

Potential of the Sport Experience (Ravizza)

KIN 161
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Experiences go beyond the ordinary

- According to the author, his experience was characterized by
- Control
- Strength
- Flow
- Inner power
- Effortlessness

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- Generalization of the greatest moments of life, of experiences of fantastic joy, bliss, ecstasy, and sheer delight.
- Moment when the individual experiences "total happiness"
 - Loss of fears
 - Loss of weakness
 - Loss of insecurities

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:



Maslow and Peak-Experience

- **Physiological needs**
 - the need to breathe
 - the need for water
 - the need to eat
 - the need to dispose of bodily wastes
 - the need for sleep
 - the need to regulate the bodily temperature
 - the need for protection from microbial aggressions (hygiene)

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- **Safety needs**
 - When the physiological needs are met, the need for safety will emerge. Safety and security ranks above all other desires. These include:
 - Security of employment
 - Security of revenues and resources
 - Physical Security - violence, delinquency, aggressions
 - Moral and physiological security
 - Familial security
 - Security of health

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- **Love/Belonging needs (Social)**
 - emotionally-based relationships
 - such as friendship
 - sexual intimacy
 - and/or having a family.
 - Humans want to be accepted and to belong,
 - whether it be to clubs, work groups, religious groups, family, gangs, etc.
 - They need to feel loved (sexually and non-sexually) by others, and to be accepted by them.
 - People also have a constant desire to feel needed. In the absence of these elements, people become increasingly susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety and depression.

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- **Esteem needs**
 - Humans have a need to be respected, to self-respect and to respect others.
 - People need to engage themselves in order to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that gives the person a sense of contribution and self-value, be it in a profession or hobby.
 - Imbalances at this level can result in a low self-esteem and inferiority complexes, and, on the other hand, can give an inflated sense of self-importance and snobbishness.

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- **Self-actualization**

“Self Actualization is the intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately, of what the organism is”
(Psychological Review, 1949)

 - They embrace the facts and realities of the world (including themselves) rather than denying or avoiding them.
 - They are spontaneous in their ideas and actions.

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- They are creative.
- They are interested in solving problems; this often includes the problems of others. Solving these problems is often a key focus in their lives.
- They feel a closeness to other people, and generally appreciate life.
- They have a system of morality that is fully internalized and independent of external authority.
- They judge others without prejudice, in a way that can be termed *objective*.

Maslow and Peak-Experience

- **Self-transcendence**
 - For Maslow, the peak-experience was a transient experience
 - “A particular experience in which the individual has an ecstatic, nonvoluntary, transient experience of being totally integrated, at peace with himself, functioning fully, and in complete control of the situation.”
(p. 62)

Sport and Peak-Experience

- One need not be particularly spiritual (or meditative)
- The sacred is in the ordinary!
- Sport is an area where people tend to become totally enrapt with the activity and thus set the stage (perhaps) for the peak-experience
- The rules are liberating since there is no ambiguity
- Participation is freely chosen
- Dedication allows for the enjoyment of the peak-experience

Sport and Peak-Experience

- After in-depth interviews with 20 athletes
The author discovered several related properties:
- A unique experience for the athlete
- Nonvoluntary experience
- Temporary experience

(cont.)

- Temporary transcendence of normal characteristics of self
 - Temp transcendence of self
 - Experience your world in a more profound and connected way
 - Total engrossment
 - Completely absorbed
 - Narrow focus of attention
 - One zeros in on only the activity – including seeing themselves in harmony with the activity

(cont.)

- Everything is perfect
 - This is how it SHOULD be
- Total control
 - Being at the height of ones powers
 - Freedom is from being integrated with what is happening
- Total loss of fear
 - One does not fear failure
- Effortless movement
 - One does not force their movements

(cont.)

- Self validating experience
 - Not dependant on outcome
- Basic skill level
 - “second-nature” execution of basic skills
 - An athlete need not be an expert however
 - The peak-experience is subjective

Conclusion

- The author suggests that we pay close attention to these experiences as they help us to achieve a greater personal understanding and self-knowledge
- Moves past win at all costs mentality
- Move ends-means justifications
- Helps to shape and frame the limits of human-potential