

# TRAIT THEORY



# **TRAIT THEORY**

## ***Biological Approaches to Personality***

Trait theory seeks to explain, in a straightforward way, the *consistencies* in individuals' behavior.

Traits are enduring patterns of behavior, such as thinking, acting, and feeling that are relatively consistent across different situations.

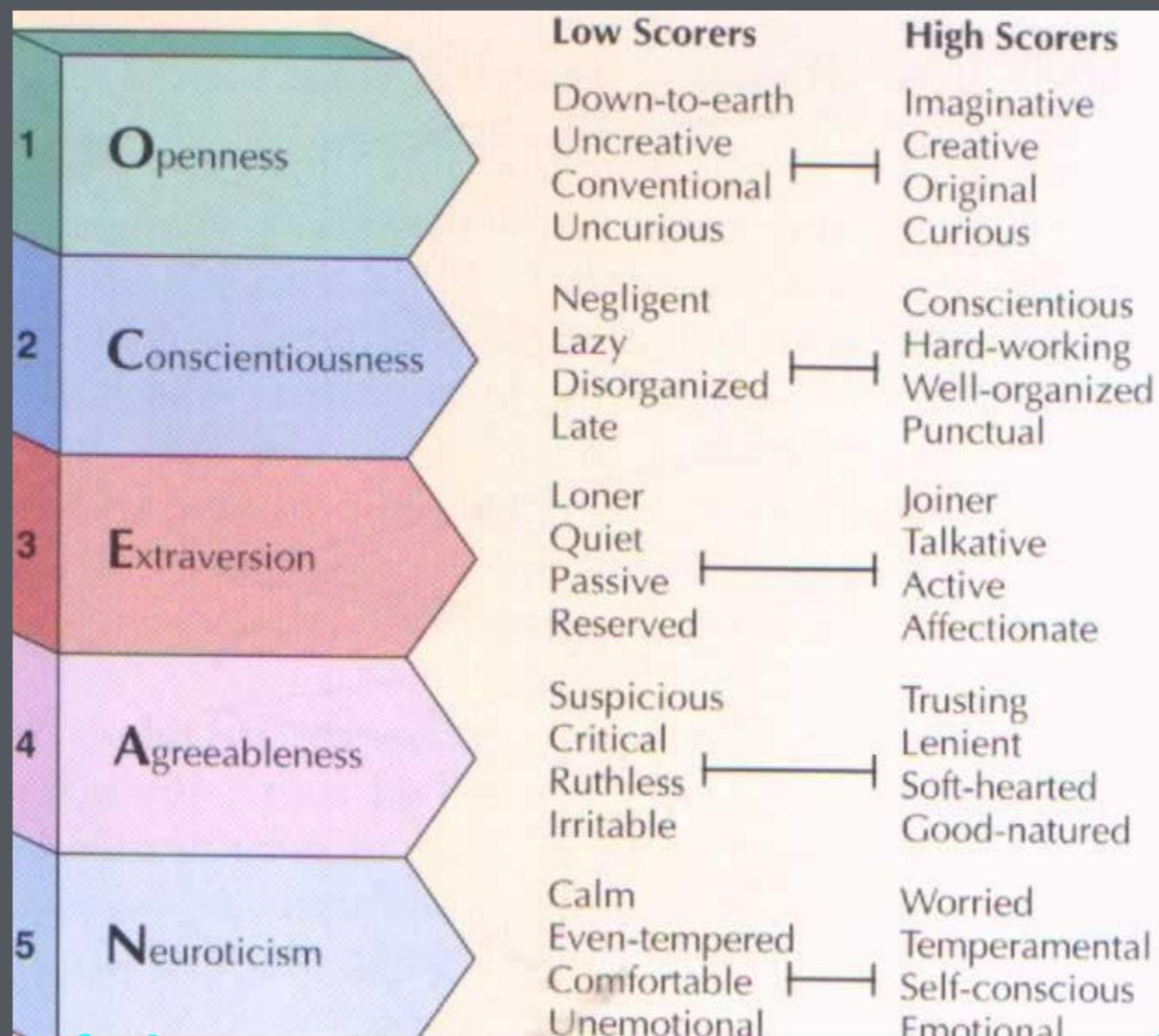
Traits tend to lead to characteristic responses:

People can be described in terms of the basic ways they behave, such as whether they are outgoing and friendly or dominant and assertive.

