FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS

OF

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Elementary psychology, Chapter 1

THE NEEDS

The human being is influenced by his body and his psyche. From the body (physical), stimuli come more frequent and compelling.

The stimuli indicate the needs and create the necessity to satisfy them.

Example : hunger creates the need to eat.

Therefore we can distinguish two main groups:

- the physical or primary needs
- the spiritual or secondary needs

Here is the list of the principal needs sorted according to their urgency, with the example of a stimulus with which the need can manifest itself.

The first and the last, more than needs, are "ways of being".

	NEED	STIMULUS
	To live, to exist	fear, anxiety, terror, panic
	- to breathe	suffocation
	- to drink	thirst
	- to eat	hunger
Primary et a	- to urinate, to defecate	specific pains
(body)	- to protect themselves from	-F F
	environmental inclemency,	
	health, light	warm, cold, etc.
	- to sleep	sleepiness
	- physical freedom, motion	slackness
	- sexuality	desire, arousal
	- safety	fear, stress
	- sociality	melancholy, ennui
	- love	desire, languor
Secondary	- self-affirmation, self-esteem,	
(spirit)	consideration	dissatisfaction, disappointment
	- freedom at all levels	boredom, anger
	 culture, knowledge 	curiosity
	- ideal, justice	pity
	hanninges	unhanninges sadnoss

happiness etc. unhappiness, sadness

Even if approximate, the list gives an idea of the gradual decrease of imperiousness and urgency of the various needs: in fact

the list is sorted considering how long a human being can endure without satisfying the single need.

Example: breathing is more urgent than eating.

Many needs are common to almost all humans. They are therefore **collective needs** that can be satisfied collectively.

Example: during a banquet the need to eat, to socialize, etc., will be collectively satisfied.

Many needs are typical of a particular group of human beings.

Example: motherhood for women.

Some needs are the result of our way of living (social, artificial, etc.), but all these needs have their place in the hierarchical ladder of needs and want to be satisfied.

<u>Example</u>: a distant workplace creates the need to move, hence the need to travel, the need for transportation, etc..

Fashion and advertisements are typical examples of manipulation of needs creating artificial needs that lead to shopping or behaviours sometimes even contrary to their own interests or self-harming.

Example : the person wearing uncomfortable clothes just to be "in", purchasing expensive and unnecessary objects or trendy "status symbols", exposing themselves excessively to the sun to get a tan.

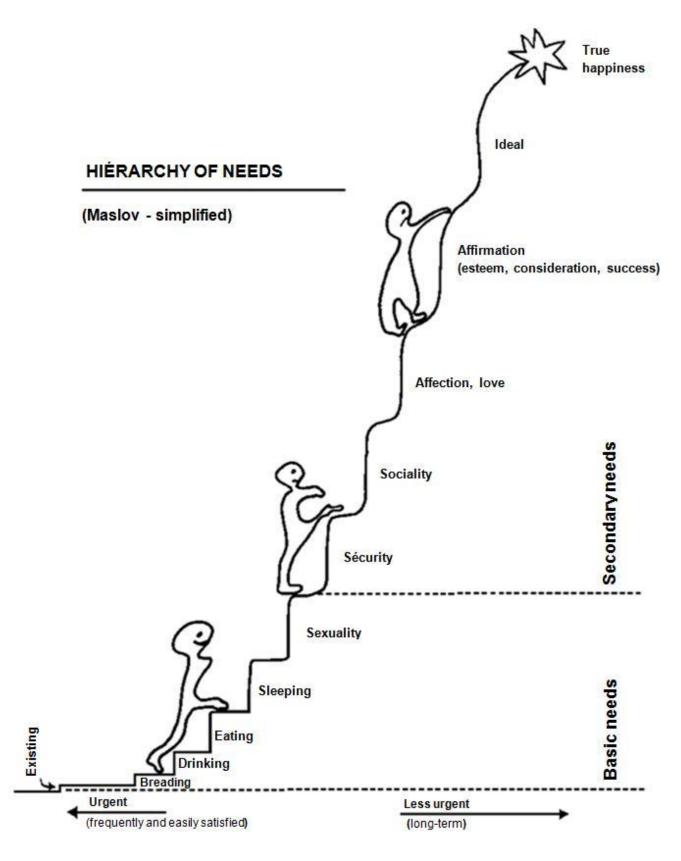
Example : smoking, alcoholism, drug addiction and all other dependencies are artificial needs (for example video dependence, the craze for gambling, the recent internet dependence, etc.).

