Kaufman, S. B. (2020). *Transcend: The new science of self-actualization*. New York, NY: TarcherPerigee.

**If you think that Maslow actually created a static pyramid for us to climb, you need to enjoy this book!**

Coming from the aspect of creativity, it was daunting to think that we had to follow a pyramid to self-actualization, scrambling from level-to-level only when we had achieved success at the lower level. As with many other theories, Maslow’s theory has been reduced to talking points. Kaufman starts with the original concepts and lets the work of Maslow bloom into the dynamic theory Maslow visualized as he became a more self-actualized person.

What a relief to have Maslow’s theory discussed in a manner that showed growth in a more fluid manner. Kaufman took Maslow’s unfinished theories and completed them in a manner consistent with Maslow’s works. Kaufman, …saw that Maslow was working on a set of axioms or propositions that would lay the foundation for a humanistic revolution.” At the time of his death, Maslow was writing a book that even included a chapter titled, *transhumanism,* a fifth force in psychology he thought should be considered. Titled, “The Possibilities for Human Nature,” Maslow’s book furthered exploration of not only his self-actualization, but the relationship of humans to other species.

With current discussions in the scientific world about consciousness, quantum physics, and the need of our world to be more inclusive of each other as well as other species, Kaufman’s book, and his thoughts as well as those of Maslow, address psychological theories that refuse to be dated.

Maslow’s Pyramid” was actually created by a management consultant in the sixties, and while it was a good representation, it also locked the theory into a static entity that is not able to grow as intended. A boat floating is more representative of Maslow’s image of our growth. Spiritual practices have spoken of the ebb and flow of life for eons, and, as Kaufman states, Maslow visualized his theory in the same manner.

Kaufman presents the boat bottom and sail to represent how Maslow’s theory of self-actualization works. The bottom of the boat is ***Security***, containing safety, connection, and self esteem.

· “The need for **safety** is tied to a particular form of meaning in life.

· “The need for **connection** actually consists of two subneeds: (a) The need

to belong, to be liked, to be accepted, and (b) The need for intimacy, for

mutuality, for relatedness.”

· **“Self-esteem** is one of the strongest correlates of life satisfaction (although the strength of the correlation differs based on culture), and low self-esteem is one of the biggest risk factors for depression.”

What fascinated me the most in this section was when students were dropped into a crime ridden area of very low security, *they began behaving like the people in the neighborhood*! In another study, Native American populations who lived in high crime, high addiction areas, when given royalties from casino income, *changed their behavior!* In today’s political climate, these results provide clear proof that funding programs to help the disadvantaged will produce more productive and healthy (mentally, emotionally, and physically) citizens.

The sail of the boat is **Growth.** The need for growth brings in a discussion of synergy, a term favored by Maslow. Maslow felt that adversity gave the opportunity for growth. Kaufman lists the seven areas of growth that have been reported to spring from adversity: 1) Greater appreciation of life; 2) Greater appreciation and strengthening of close relationships; 3) Increased compassion and altruism; 4) The identification of new possibilities or a purpose in life; 5) Greater awareness and utilization of personal strengths; 6) Enhanced spiritual development; 7) Creative growth.

Kaufman’s explains that this need for growth also involves our exploring our feelings about the events that produce this growth. He explains this as *cognitive growth.*

**Love**, as Maslow explicitly distinguished between *deficient love* (D-love) and B-love. Deficient love is described by Maslow as a “needing love”, to be “gratified.” B-love is an unneeding love. Those with B-love no not need constant reassurance. The B-love tends to grow, and requires no gratification. It is the love of more self-actualized people.

**Purpose,** “The need for purpose can be defined as the need for an overarching aspiration that energizes one’s efforts and provides a central source of meaning and significance in one’s life.”

Kaufman not only studied Maslow’s occupational side, but his personal life. “As I dived into Maslow’s private journals written during the last few years of his life, I saw a remarkable shift in his own depths of meaning, facilitated by the awareness of his own mortality, as well as the development of his own full humanness.”

Kaufman also mentions the inner conflicts, struggles, and insecurities of Maslow; his need to be liked and to have his sense of importance validated. He also had a grandiose side that was exhausted by the weight of responsibility and authority of being the “authority”.

According to Kaufman, Maslow’s life was also fraught by a competition between his ultra-rational scientific side and his intuitive spiritual side, which put him at odds with his fellow scientists and friends. These thoughts shared by Kaufman show a person who would never have come up with a rigid structure such as the pyramids the marketing people put together. I believe that some things are just too complicated to be put into such a simplistic framework.

Kaufman, in this study of the work of Abraham Maslow, shows Kaufman himself to be a self-actualized, self-aware individual whose work needs to be taken seriously. It was an academic treat to be given this view of Maslow.