



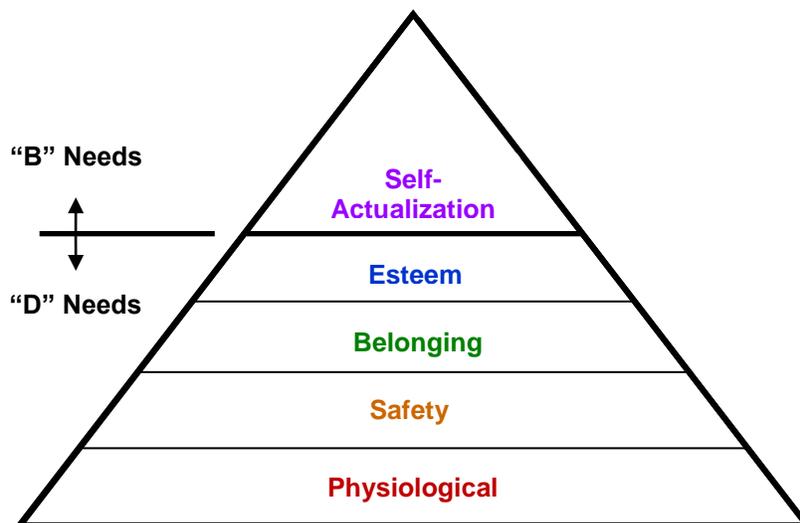
DRIVING YOU TO FEARLESS SALES LEADERSHIP

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The profession of selling creates fear. It inherently violates laws of spiritual philosophy and psychology which assert that materialistic desires impede the path towards happiness. Each sale brings only temporary relief. Another sale has to be made...then another and another. One month of success gives way to a new month of pressure. A salesperson who wins the annual sales contest discovers that satisfaction soon evaporates because a new year of sales challenges lies ahead. There is an alternative...

Salespeople and sales managers can replace the fear with a controlled process that produces predictable future results. After all, the job of sales *is* to produce results. Our mission at Building Leaders is to help salespeople discover the method by which they can overcome fear by focusing on the processes within their control. I derive a lot of my teaching from psychological theories that enable salespeople to achieve the proper mindset for success.



Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" provides the perfect psychological theory to illustrate this model of fearless sales leadership. Maslow describes human needs with a hierarchy (see Figure above) and asserts that humans must rise through levels of personal development in order to achieve a state of "being". At the basic level, humans need food, air and water for biological survival. Even within this level there is a hierarchy – i.e. air is more important than water because we can go a few days without water but only a moment or two without air. After physiological needs are met, humans strive for the safety of shelter, clothing and transportation. Thus physiological and safety needs combine to provide the foundation for human existence, but hardly for a fulfilling life. We want more than mere survival.

People need the human touch and the emotional bond created by the acceptance of belonging to social groups – families, clubs, and organizations. This is why we associate so readily with our favorite schools, sports teams and geographic regions. We seek tribal interaction and the connection with social groups that provides acceptance. Ultimately it is not enough to merely belong; eventually this desire is superseded by the goal to attain esteem, recognition and authority within the social group.

Maslow points out that every one of these needs – i.e. Physiological, Safety, Belonging and Esteem – are external needs which require fulfillment from other people or objects. More significantly he noted that these needs don't produce any lasting satisfaction, but instead only negate the emptiness that previously existed. Thus he referred to the basic categories as "D needs" – i.e. Deficit Needs – because they really only fill a temporary shortage for basic human survival, whether biological or emotional.

It is easy to see how this works in the biological realm – e.g. water and food satisfy thirst and hunger, although only temporarily – but it also works in a psychological way. Praise and recognition provide only a temporary boost to the ego and must eventually be repeated to satisfy future emotional needs. Whether you are talking about biological or psychological needs, the cycle continues and external stimuli fill voids only temporarily. Eventually the human wants more fuel – whether material, biological or emotional – to replenish the deficit.

Other psychologists have contributed to Maslow's line of thinking. Most notably, *Martin Seligman*, author of [Learned Optimism](#) and [Authentic Happiness](#).

During his tenure as the president of the American Psychological Association, Seligman emphasized a focus on human wellness and happiness. This was a radical change in thought for psychologists that had published thousands of papers to cure people of pathologies that would get them back to "neutral" but less than 100 on the idea of helping people find methods for achieving a *positive* outlook and happiness in life.