Most of those who are considered as simple needs are in reality a composition of several interdependent needs.

(See the example concerning love in the next chapter).

The satisfaction of needs

If we represent needs as a ladder, we see that the first, the most urgent and frequent, are also the easiest to satisfy and vice versa.



The fulfilment of needs is necessary (see also section 4).

Note

In this regard the American psychologist **Abraham Maslow** states that a worker reaches the optimal performance when he can satisfy about 2/3 of his needs.

It should also be recalled that Maslow has identified five groups of needs, therefore he rightly represented the ladder of needs in the form of a pentagonal pyramid. In addition, to facilitate understanding, the ladder represented here neglects the important needs of the subconscious (for example the need to dream).

Maslow's theory can be used to analyze individuals but also entire social groups, or historical periods (see "The Origin of the Family, the private Property and the State", by Friedrich Engels). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Origin_of_the_Family,_Private_Property_and_the_State)

<u>The climber</u> shown in the drawing quickly and easily surpasses the first steps. As the climber goes ahead he meets higher and more slippery steps and he must therefore increasingly struggle to overcome them and to not fall back.

Whenever the climber surmounts a step, he feels some happiness, which is greater the higher is the step just passed. (more intense was the need just satisfied and greater is happiness). Happiness ends any time the climber realizes the presence of the next step (this happens when the satisfaction of a particular need now is something gained and durable) or when one of the steps already passed comes back. (because in the meantime the climber slipped back because it is no longer possible to satisfy a specific need whose satisfaction was achieved).

Example : a worker has a family and a job, so he can regularly satisfy all needs up to and including the affection he receives from his family. At work his position as a simple worker makes him unhappy, so his greatest desire is to be considered a little more and become foreman. Unfortunately he must separate permanently from the family, and he also loses his job. Suddenly his most urgent needs return to be sexual and about safety and affection. There is no more talk about self-assertion. In this situation even just a conversation with an occasional acquaintance is enough to make him happy.

Example : later the same person unexpectedly wins a large sum on the lottery. Immediately he can satisfy sexual needs (possibly also with prostitutes), safety and sociability (the mundane life) and he is happy.

Now the small and simple satisfactions of the previous period have lost their attractiveness. But happiness ends when he realizes that despite the richness nobody really loves him and this lack of affection will make him unhappy again, until ...

On top of the ladder there is the happiness that we can define as "real" because it persists much longer than that obtained by the passing of each step.

However, it is clear that happiness is not permanent but eventually gives place to serenity. It should also be noted that the satisfaction of secondary needs (the needs of the spirit) depends very often on the positive proximity of other human beings. It follows that **happiness is real when it is shared**.

Comments

To satisfy only basic needs would mean to degrade life to the animal level.

Example : a marginalized beggar who survives at the existential edge.

Technological progress and the consumer society make it difficult or complicated to satisfy secondary needs; but they also facilitate the satisfaction of basic needs for those who have the necessary money.

- Example : going to work alone in his car, the employee can no longer satisfy his need for sociality as when traveling by train in friendly company with other commuters.
- Example : the growth of marriage agencies, meeting places for singles, the elderly or the lonely, chatting on the internet, etc.., are a symptom of how it has become difficult to find an appropriate partner or simple friendship.

The individual reality can make it more or less easy to satisfy needs, and it is also widely believed that **with money it is possible to satisfy all needs**, which in principle is true for the primary needs. The binomial **money = satisfaction of needs = happiness** gives rise in our society to a suffused desire to be wealthy and to envy for the rich.

