

Are Your Blocks in Alignment?

Self esteem, confidence and assertiveness are three important personal attributes essential today to exist in a complicated and fast paced world where everything we do and most of what we say is scrutinized and used as a way of analysing who we are. Although the three attributes sit on the same continuum, they are not the same thing but they are often used interchangeably. The commonality they have is that they are all fuelled by our values and belief systems which can be *nurturing, motivating, limiting and destructive*.

Personal attributes such as these are often spoken about as if they are an either or; If you don't have them don't worry, you don't need them. Actually, you'll be hard pressed to do very much in life without them! Try standing out at an interview with the lack of ability to convince the panel that you have confidence to do the role and that those particular business parameters you will be charged with, will be safe with you! The good news is that they can be developed.

What is the difference between them? Self esteem is dependant solely on our own perception of our self worth. Even though we might be influenced by those around us directly or indirectly in terms of how we feel and think about ourselves ultimately, it's down to us individually and the choices and decisions we make based *on the percentage of worthiness* we give ourselves. Confidence is dependent on both how we see ourselves *and* how others see us in a variety of circumstances. Confidence can be fluid i.e. you are more confident in one set of circumstances than another. Assertiveness is about our ability to stand up for ourselves in a non threatening way. Assertiveness is not about being loud, aggressive or passive aggressive and you most certainly can be assertive and have a quiet voice! All three areas interlink but are not the same.

When working with clients, which can be on a one-to-one basis or in a training programme, my starting place is always identification. Which one of these three areas is the person referring to? Is that what they really mean? Then, particularly if there is more than one area identified, setting to work to look at which area is the priority area?

Setting the context is important. Clients need to know that they haven't grown a second head overnight or that they are in any way abnormal. Actually, they are very normal. The context for me starts with introducing the model Maslow Hierarchy of Need as a starting place to understanding where the client is coming from.

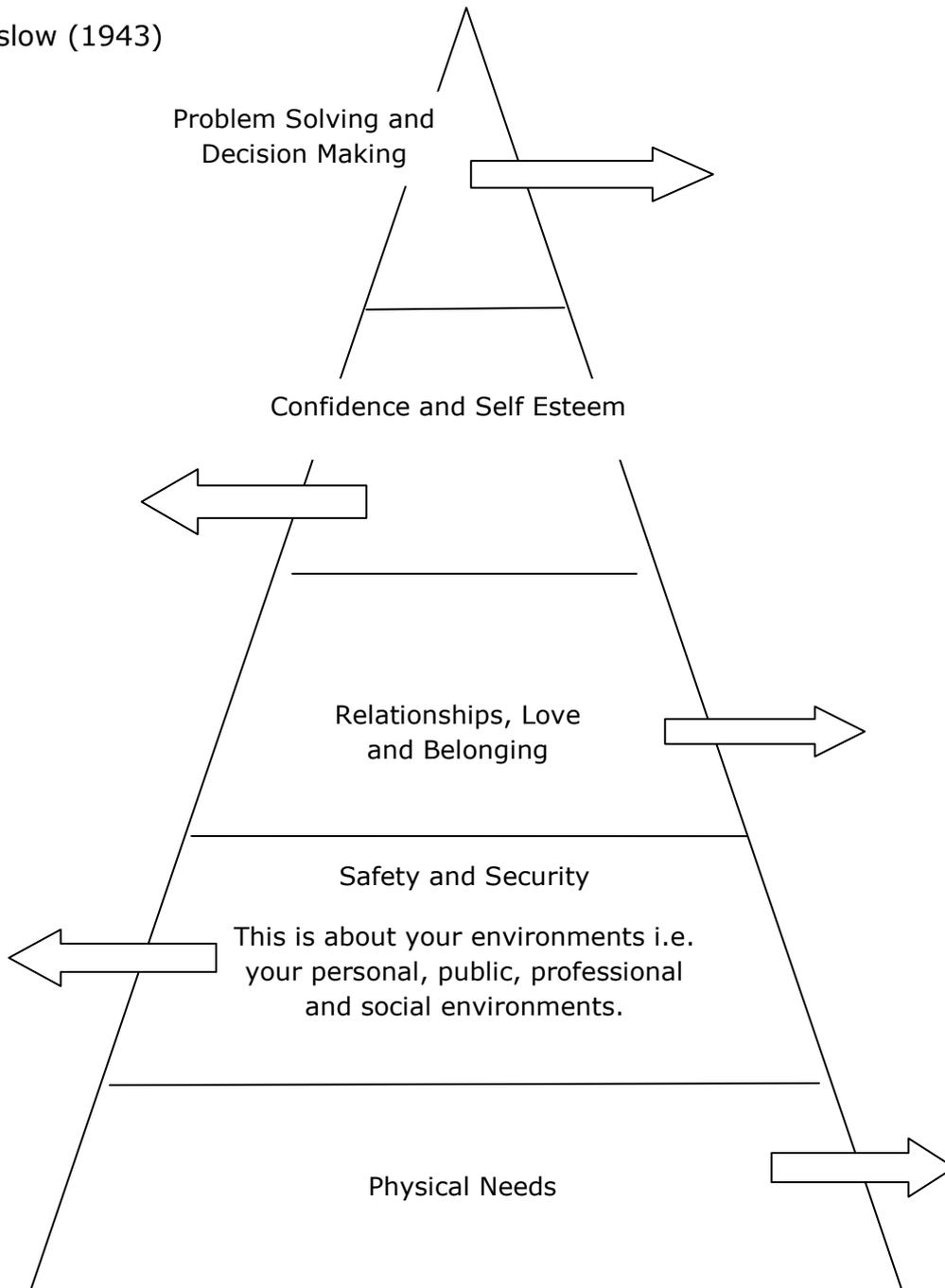
Maslow suggests that each segment of the pyramid (5 in total) has an impact on the one above. So your physical needs, often described as *basic* needs in the literature, has an impact on your *safety and security* which has an impact on your *relationships* which has an impact on your *confidence & self esteem* (also your assertiveness, resilience and ability to cope with stress) and so on.

Maslow goes on to break needs down into both '*Surface needs*' and '*driving needs*'. Surface needs can be described as those motivations that are externally delivered on because we feel that we *should* be doing them rather than because we *want* to deliver on them. Surface needs can be described as superficial whilst *driving needs* are usually linked into our core values and belief systems so literally drive us to do the things we do. Driving needs as well as surface needs can be either positive or negative.

The top of the pyramid is known as self actualization in the text. I like to say, it's simply being the best that *you* can possibly be! To get there, you need to have all the blocks in alignment for the majority of the time. Do you have all the blocks in alignment at the moment and if not, which one(s) are out of sync? What do you think you can do about this?

Context: Understanding Your Needs and Motivations

Abraham Maslow (1943)



If you would like some help with reconnecting with your resilience, confidence, self esteem and/or assertiveness levels, email me on

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Visit our website and use our contact page

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