McAdams (2015)

Chapter 6   The Motivational Agenda – What Agents Want

20th Century Theories of Motivation: There have been multiple theories

- Behaviorism: reinforcements vs. punishment (Skinner)
- Freud: Sex (Eros) & Aggression (Thanatos)
- Carl Jung: Individuation across the lifespan
- Humanistic Psychology, e.g., Abraham Maslow (hierarchy of motives) and Carl Rogers => Humans strive for self-actualization, spiritual completion, personal salvation, making manifest our good inner potential.
- Henry Murray: "Psychogenic needs" – achievement, affiliation, dominance, nurturance, order, play, avoiding harmful situations (p. 171)
- Evolutionary Psychology, e.g., David Buss: Mate attraction, mate selection, procreation, child rearing, forming alliances in social groups, defending ourselves from attach, finding food & shelter, etc. (p. 172)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) & the Need for Autonomy (Edward Deci & Richard Ryan)

- Extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation
    - Extrinsic: obtaining rewards from the environment, avoiding punishment
    - Intrinsic: Behavior that is rewarding in itself (play, work, creative activities, leisure, religion, spirituality, and others)
- Self-determined behavior comes from
    - Need for autonomy: feel free and able to choose [most basic]
    - Need for competence: feel mastery & effectiveness
    - Need for relatedness: feel loved & secure

Competence: On Getting Ahead in Social Groups – Motives for Achievement & Power (p. 177)

- David McClelland (Harvard personality psychologist) extended work of Henry Murray
    - Motivation is a concern in the imagination for some sort of goal or condition which drives, directs, and selects behavior of individuals. Motives are learned as we grow up and are shaped by the values of our society and culture.
    - Need for Achievement (nAch): to excel, to strive for success evaluated against some standard of excellence
        - Research for past 50 years show that nAch varies in people from low to high. People high in nAch often go into business and show leadership in their chosen field
    - Need for Affiliation (nAff): have close personal relationships
    - Need for Power (nPOW): be influential in the world, helping, volunteering

Relatedness: On Getting Along in Social Groups – Motives for Affiliation and Intimacy

- nAff: Need for relatedness involves strivings for love, friendship, community, and other warm and caring relationships.
- High nAff people are seen as sensitive, sincere, and caring (p. 187). Associated with greater happiness and overall psychological well-being

Prevention vs. Promotion (p. 190, Table 6.1)

- *Prevention goals*: avoid pain, punishment, and threats. Look to safety, security, and self-control.
- *Promotion goals*: look to increase positive incentives, obtain rewards, experience growth and expansion of the self.

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TABLE 6.2. Developmental Change in Goal Pursuit

Young adulthood

- Establishing an identity: Exploring range of life goals (and values) and committing to subset that aims to provide life with meaning and purpose.
- Promotion focus greater than prevention focus.
- Goals related to education, jobs, friendships, love and marriage.
- Tolerance for contradictory and conflicting goals.
- Primary control strategies: Actively changing the environment to accomplish goals.

Middle adulthood

- Midlife reviews and midcourse corrections: Reassessing goals and making changes.
- Goals related to raising children, running a household, civic engagement, passing on cultural traditions.
- Ability to manage goals in order to minimize conflict.
- Increase in intrinsic motivation.

Later adulthood

- Prevention focus greater than promotion focus.
- Goals related to health, retirement, leisure, passing on cultural traditions.
- Winnowing of goals down to most important and meaningful concerns, often related to family.
- Even more increase in intrinsic motivation.
- Relatedness goals greater than competence goals.
- Secondary control strategies: Modifying expectations to accommodate and compensate for limitations.

Note. In broad-brush terms, this table summarizes the main findings from empirical research on age differences regarding the content of personal goals and the ways in which adults experience and pursue their goals. Although age estimates are inexact, think of "young adulthood" as roughly equivalent to ages 20–40, "middle adulthood" as ages 40–65, and "later adulthood" as ages 65 and above.