Example : for a disabled person the satisfaction of needs is more difficult; in a large shopping center almost all basic needs can be satisfied, of course against payment.

Generally those who are able to satisfy their needs consider this legitimate and worthy. Moreover, with little understanding, they think that others might be able do the same thing if they want.

- Example : "we have what we have because we worked day and night all our life; others can do the same".
- Example : "if in Africa they would work a bit more instead of dancing and sleeping, they would be a bit better off."
- Example : "if you would have been up earlier you would have been be the first in line and you would have gotten the job (!)"

Human beings tend to satisfy their needs in the most simple, varied, quick and congenial way to their personality.

<u>Example</u> : an attractive person can satisfy his needs for consideration and affirmation by the admiration of which he is the subject instead of by developing his personality.

Example : at dinner each diner chooses the menu that he likes, but all the guests together satisfy the need to eat and drink.

Whoever has the habit of satisfying a particular need renounces it unwillingly.

Example : it is difficult to stop smoking

Example : it's hard to be abandoned by the loved person (jealousy, resentment).

Example : in Italy, an old man was traveling alone on public transport, carrying a strange device that he had built himself and which did not serve any purpose. But people were curiously asking him what it was, so he could start a conversation and satisfy his need for sociability.

3 Examples of analysis

We can divide LOVE in its interdependent components, namely: physical love (glandular functions), eroticism (imagination) affection, sociability, consideration (self-affirmation) contribution to the satisfaction of a partners needs and the creation of his happiness (ideal).

If a relationship fulfills all these requirements, it generates a lot of happiness.

Example : masturbation satisfies only the glandular needs

Example : watching a pornographic film satisfies the need for eroticism

<u>Example</u> : the relationship with a prostitute satisfies the previous two and possibly those for consideration and sociability.

Example : maternal affection does not satisfy the glandular needs and eroticism

<u>Example</u> : love for an animal artificially satisfies the need to contribute to the happiness of others, and (possibly) to sociability, affection and affirmation.

Etc.

Comment

Also the psychologist Wilhelm Reich, disciple of Freud, was convinced that love and sex in particular are important human needs.

4 The failure of the satisfaction of needs

To the failure to satisfy a need the body and / or psyche react with stimuli gradually more and more compelling, an automatic consequence of the survival instinct.

From the non-satisfaction of a basic need, after a shorter or a longer time, there follows pain, sickness, and death.

Example: without drinking a human being dies after a few days (dehydration).

From the non-satisfaction of a secondary need there follow psychic imbalances such as

- disappointment, demoralization
- frustration, apathy, nervous depression
- various complexes including the
 - well-known inferiority complex
- breakdowns: a classic is the nervous breakdown
- violent reaction: revolt, suicide or other

Example: prisoners in solitary confinement

(almost permanent) (serious illness) (severe reaction, sometimes definitive)

(temporary)

(reversible)

Despite the fact that the satisfaction of needs is indispensable, in our society it is virtually impossible for everyone to satisfy all his needs, particularly the secondary ones.

Example: the scarcity of food does not allow everyone to "eat" according to his needs.

Example: those that in our social order are "nailed" to the lowest places can hardly satisfy the need for consideration with a professional affirmation.

Example: the tired worker no longer has the time and desire to deal with cultural issues.

We can therefore say that it is very difficult to reach the stage where all needs are satisfied. And if this happens it is probably a transitory situation because given the amount of needs that human beings have to satisfy, sooner or later unsatisfied needs emerge.

5 Frustration and stress

Denying him the well-deserved opportunity to satisfy a need creates in the human being a sense of disappointment, of being a victim of injustice, and so on.

If the situation repeats itself, this generates a frustration with a consequent lowering of morale, apathy, etc. that "limits the performance". Frustration will become reversible as soon as the unsatisfied need is satisfied.

Example : the missing recognition for a good performance creates disappointment and, if repeated, can generate frustration.

