

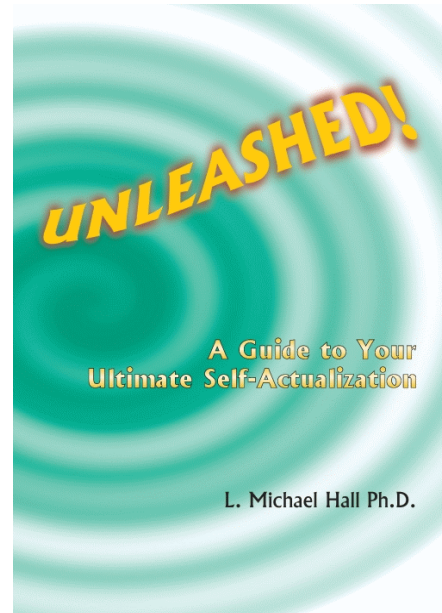
# UNLEASHED!

## A GUIDE TO YOUR ULTIMATE SELF-ACTUALIZATION

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D.

### *What is Self-Actualization?*

- Actualizing your highest and best skills, capabilities, possibilities, and potentials.
- Being the best *you* so that you can be fully alive/fully human and contribute your unique gifts.
- Fully functioning as a psychologically healthy human being in all of your relationships, activities, career, habits, etc.
- Refusing to die with your music and gifts still within you, but actively seeking to develop your talents, turn them into competent skills and express your best as your contribution.
- The human adventure of continuing to grow and develop as an adult with child-like love, passion, curiosity, wonder, and learning.



Abraham Maslow intended to write a book about *Self-Actualization Psychology*, but he died at the young age of 62 before he could pull together his life's research. Now, Dr. L. Michael Hall a cognitive psychologist has stepped up to continue Maslow's vision of actualizing human potential.

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## A GUIDE TO YOUR ULTIMATE SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Everybody talks about self-actualization, but who does anything about it? Who can tell us *how* it actually works and what can we practically do to actualize our potentials? What are you doing to unleash your potentials? What potentials have you already begun to unleash? What potentials will you be unleashing this year? If we all have a self-actualization drive within us, a drive that urges us to make our highest and best real and to become all that we can be, *how* do we achieve this and experience the joy of being “in the zone” of self-actualization in our everyday lives?

So many questions and now the book *Unleashed* offers some answers. Discover in this revolutionary work *how to unleash your highest potentials*. As a practical guide for taking your skills to new levels of peak performances and experiencing new levels of personal transformation, *Unleashed* is about the human journey that embraces the possibility of greatness. But this is not an adventure for the faint of heart. It is for those ready to change themselves and their world. How ready are you to be unleashed?

Experience life as a *self-actualizing adventure*—explorative, meaningful, enriching, productive, and fun. Live more fully with love and humor, connection, and contribution and join the new *movement for achieving self-actualization*.

### ***What's in Unleashed?***

*Unleashed* presents self-actualization as a drama in three acts. So the book opens up with a section on *Waking Up to the Possibilities* wherein the vision of self-actualization is described as is the metaphor of “unleashing” and attitude required to actualized your highest and best. And with that, the three-stage drama begins:

*Act I: The Construct of Self-Actualization*

*Act II: The Crucible of Self-Actualization*

*Act III: The Zone of Self-Actualization*

***Act I*** is because self-actualization is a function of meaning and *meaningfulness*. We are free of any and all genetic “programs” that force us to think and function in a deterministic way. For human life we have to create the meanings that we live by and that’s where “the construct” comes in, the place in our mind where we construct meaning. This is the place where we assume the power and responsibility for creating the kind and quality of meanings that make life worth living. It’s the place where we find the highest meanings that make everything full of rich meanings.

***Act II*** is because self-actualization is also about change, transformation, and ongoing development. It is about actually performing what we understand, believe, and intend. So we then enter into the Crucible of change where we take all of our hot needs, emotions, and

experience. Then in that crucible we develop the forms and structures for using our inner power of choice to actualize our best. Here we develop a strong enough sense of self to transcend self (ego), create the inner security to take smart risks, and learn to synthesize opposites as we create new forms and levels of synergy.

**Act III** is because self-actualization is experienced as moments of flow, as peak and plateau experiences, and where we are able to create peak performances with our highest gifts and competencies. Here we enter into the Zone of self-actualization itself and experience a synergy between our highest meanings and performances. Now we can stretch forward to ever higher levels of development, capitalize on problems, and experience the peak experiences of love, joy, valuing, etc. As we do this with others, we are then able to create self-actualizing cultures and that's the beginning step for changing the world.

# UNLEASHED

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## PREFACE

“What lies *behind* us and what lies *before* us  
are tiny matters  
compared to what lies *within* us.”  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

**T**his book is about one thing and one thing only—  
*Unleashing the potentials within you so you can discover and  
experience all that you have to offer as you experience more peak  
experiences of “flow” and take your performances to ever higher  
levels.*

This is “self-actualization.” In self-actualizing, you *actualize* yourself as you mobilize all of your inner psychological resources as well as all of your outer relational, social, and environmental resources to make your life all that it can be.