People who have a strong tendency to behave in these ways are described as high on the traits; those who have a weak tendency to behave in certain ways are described as low on the traits.

# *The Big Five Personality Traits*

Most common trait approaches to personality can be captured using these five dimensions



This is one of the more current approaches to personality. This approach is mostly research driven opposed to theory based, this theory came about through data.

# The Soloist

The Soloist is the true story of Nathaniel Anthony Ayers and his relationship with L.A. Times journalist Steve Lopez. Steve approaches Nathaniel playing the violin on the LA streets only to learn the story of a promising past ravaged by mental illness and homelessness.



# Nathaniel Anthony Ayers

## BIOLOGY – GENETICS – TRAIT THEORY



Nathaniel displays all of the signs and symptoms of a person suffering from schizophrenia. He was an attendee of Juilliard in 1970 but dropped out in his second year.

Schizophrenia is characterized by profound disruption in cognition and emotion, affecting the most fundamental human attributes: language, thought, perception, affect, and sense of self.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 2.4 million schizophrenics live in America. Moreover, it is estimated that 1 percent of the entire population of the world is schizophrenic. This is a mental illness that can incapacitate or even kill a person. Although the causes of schizophrenia are not entirely known, scientists think that genetics is a major factor in the development and progression of the illness.

In July of 2008, a study came out looking at the genetic causes of schizophrenia. So far, it looks as if there are three kinds of genetic material (microdeletions) present in non-schizophrenics and lacking in schizophrenics, and it's thought that this factor can make a person more prone to developing schizophrenia, but may not be the actual cause. These microdeletions do seem to run in families. Other factors thought to combine together with these genes include problems with brain chemistry, injuries to the brain during birth that leave the brain smaller than normal, and traumatic or very stressful events.

# ***Nathaniel Anthony Ayers***

## ***THE ENVIRONMENT***



Stressors that contributed to the neurological onset of Schizophrenia:

- The pressures of Juilliard
- Current stressors in his environment like living on skid row as well as Steve Lopez
- His “apartment”. While he was an adult one of the main stressor that was a catalyst for his Schizophrenia was the apartment given to him by Lamp. Simply calling it an apartment triggered the illness and brought it back. It remind him of his time at Juilliard and the apartment he was so excited to have as his own back then.



Mary Weston – BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE  
Steve Lopez' ex-wife she is also his boss at the L.A. Times.  
She still loves/cares for Steve and becomes jealous of the  
friendship he has with Nathaniel