Example : the often rejected suitor is frustrated and starts to have self-doubts and to have complexes that make his life even more difficult.

Stress is basically the fear of not being able to satisfy one or more needs.

In this context, time and its fragmentation play an important role. In fact, in our economic system the most common sources of stress are the limited time allowed to achieve one or more objectives, performance, coveted success, the timetables, appointments and deadlines to keep, hurry, competition (being observed, evaluated, judged), insecurity caused by the impossibility of evaluating the continuation and/or the future outcome, etc. It follows that most individuals are more or less stressed. Obviously stress reduces the quality of life and also affects psychophysical health. Too much stress induces panic with unpredictable consequences. Digitization, with relative codification of procedures, terms and competition, has increased stress and has also made it more sneaky.

Example: Poverty is a source of stress because it creates the fear of not being able to satisfy needs and relative uncertainty for the future.

Example : Unrealistic goals are a source of stress for those who should achieve them.

Example : Many workers hope that retirement will relieve them of daily stress.

6 Happiness and freedom

The human being is temporarily happy when he can satisfy the most urgent need and is really happy when he can satisfy all needs (difficult and transitory).

Happiness is the possibility to satisfy all needs

The greater the number of satisfied needs and the longer lasts happiness.

Example : the drowning castaway is happy when he finds a wreck, is unhappy when he realizes that he is at the mercy of the waves, is happy when he finds land, is again unhappy when he is thirsty, is happy when he finds a source, is unhappy when he is hungry and he is happy when he can eat a roasted goat, is again unhappy because he is only on an island, and happy again, this time for a long time, when he meets Friday, etc. (it was Robinson Crusoe)

Starting from the type or types of satisfied needs, from time to time happiness is generally defined as "satisfaction, serenity, contentment, joy, great happiness, and so on".

Imagination is very important, so sometimes the human being foretastes happiness just thinking about being able to satisfy one or more needs and / or relive the happiness experienced long time ago.

Example: receiving a love letter from the far away lover

Example: re-reading the same letter many years later

A great source of happiness comes from the realization of ideals, in particular the personal contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of others, therefore the happiness of others, of young people and of future generations. For this reason, procreation, motherhood, and the role of parents and grandparents are a natural source of happiness. It is obvious that:

A reasoning

Truly free (and happy) is he who is no longer pressed by unsatisfied needs. The first step to freedom is the satisfaction of basic needs; in fact,

freedom is the possibility to satisfy all needs wherever, whenever, and however one wants.

Obviously this is a theoretical hypothesis because each person's freedom is limited by the presence and freedoms of others. Subordinately freedom is the possibility to choose independently where, how, and when to satisfy all needs.

Moreover it would be nice and fair to share the possibility to satisfy needs equally.

7 The importance of motivation

The satisfaction of needs, or simply the fear of not being able to satisfy the needs, and the consequent search for happiness are the engine of every human action, the spring that pushes the individual to take an interest in everything that in his opinion can help satisfy needs.

But we have seen that to reach true happiness it is necessary to satisfy all needs. Therefore, to satisfy the most pressing individual needs is the object of thoughts and desires, or even a nagging necessity. The satisfaction of needs becomes his target in the short or long term, its daily engine, <u>its hope</u>, the reason why he acts: **the motivation**.

Motivation is the reasoned will, which causes the individual to take action to ensure the satisfaction of his needs.

Example : the desire to win (and to satisfy his need for affirmation and consideration) causes the athlete to join a race, to train and compete with engagement (which sometimes is even excessive and counterproductive). The reasoned will, which has supported the athlete from beginning to end, is the motivation.

Example: social climbing, greed, and fanaticism are motivations pushed to the extreme.

Motivation can be evidenced by making the subject conscious of his needs or even creating needs.

Example: if we explain to the worker that due to the overproduction his company must downsize and that he will soon be fired, he will be frightened and also increasingly conscious of the need for security. The motivation that will drive the worker to ask his foreman for further information the next day, is to ensure the desired security.