In the drama of making this happen, you will discover how to release everything that holds you back, everything that interferes with your possibilities, and everything that undermines your courage to break out of the limitations that may now be holding you back. Are you ready for this?

If this seems like a big order, it absolutely is! It is an enormous vision about life, meaning, and ourselves. And if you entertain this vision to *become all you can become*, you will be embarking on a lifelong adventure in discovering your authenticity as you develop the best version of *you*.

I believe this is critically important? The reason is because only then will you feel completely *at home in your own skin*, real, authentic, congruent, and able to be completely present. Consider the opposite. What do you feel, and how do you act, when you aren’t experiencing life in this way? Typically we feel disconnected from any exciting passion, we feel an anxiety about trying to figure out what we’re supposed to be doing, what we really want, perhaps even frustrated or even depressed with our current life. If you are not in the process of self-actualizing, the very *quality* of your life will suffer.

Every day I talk to people about these things. For more than a decade I've been running a workshop on self-actualization called *Accessing Personal Genius* (APG), which is designed to enable people to wake up to the possibilities and to discover their innate powers for finding their passions and being able to step into a "flow" state of total engagement. Over ten thousand people in two dozen countries have experienced APG which has given me an extensive appreciation of the challenges and processes.

Before that I had a private psychotherapy practice in which I focused on such things as "empowerment," personal effectiveness, and business success. I didn't start out in psychology with that emphasis. My training in psychology did not introduce me to the *bright side* of human nature, but to the *dark side*. I was introduced to how people get hurt and traumatized. How people become "disordered" in their personality so that they feel messed-up in their mind and emotions.

I started there, but I didn't stay there. Eventually I started reading the works of Maslow and others in the *Human Potential Movement* and that awakened in me a whole new focus and perspective. It awakened in me a desire to discover my own potentials and to see what "greatness" could or does lie within myself and others.

So this book is a strength basis approach of psychology that assumes there's more to life than just fixing broken things. There's the whole question about what it means to be a *fully functioning human being*. There's the question of living with meaning and passion, of enjoying life, of discovering your potentials, of being in love, of contributing, and of making a difference.

While I've written other books on self-actualization, this is the first one that I have written as a *practical guide* to enable you to actualize your potentials and point you in the direction of your ultimate self-actualization. I have written this book for anyone looking for living a more real and more full-of-meaning life. I want to offer something that empowers you to experience a robust sense of vitality. If you're not ready for that and for all it entails, it would be best to wait.

"Wait? Why?" Because this book will otherwise awaken and disturb, it will challenge and provoke, and it will ruin any delusion of smug satisfaction with conventional life. With this book I want to jar you from your comfort zone. So my objective is not to comfort, but to induce an *exciting restlessness*. I want to disturb. I want to disturb your conventional thinking and to invite you to expand your consciousness, to see new vistas and possibilities. All of this will challenge the traditional ways we sleep through life.

Has it done that for me? You bet it has. As I have researched and written this book, my own peace and tranquility has been disturbed. How? Mostly, I have

discovered how small I have been thinking, and how safe I have been playing life. So in the process I have been awakened in places where I had been slumbering and my potentials undisturbed. As this reinitiated new searches in my psyche, it has unleashed some new areas of growth that I'll share in the coming chapters.

In unleashing your potentials to actualize your best, I will be inviting you into *being* before *doing* and *having*. This turns everything upsidedown from the way most of us direct our lives. Typically we think about what we want to *have*, then figure out what we have to *do* to achieve what we want and then adjust ourselves in how we have to *be*. Or, we may find that we are able to *do* certain things and so go for a ride *doing* what we can. This leads then to *having* certain things. We then end up *being* according to the roles and games required by those activities.

The Self-Actualization Psychology I offer here reverses that order. Instead of *doing* or *having* setting the pace, this journey starts with *doing*. It starts with your exploration of your inner gifts and strengths. You search for the potentials and passions within yourself first —what and who you want to *be*. What seeds of potentials are within? What passions have, or could, emerge from our deepest core expressing your deepest and highest essence. What *way of being* in the world would be most true to what truly excites you? What inner gifts, talents, and strengths would enable you to fall in love with life so that you feel the passion of giving your best?

As a guide to your ultimate self-actualization, I will quote again and again in the pages of this book from the original pioneer, Abraham Maslow. To give voice to his vision of the bright side of human nature has been a wonderful privilege for me. Reading and re-reading his books convinced me that very little of his vision has become part of today's current of thought, that his genius has not even begun to be appreciated, and that what he wrote and developed could very well change the quality of life on this planet.

If you're open to waking up to the possibilities slumbering inside you and if you're game for the ultimate adventure of life—buy this book. In it I set before you *the Red Pill*. So be careful. Take it and I will show you the Matrix, which will invite you into the whirlwind of the Construct where you will discover and develop your incredible powers as a maker of meaning in the Crucible of challenge. Are you ready to see how deep the rabbit hole goes? Are you ready to become unleashed? Are you ready to step into the Zone of focus and “flow” at will so you can get lost in an engagement? Then turn the page and you'll begin to take *the Red Pill of self-actualization*.