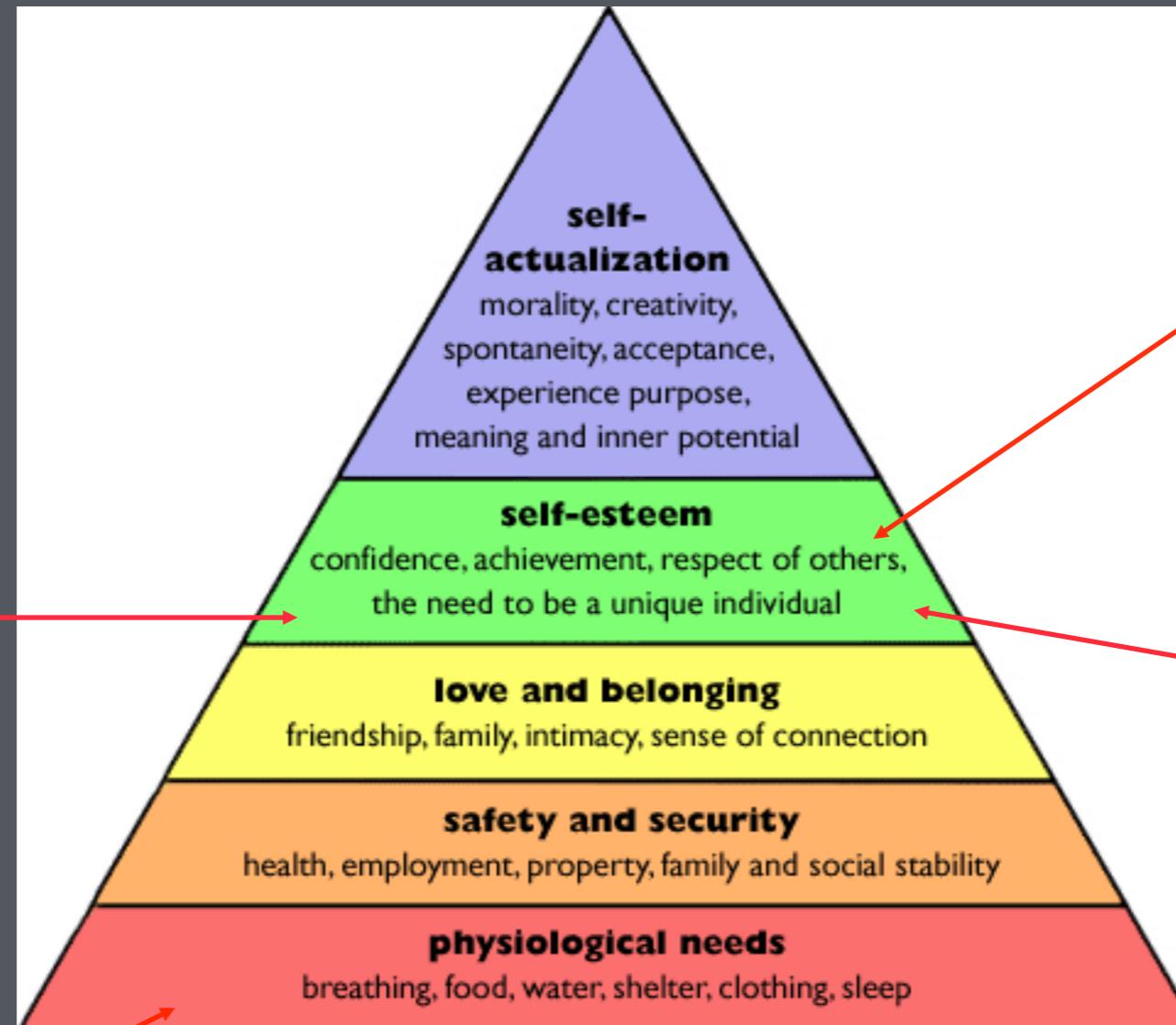


David – HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE  
Works at Lamp, David is dedicated to helping the mentally ill and  
homeless in the area. He is passionate about his work and it shows  
through.



Jennifer Ayers-Moore – HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE  
Nathaniel Ayers sister who has been out of touch with Nathaniel  
for a long time before reconnecting with him through the help of  
Steve Lopez.