When the unsatisfied needs (or directly the motivation) of a person are known, we can convince him that we offer a chance to satisfy them and so draw his attention, sympathy, and trust towards us.

Example: invite those who are desperately lonely to a party or a meeting (if necessary political), with the promise that he will find many new friends.

Example : do not tell the unemployed "unlike you, I have a wonderful and secure job", but explain him who can help him find a job, or how the employees of the LIP company have fought to preserve their jobs.

At this point, the problem is how to determine and / or discover the motivation.

8 The search for motivation

Given that it is the necessity to satisfy needs that creates the "will to satisfy them," defined precisely as **motivation**, we need to find out which are the unsatisfied needs; particularly among those which are the most compelling.

Method of direct search: by direct questions (with discretion!).

<u>Example</u>: are you happy with your job? Is everything alright in your family? Is your girlfriend doing well? Have you still met your friends? etc.

Example : "fast train" : are you happy? What is wrong? What is your biggest wish at this moment?

Based on the responses you can direct the conversation towards issues that are most at heart to your conversation partner.

Method of indirect research: trying to judge the person by framing him in a social class or a defined group, by observing the appearance (see next chapter), behaviour, and handwriting, taking information, etc.

- Example : it is probable that for the thin man, dismissed and alone, sitting on the sidelines, it is difficult to satisfy his need for human contact (sociability) and affection. This unsatisfied need could be the motivation that drove the man to enter the bar.
- Example : it is probable that the man in overalls standing with a group of unemployed is also jobless, and therefore in urgent need of a job and material security (at that time it is useless to talk to him about football).

The search for motivation is easier and safer by applying the direct and the indirect method simultaneously.

- Example : often those ladies who call themselves "clairvoyant", with attentive observation and some targeted questions discover unsatisfied needs of their customers and then have an easy game to predict an upcoming satisfaction (you're alone but soon you'll find love, you'll have three children, etc.).
- Example : in criminology the investigator must first find out which needs the author intended to satisfy with his act. From there he can go back to the reason (motive) that has driven him to commit the crime and he can also define the psychological profile of the author.

9 Collective motivation

Collective needs, or the manipulation of collective consciousness through fear, give rise to a collective motivation which can possibly be created and/or utilized as the motivation of the single individual. (In this regard we recall the extreme ability and effectiveness of political propaganda of certain totalitarian regimes in the past).

Example : the need for security and work can induce workers to participate in a gathering. Made aware and motivated by a well-argued speech they form a protest march.

Example: often certain politicians are intimidating listeners fearing economic recession, unemployment, increased bureaucracy, rising costs, dangers and various disasters.

Insofar as industrial production satisfies the most common needs, the successive unsatisfied needs change social relations.

Example : in an Arab village the women used to go to the well with their pitcher also to talk to each other (and to satisfy their need for socialization). When the State brought running water to homes, husbands did not allow women to leave the house anymore. To justify their exit the women broke the taps.

It's clear that the reasons for their journey to the pit had little to do with the supply of water, which government officials had not understood. (there would have been better to build a beautiful fountain with attached public washhouse!)

End of Chapter Elementary psychology Exercises follow

Exercises of practical psychology

<u>Needs</u>

- Which category includes the need to protect the hands against the cold?
- Is the need to smoke a natural or an artificial need?
- Is the need for company of others more or less urgent than the need for affection? Why?
- Which group includes the spontaneous need to tell the truth?

Satisfaction of needs

- Which are the needs that you can satisfy in a generally well attended bar?
- Which need are recruits satisfying by taking a shower after an exercise?
- Which needs can an old lady satisfy by taking part in an organized trip?
- Which need can you satisfy by painting on a large immaculate sheet of paper, or by voluntarily shattering a plate or a sheet of glass? (it is recommended to try just with the paper!)
- Which needs can the fans of the winning football team satisfy?

