
The other interesting factor about this self actualize people is that they can laugh at themselves. And apart from their humility they also have this so called peak experiences. Maslow's spends about 50 pages in the book theory of motivation only to talk about peak experiences, but right now it is enough to know it is that kind of excited movement in which you feel that your self is at the highest form of fulfillment you did your level best it is more than excellence, it is above excellence. And when you reach that movement and then you cherish it. And then towards the end they are also spiritually enlightened people. Again about this I will spend more in the coming lecture.

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Before I conclude one or two thoughts that Maslow wanted us to think about when he introduces this self-actualization. This is the way he defines self-actualization he says "a musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be-What a man can be he must be" this is what he calls us self-actualization.

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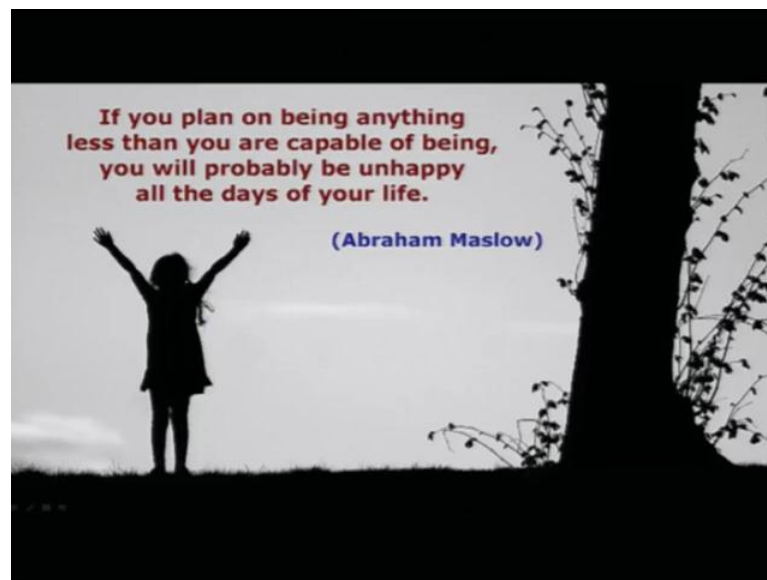
But, the interesting fact that he also tells us later he says that less than one percent of adults achieve total self-actualization. This means many people try many

people want to reach that level, but it is just less than one percent of adults actually achieve this. So self-actualization he says rarely happen certainly in less than one percent of adult population. Having said this you may ask now so should I try for self-actualization of course that is what I am implying that you should try; you should be among that one percent of the adults who actualize that fully, who realize that fully. So, reach that level even if it is just one percent.

And then he also says that the fact that most of the time on a level lower than that of self-actualization we are not reaching that level at all, most of us are bog down in physiological needs, some of them in emotional needs, some of them in esteem needs where they combined power also, but many do not even aspire to reach that self-actualization need.

Now, he says that is the psycho pathology of normality. That is the disease of being normal, that is the disease being just normal human being living and normal life. Now why he is saying that that is not going to make you happy, why? Think about this before I conclude.

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He says that “If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being-if you plan on being anything less than your capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life. So, the risk is that some of you may not even think of self-actualization may not reach that level fine, but even aspiring to that level is actually

going to make you happy. Conversely if you think that you have the potential, but then you do not want to realize that potential, you do not want to actualize yourself to reach that level of creativity and spontaneity and make yourself the complete authentic self, if you do not do that he says that you are going to be unhappy all the days of your life. Think about it do you want to be unhappy all the rest of your life or you want to live a happy and peaceful life. Now obviously you are going to say that it is the other thing that you want to be happy and peaceful towards the rest of your life think about where you are reassess your potentialities and as per to reach that level of self-actualization.

I will talk about two more aspects of self-actualization that is close to need achievement and spiritual wealth in the next lecture. Thank you just takes a relook at the lecture and then particularly thinks about self-actualization and especially before you go to bed today. Think about self-actualization how can you reach that level?

Thank you one again.