David Hawkins is another psychiatrist who offers insights into levels of psychological being. In [Power vs. Force](#) he illuminates 17 levels of emotional consciousness. One compelling aspect of his study is the thesis that humans experience levels of consciousness as groups in art, science and culture. Carl Jung called this "Social Consciousness" nearly a century ago.

The concept of social consciousness provides a tidy link to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in explaining the recent economic collapse experienced around the world. It could be argued that our entire global culture created very real emotional and financial deficits as a reaction to needs for esteem. The desire for wealth, status and easy money caused irrational behaviors that, business, governments and a world economy is now paying for.

The psychology of “D” needs is exactly the same for salespeople. Short term sales success provides a quick jolt of happiness, which is soon vaporized by the realization that a new sale needs to be created. A month of sales success ends with the realization that upcoming months of sales pressure loom. The mission for salespeople to fulfill deficit needs – i.e. constant sales success – creates a very real psychological challenge. Moreover, a behavioral challenge is created when the salesperson focuses only on the results without striving to manage the actions that that will produce results.

THE SOLUTION – SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Maslow concluded that happiness relies on the ability to forsake the opinions of others as the measure of self-worth. He concluded that there had to be an internal mechanism that enabled humans to find satisfaction and calm in a chaotic and dangerous world. He used the term “Self-Actualization” and termed the needs fueled by higher levels of consciousness as “B Needs” – i.e. Being Needs.

Self-actualized human beings engage in self-improvement pursuits such as reading a book, developing a scientific theory or striving for a personal physical goal. They are satisfied with themselves and joke at their own expense while not making fun of others. Moreover, they recognize that the most important benchmark of success is their own expectations.

When Abraham Maslow developed his theory on the Hierarchy of Needs, he probably did not envision a link to sales performance. There are, however, interpretations in his work that I believe can be connected to many aspects of life, including the profession of selling. The continuous emphasis on past results creates future deficit needs to achieve more results without including the “self-actualized’ development of performance.

TWO PSYCHOLOGICAL SALES BEHAVIORS	
FEARFUL	SELF-ACTUALIZED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results-Oriented • Sells Price • Pushes for Sale • Suffers from Want • Does things right • Sells Product Features • Seeks Job Security • Risk Averse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process-Oriented • Sells Total Cost • Does not Presume • Suffers to Grow • Does the Right Thing • Sells Client Results • Achieves Career Security • Growth Oriented

The salesperson must learn to focus on the activities that can be controlled and managed each day with the knowledge and belief that “good actions will produce good results.” The self-actualized manager therefore evolves from overseer to mentor, guiding performance while reducing fear and undue focus on results. This is not to deny a link between results and activity, but rather to stress that the focus should be on activities which are positively linked to future results. ***The satisfaction in the job must become doing the job.***

My mission is to help salespeople discover ways in which they can achieve a focus on “being” a salesperson rather than attach to the “deficit” needs that create constant fear. At Building Leaders, Inc. our training programs give salespeople and managers a “how to” guide on achieving long-term sales success. The focus is on a process that links to measurable and predictable future results.

Any person serious about losing weight recognizes that diet and exercise are the keys to success; the actions produce the desired results. In the same way, a salesperson serious about achieving sales success focuses on the right prospecting methods, listening skills, measurement tools and the practices which create future results. The Self-Actualized salesperson is the one who engages in the profession for the sake of giving to others and constant self-improvement.

The Sales Leader must be diligent in understanding the link between behaviors and results. Salespeople will (appropriately) rebel when they are forced to engage in tasks that support no link to end results. “Reporting to the boss” tools such as call reports become adult-to-child communication devices that hinder productivity. Sales support tools and activities must be conceived and utilized as adult-to-adult learning assets that establish team objectives and create coach-to-performer interaction.

This means that tasks must be completed with either a) a historical record of expected outcomes or b) a preconceived expectation that the salesperson intends to validate (or nullify) with objective measurements. In the latter situations the manager and salesperson must openly communicate how the data will produce strong links between behaviors and results in order to produce conclusions about optimum behavior.

It is vapid and ineffective leadership that merely criticizes bad results after the fact. Thus, in order to create powerful sales leadership behavior, measurements must be predictors of future results. Ultimately the best leadership of any performer begins with a behavior mindset in which praise and constructive feedback are focused on creating self-actualized performers. ***Success is not what you get, but is what you do.***

For more information on these or other sales theories, please contact me or visit my website: RickDavis@buildingleaders.com
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