Happiness

- Why and which feelings experiences a person who finds her lost purse?
- Which feelings will a man lost in the desert experience when he hears on his radio the announcement that assistance is on the way, and for what reason? Or when he hears that the searches have been suspended?
- Suppose a single person XY meets the good genius of Aladdin's fable. So the genie makes two offers but the person XY is allowed to choose only one.

The first offer is to provide a very beautiful woman (or respectively a man),

attractive, kind, loving, helpful, who will love person XY forever and make her happy.

The second offer is to provide \$ 20 million, a significant amount that will allow the person XY to live comfortably forever.

Analyze the reasons (practical, socio-cultural, emotional, etc.) and the consequences of one or the other choice.

Example of application

In an adult female affected by mental illness a subconscious hatred for her mother has been diagnosed, dating back to adolescence, and so on.

Almost certainly the traditional and conservative mother (home, school, classical music, tennis) prevented her teenage daughter to satisfy its already imperious needs of sociality (meeting with friends, parties, disco, holidays, etc..) and sex (love, relationship with boys, etc.). For the young girl full of life the forced renunciation was traumatic, and there followed a subconscious and repressed hatred for her mother, who is considered the main obstacle to the satisfaction of needs and consequently responsible for her unhappiness.

Of course, the sociocultural situation and the repressive education imparted by the parents does not always correspond to the individual needs but rather to the dictates of society, respectability, economic situation of the family, and so on.

The reaction may be the resignation of the young but also rebellion, running away from home, drugs, etc.

Motivation

- Which is the motivation that induces the inhabitants of a drought-stricken region to make a rain dance?
- Which is the motivation that induces the worker to frequent an evening course for advanced training? And the young man to participate in a dance party?
- Which is the motivation that drives the scientist to carry out research? And the artist to create a work of art?
- Why do we dress better on Sundays?
- Why do many people bet on football games, play the lottery, and gamble, despite knowing that the chances of winning are very low?

Elementary psychology, Chapter 2

TIPOLOGY

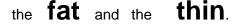
Introduction

It is possible to know the human being and his character even by starting from the observation of his body and of his behaviour.

Warning: recent studies have partially disproved the present theory of tipology.

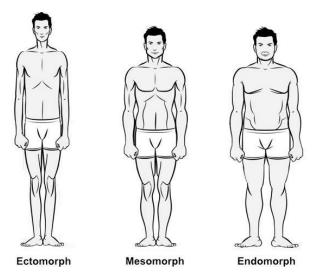
The importance of the body

Considering **only** the physical constitution, the best-known theories in this field (for example Ernst Kretschmer) divide humanity into two (or three) main groups, which we can simply call



It must be immediately pointed out that those who are **physically and temperamentally** "very fat" (neurotic) or "very thin" (schizophrenic) are a small minority and sometimes they are in need of psychiatric care, and therefore they are excluded from our theme.

Also classic "**fats**" and "**thins**" are uncommon: in fact, everybody possesses all the characteristics of both groups, but in more or less <u>unequal proportion</u>. These characteristics, which we do not examine because they are infrequent, are present in <u>equal measure</u> in the type of average individual called "wide or athletic man", persevering, and irritable.



The origin of differentiation should probably be sought in hereditary characteristics, the type of preand postnatal nutrition (breastfeeding or bottle) which determines the number of cells designed to store fat, and which half of the brain is more active.

In the table on the following page the two classic types, with regard to their physical and temperamental properties, are represented.

Recall again that the majority of human beings has "a bit more of the one and a bit less of the other".

Deductible from the small table is a fundamental concept:

the thin is **introverted** (keeps everything within himself, psychotic, schizophrenic) the fat is **extroverted** (bestows all on the other, depressive, maniacal). This concept is linked to the four types of behaviour described by Galeno in antiquity: the **choleric, melancholic, sanguine and phlegmatic** types.

Determination of the type

It is not always easy to categorize a person, especially when there is little time available, the person is dressed, wears a beard, is very young and sporty, etc.

