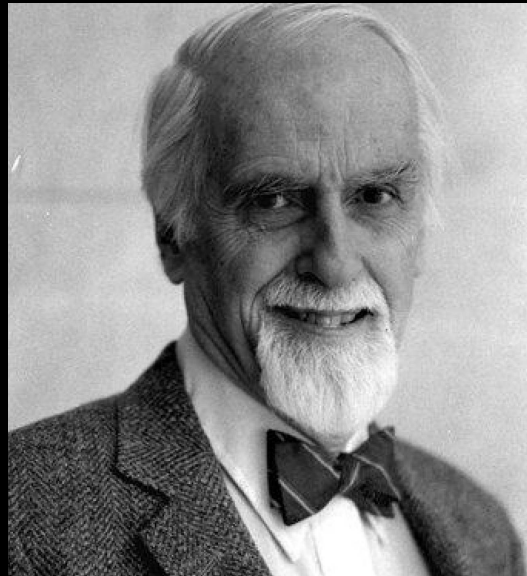


MCCLELLAND'S THEORY OF NEEDS



- The acquired-needs theory was developed by David McClelland, and is called "**McClelland's Theory of Needs**" (sometimes as the "Three Need Theory" or the "**Learned Needs Theory**"). McClelland proposed that ***an individual's specific needs are acquired over time and are shaped by one's early life experiences.***
-

- According to McClelland, most of human needs and/or motives can be classified as **achievement**, **affiliation**, and **power**. He found that a person's motivation and effectiveness in certain job functions are influenced by these three needs. Thus, the importance of a particular need depends upon the position.
-

ACHIEVEMENT

- *The need for achievement (N-Ach) is the extent to which an individual desires to perform difficult and challenging tasks successfully.*

PEOPLE WITH A HIGH NEED FOR ACHIEVEMENT:

- *Desire success and positive feedback that is related to their performance on tasks*
 - *Seek to excel and thus tend to avoid both low-risk and high-risk situations*
 - *Like to work alone or with other high achievers*
-

Predominantly achievement-motivated individuals avoid low-risk situations because they find easily attained success is not genuine achievement; rather they attribute it to the ease of the task not their own effort. Similarly, *they avoid high-risk projects*, regarding success as the result of chance not their competence. Thus, *individuals with high need for achievement are not gamblers, nor are they afraid to take risks*. Rather, *they calculate the degree of risk and select moderate risk options*.

- McClelland suggested that *people with high achievement need make **good leaders***, although they tend to expect those that they work with also to be result driven and may expect too much from them. Their aggressive realism makes them successful entrepreneurs.

AFFILIATION

- *The need for **affiliation** (N-Affil) is the desire for harmonious relationships with other people.*

People with high need for affiliation:

- Want to be liked and feel accepted by other people
 - Tend to conform to the norms of their work group
 - Prefer cooperation over competition
 - Enjoy being part of a group.
-

- High affiliation need individuals *prefer work that provides significant **personal interaction**, and depends on **successful relationships with others**, such as customer service. They are **concerned with whether people like them more than whether they are doing a good job**. McClelland regarded a strong need for affiliation as undermining the objectivity and decision-making ability needed in management.*

POWER

- *The need for **power** (N-Pow) is a desire for **authority**, to be in charge. It takes two forms—**personal** and **institutional**.*

- Those who desire **personal** power *want to direct others*; this need often is perceived as undesirable
 - Those who desire **institutional** power (also known as social power) *want to organize the efforts of others to further larger goals*, such as those of an organization
-

- In management, while the job requires directing others, those with a high need for **personal** power may become dysfunctional as their focus is on the directing of others rather than on the achievement of the company's goals.
 - Managers with a high need for **institutional** power tend to be more effective than those with a high need for personal power, since they channel their need into accomplishing goals set by the organization. Those whom they direct are more likely to respond positively when they are being directed toward the larger goal.
-

- ***McClelland noted that people generally have all three needs; one need, however, tends to be dominant.*** This depends both on their internal make-up, their personality, and also is learned through experience. Unlike Abraham Maslow who developed a hierarchy of needs, McClelland did not discuss these three needs as stages or with transitions among them.

- In his later work, McClelland (1988) added a fourth need, **avoidance** which *functions to motivate people to avoid situations and people with which they have, or expect to have, unpleasant experiences*. These avoidance motives include fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of success, and generalized anxiety. In this work he also stressed that there are both conscious and unconscious intents that affect a person's motivation.