# When we first meet these characters...



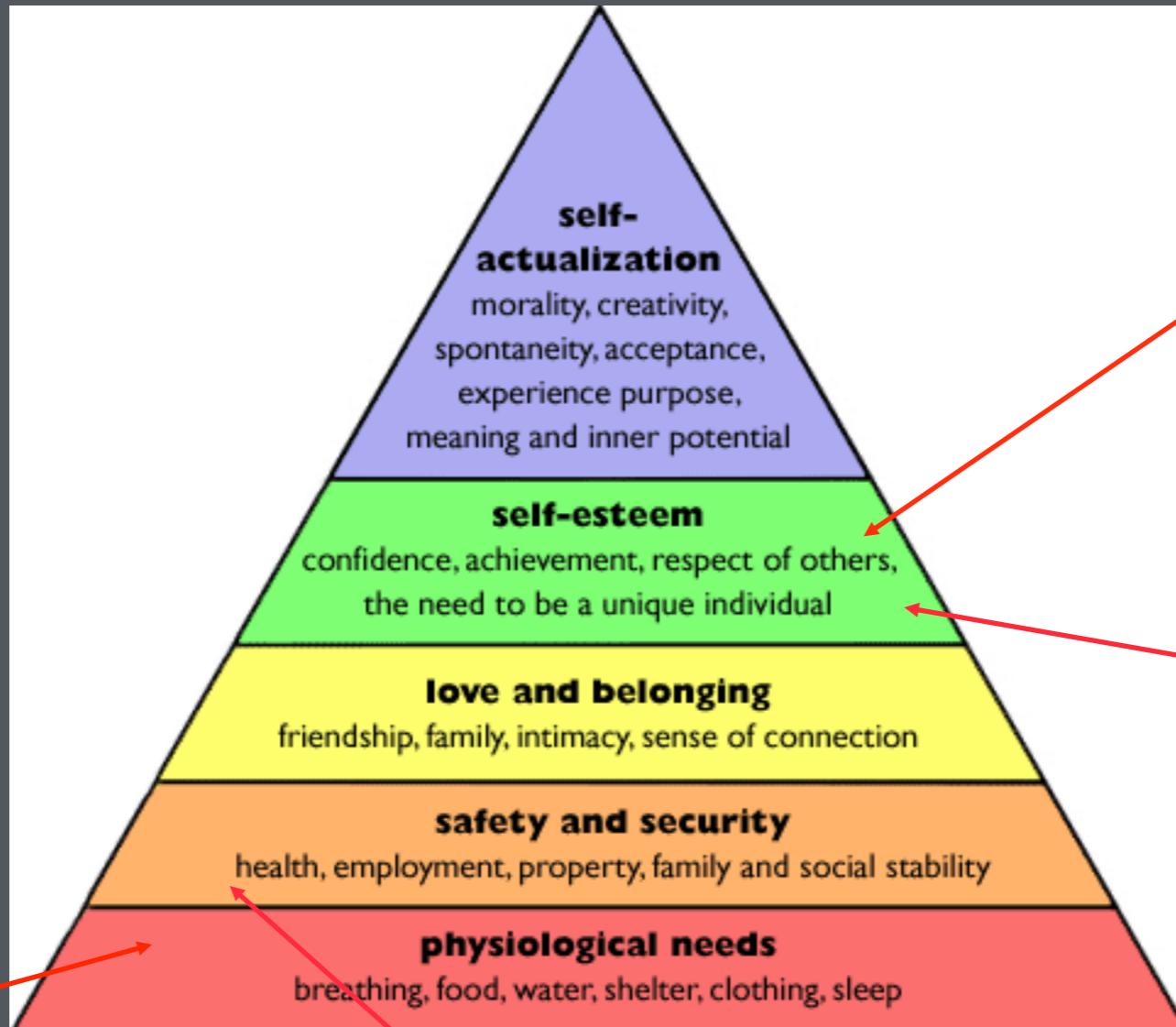
**Steve Lopez**  
He has achieved status as a columnist for the LA Times. Has a relatively decent life and is very confident in his work.

**Nathaniel**  
He is borderline between physiological and off Maslows chart, he has nothing and can barely maintain food and shelter

**David**  
David is very even keeled throughout this movie, he has much respect for people esp. the homeless and mentally ill around him.

**Mary**  
She is also confident in her work. She lives a good life and cares a lot for Steve Lopez

AFTER we first meet these characters...



Nathaniel

ays at is level, does not fluctuate.

David

David does not change,  
He remains at self esteem

Mary

Mary does  
not change,  
she remains  
at self-  
esteem

Steve Lopez

Steve drops down from self-esteem to safety when he is fighting with his wife and when Nathaniel slaps him in the apartment. Steve knows he is in a bad situation so he brings Jennifer Ayers to LA to intercede and reach out to Nathaniel.