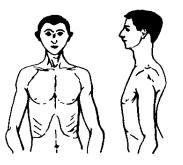
The physical properties only become evident with advancing age.

In principle, the slim-skinny physique, or vice versa the chubby, already betrays the kind of personality.

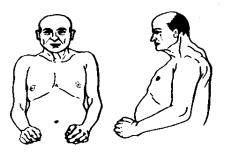
Also helpful is the observation of the behaviour resulting from the characteristics listed above.

Example: the person who is cold, detached, wearing plain colours, highly concentrated in reading, is probably a "thin".

Typology of the individual



Schizothymic, "thin "



Cyclothymic, "fat"

DEFINITION

Way of life

Rhythm of life

Way of behaving and acting

Way of interpreting things Attention, concentration

Sensibility Relationships with others

Personal pace Fatigue Philosophy, politics idealistic, super-organized life

his own rhythm

according to fixed and foreordained schemes according to the form hardly distractible, focuses on a single activity high, hard to reconcile detached, cold (only few friends but good ones) fast sudden rationalist practical, natural, without rules

adapts to circumstances and to others adapting himself to the situation

according to the colour easily distractible, many parallel activities low, easy to reconcile ease of contact, great human warmth but superficial slow progressive pragmatic

There are also tests to determine the type:

 Example
 : you have eight pieces of paper as follows:

 2 red triangles
 and
 2 blue triangles

 2 red circles
 and
 2 blue circles

 Now reshuffle the pieces of paper and ask test takers to divide them into two groups according to a criterion of their choice.

Most probably the "thin" will divide them according to the shape (triangles and circles) and the "fat" will divide them according to the colour (red and blue).

You can ask the usual questions as well.

Example : is it easy for you to make new acquaintances and new friends?

Do you immediately become friendly with others? Do you often get offended? Are you idealistic or practical? Are you often annoyed? etc.

Consequently, it is obvious that the physical type also influences the way to satisfy the needs described in the previous chapter.

Characteristics

It's important to know at least those listed in the table:

The "thin", as a good introverted, is cold, reserved, aloof. The "fat" is outgoing, loving, open, good company.

Example : Often the animator of a group of friends is a very nice, laughing "fat", who jokes, is friendly, and pats everyone on the back, while the thin, while having a great time, are pretty reserved.

Example : Often the "leaders" of large organizations or political parties and successful people are of the cyclothymic type because of their innate ability to communicate.

It is therefore irrational to approach a "thin" without tactfulness, while a "fat" will immediately become friendly.

Conversely it is also irrational to force oneself to act differently from what is one's own nature.

Example : The thin, talking, laughing, and joking loudly and ostentatiously, in the long run becomes unbearable.

Yet it is important to know oneself and, on the basis of this notes, to seek to mitigate those characteristics that, because they are too sharp, are almost faults and may shock others.

Example : The "thin" must commit himself to adapt to circumstances, not to be obstinate, and not get mad for every trifling thing.

Example : The "fat" must strive to leave some "space" even to the personality of the other.

Consequently, it is obvious that the physical type also influences the way to satisfy the needs described in the previous chapter.

Factors such as culture, education, family, environment, social status, group dynamics, etc., may overlap with the natural personality, which is sometimes even deliberately hidden and / or denied because it is considered socially disreputable.

Example: There are some people who take offense if it they are considered introverted.

In this case, even unconsciously, the individual lives as the actor who impersonates a character alien to him, and which must show some feelings that in reality he doesn't feel. It is the so-called "social mask" that almost all adult individuals carry as a shield to defend themselves from a society that judges and evaluates others according to their look and their behaviour.

Example : The 'thin' who grew up in a family environment dominated by 'fats' acts as fat but keeps the high sensitivity characteristic of the thin. This inner conflict may even put the individual in crisis.

Only children escape from this logic because they still act spontaneously



Of the file Fundamental elements of social psychology

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typology_(psychology) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normal_distribution http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somatotype_and_constitutional_psychology