

What is Family? These days Families come in all different shapes and sizes. This wonderful variety, as well as less rigid structures than in the past, makes room for us to find our own sense of healthy Connection with kin.

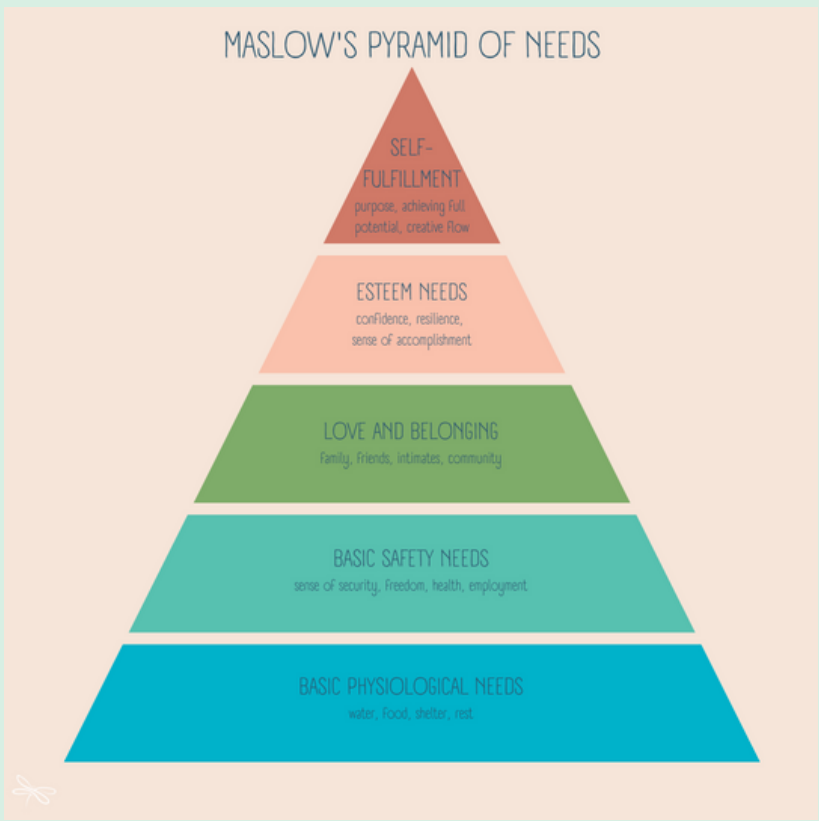
Have you ever thought about the kind of Family you have now, or the kind of Family you would like to have in the future?

Much has been written about our psychological development as human beings. I have chosen to refer to the work of Richard Barrett, president of the Barrett Academy for the Advancement of Human Values.

Family is so important in our development. As babies and then children we rely on our primary caregivers to help us meet our basic physical needs and also for a sense of safety and protection.

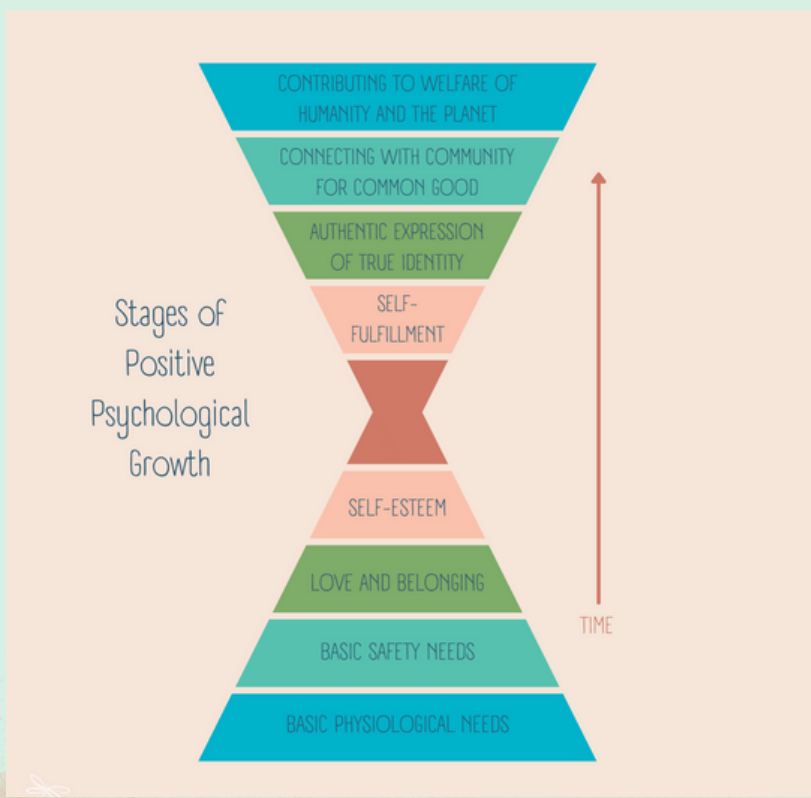
According to Barrett, around the age of 8 is when we start to look beyond our immediate caregivers for recognition and a sense of value within our broader community. This stage of development can continue into our mid-twenties.

What is important to note, I think, is how Family influence and Connections set the foundation for us as we venture into the World.



Richard Barrett built on the famous work of Abraham Maslow's Pyramid of Needs to create his Seven Stage of Psychological Development Model. Both these models have helped me see the place of Family in our individual Journeys. I have found both models useful in articulating where I am right now as well as inspiring me to move forward in my life's Journey.

Reflect on both diagrams here. Where are you at right now? Could you set some aims for areas of growth moving forward?



Because the Nature of Family is so important and Foundational in supporting our growth and development, let's use a whole page for this self-reflection exercise. Give yourself a good chunk of time to consider these self-reflection questions on Family...



What or who do you think of when you hear the word 'FAMILY'?

What's your FAMILY story?

Do you agree with your cultural heritage's idea of FAMILY? What would you change and why?

What kind of FAMILY do you want to have in the future?

Who could you talk to more about this idea of FAMILY?

Is there a Place for Nature or the natural World in your idea of FAMILY? Why, or why not?