# What caused the change...



What three major things do you think caused the change?

niel mentioning that he went to Juilliard was the cause of the series of ev

- Jennifer Ayers comment “he plays the violin now?”

e donation if the cello from the reader of Lopez article

# HELPING NATHANIEL...

## Biopsychosocial

Nathaniel falls under the Biopsychosocial Model of psychology. His mental illness is biological, as he was predisposed to the gene. Although carrying the gene is an important factor there are other factors that contribute to the illness surfacing. Due to certain circumstances in his life while he was attending Juilliard something happened that triggered the condition causing it to surface.





## Area of Psychology and changes in behavior...Steve Lopez

Lopez is a well known columnist for the L.A Times.

Keeping in mind the five major personality traits OCEAN Steve Lopez possessed a few of these traits which benefited him in his work and in his relationship with Nathaniel Openness, Extroversion and Conscientiousness.

Openness to Experience - He was ready and willing to submerge himself into a world unlike what he was familiar with. We see this when he goes to skid row effortlessly, and more specifically when he chooses accompany Nathaniel on the streets he called home. Sleeping with him in squalor and among rats.

Extroversion – Because Steve is an extrovert he does not have any trouble approaching a homeless man on the street. In most of Steve's interactions we he is very forward whether it be to get

Nathaniel into Lamp or to get him set up with an apartment. There is aggressiveness within Steve as well, when Steve adamantly yells at David to

# Steve Lopez cont...



Conscientiousness - Steve possess this trait because he is hard working, dependable and somewhat

impulsive. He works hard to complete the mission he sees with Nathaniel.

Nathaniel realizes throughout

this movie that Steve is not just someone looking to write a story but turns out to be someone he can depend on, and in his life he did not have many people like UNSURE OR INSECURE – Steve is unsure what the right way to help Nathaniel.

He thinks he is doing what is right but he questions his approach.

# Learning...

How do you think Steve learned from those around him?

Steve has the most profound change. Although he cares for Nathaniel the entire time it isn't until the end that he realizes he can only be the friend that Nathaniel needs and nothing else.

Steve learns this from those around him...

- He sees the love that David possesses for all the people that need help and he begins to understand that he needs to just be there for Nathaniel as someone he can trust and not as someone who tries to control
  - his choices.
- Steve also learns indirectly from Nathaniel as well. By seeing the negative results he caused Nathaniel
  - he realizes that will break Nathaniel's trust and
- The most significant time when Steve learns he can not change Nathaniel and must change his own actions is when he is at his home having a conversation with Mary. Steve compares trying save his son during an LA earthquake to how he wanted to "save" Nathaniel realizing it can never happen. It was then that

# David Carter

David Carter displays the Humanistic Perspective.



David works at Lamp because he cares for the well being of the mentally ill and homeless around him.

His utmost concern is being the voice behind those who can not speak for themselves for one reason or another. He views the men and women on skid row not as an outcast as society shows us but still as part of this

world and worthy of help and attention. He recognizes the importance of human values.

Ex. When Steve Lopez gets angry and tries to have David force Nathaniel to see a doctor and take

medications by not letting him play his instruments. David says “that’s not what we do here. Nathaniel’s made it quite clear he’s not ready to speak to a psychiatrist.”

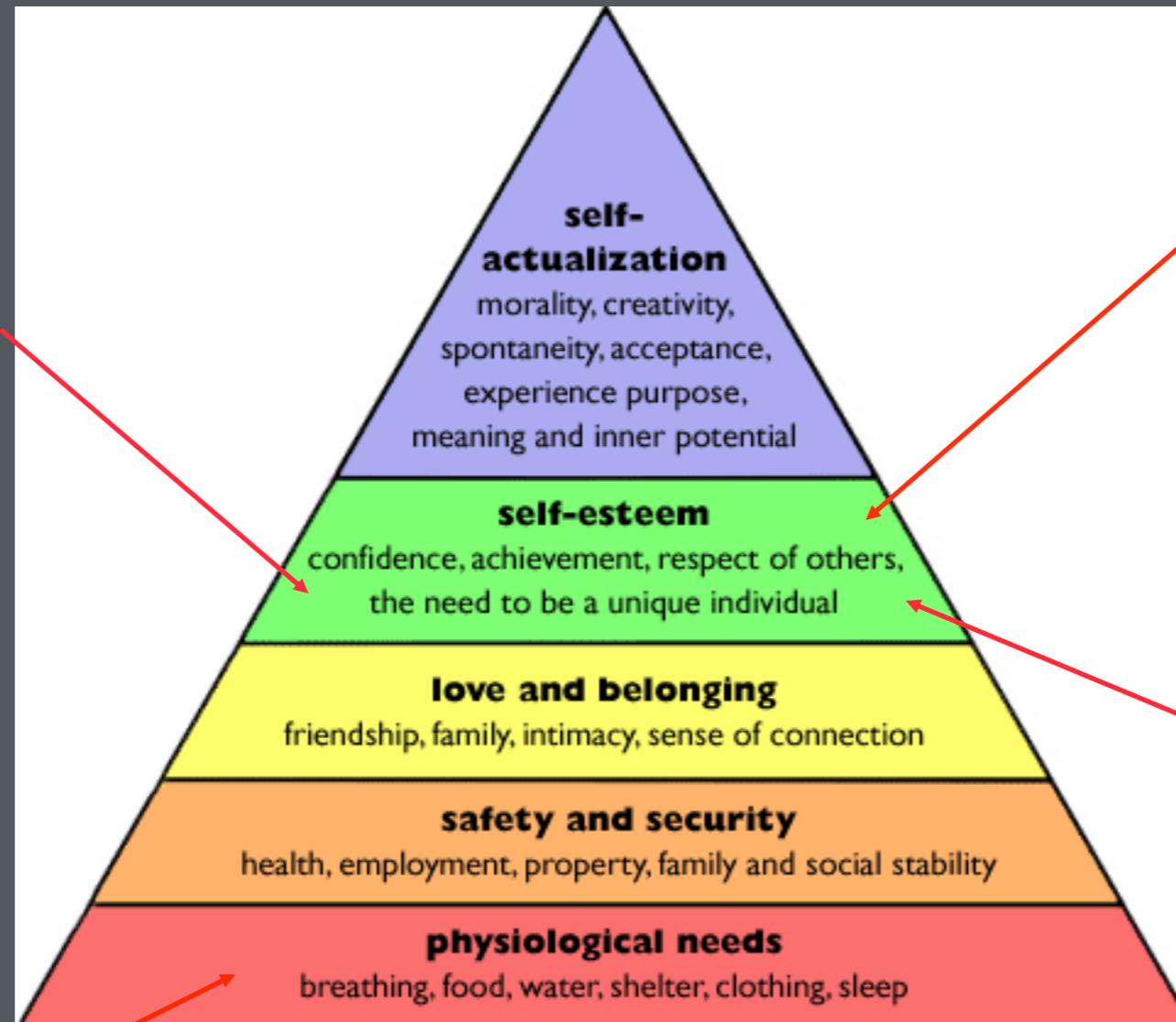
# After these characters move forward...

Steve

In the ~~end~~ Steve is back at self-esteem. He made up with Nathaniel and his wife. He stopped trying to force Nathaniel to see a doctor and take meds. They are all at Lamp dancing with each other and having a good time.

Nathaniel

Nathaniel is in a better place than he was. Although he is still at physiological needs as he has all his needs met in a more promising way. He is no longer sleeping on the skid row he is in his apartment. He found a good friend in Steve Lopez



David

He remains in self-esteem because of his love and passion for the work he does.

Mary

~~She is more happy in her relationship with Steve. She joins them at Lamp spending time with the homeless dancing also having a good time.~~

# The End

