**Title: Innovation & Self-Actualization: A Symbiotic Relationship  
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**APA’s Jessica Carson:** Welcome everyone to our second Innovation Series webinars. This series has proven to be wonderfully-popular so far, and we are so, so, so pleased to have Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman on today. Scott is one of my personal favorite thought leaders in psychology. I had the privilege of being able to hear him speak on a panel in New York a few years ago, and have been following his work ever since.

For those of you who are less familiar with Scott, he is a humanistic psychologist exploring the depths of human potential; specifically, looking at topics like intelligence, creativity and wellbeing. He has taught everywhere from Columbia, to NYU, to UPenn; and is the author of multiple books like *Transcend*, *Wired to Create*, *Ungifted*, and others. As a side note- and I just found this out today. I knew that he was the lead of a podcast called the *Psychology Podcast*. I did not realize that it is the number one voted science podcast, which is super awesome and exciting. So, I encourage you to also check out Dr. Kaufman on social media and his website. He also- and I'm sure he'll tell us more about this in a bit- has a really exciting eight-week virtual course inspired by his new book; *Transcend*.

I reached out to Scott to come speak about the intersection of innovation and self-actualization because that is the theme of his latest book; *Transcend*- self-actualization is- and I can't help but think that the two are very symbiotic and synergistic pursuits. Because after all, the prerequisites for innovation and self-actualization might be similar.

With that, I will turn it over to Scott. Scott, thank you so much for coming.

**Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman:** Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to talk to everyone today, and I'm going to talk about a new hierarchy of needs. Many of you have probably heard of a Maslow's hierarchy of needs, but I have been on a quest the past 20 years or so to scientifically study creativity and the highest reaches of human potential. What are the highest ceilings that humans are capable of? Hope that today's talk also gives us all a reminder during these very uncertain and anxious times that there still is a higher nature to humans. So, I'm excited to get a chance to present that to you all today.

I found a unpublished essay by Abraham Maslow, the humanistic psychologist, who by the way, he was elected APA President but due to a heart attack and sickness, he never got a chance to actually deliver his APA address. So, I'm going to consider this as well; a way of honoring him and by talking to the APA right now, I feel this is a way as well of saying some of the things I think he always wanted to say, so I'll channel him a little bit. In describing what he meant by self-actualization- because self-actualization is such a nebulous term- he said, "We try to make a rose into a good rose, rather than seek to change roses into lilies. It necessitates a pleasure in the self-actualization of a person who may be quite different from yourself. It even implies an ultimate respect and acknowledgement of the sacredness and uniqueness of each kind of person."

Like I said, I've been on this scientific journey to understand and put on a firm foundation; humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychology was a field that was very popular in the '50s and '60s. It focused on the whole person. It focused on things like growth potential. There was a very different lexicon to humanistic psychology than what you see in modern-day psychology. Words such as happiness and achievement, high-performance; those weren't words that were used by the humanistic psychologist. Words like creativity, growth, social action, justice, truth- I probably already said growth, but I'll say growth a million times because growth was a big one. It was more about growth and achievement and the actualization of all of- bringing our entire being into existence.

So, I'm really excited to talk about, and in a sense, this is the new science of humanistic psychology I'm presenting today. One thing I did, and I published this paper- and all my papers are on scottbarrykaufman.com or you can also go to selfactualizationtest.com. This is one test that I scientifically validated. I looked into Maslow's writings and looked at the characteristics of self-actualizing people that he put forward, and I looked to see which ones could be empirically captured. I found that these 10 dimensions were positively correlated with each other, and together, form something I think we can call the self-actualizing personality, so to speak. I also linked this test to modern-day personality tests and showed where it fits within modern-day sort of big five framework.

Things like truth-seeking, continued freshness of appreciation; I always love that characteristic of self-actualizing people. Continually appreciating the things that everyone else has found stale. An item may be; every time I look at a sunset, it's just as beautiful as the last time I looked at the sunset. Acceptance, acceptance of oneself, but also acceptance of the differences of others. Authenticity, and I define authenticity in the way that Maslow did, which was- and it's also the way that the humanistic philosopher, Erich Fromm, defined it; as staying true to your values when you're in an environment where they're being challenged. It's easier to be authentic when everything you say, people like it on Twitter. A true test of your authenticity is if you can maintain that when it's not necessarily going to bring your social status.

Equanimity, purpose, humanitarianism, social interest; these peak experiences that Maslow talked a lot about, the most wondrous experiences that a human could possibly have on Earth. Good moral intuition and this creative spirit that in a way is a thread that is woven through all of the rest of the characteristics of self-actualizing people.

I just want to circle back to the authenticity one a second because I am such a big fan of Erich Fromm, and I think that so much of the humanistic thinkers are relevant today in the world we live in. Erich Fromm talked a lot about the sane society. Being sane in an insane society, he thought was a big marker of insanity. I think that's really important to recognize when we talk about things such as happiness. You can have a society overall that reports very high on life-satisfaction questionnaires, but if they live in a society where there's systemic cruelty, in a lot of ways, to large swaths of that society, do we really want to say that that society is mentally healthy? I've really been trying to bring back a lot of these ideas. I think they're very relevant to the world we live in today.

I really wish I had some sort of interaction with you all, and I want to see how many of you heard of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. You can type things, by the way, in the questions box or the Chatbox. I don't know. I don't really see anything, but I'll keep looking out to see if I could see something. It's really interesting for me to be in this new normal, where I'm presenting a talk right now and I have literally zero feedback in any way, shape or form. It's a real true-test of how much I've grown.

Because as a kid, I was in special education. I had a learning disability- an auditory learning disability and I developed very low self-esteem. I noticed that through a lot of periods of my life, I really required so much to know the feedback of others to give me confidence. Now, I'm here in a situation where I'm getting literally zero. I don't get to see anything, and I just got to keep going through this and rely on my own inner strength. So, I actually recommend this for any of you to try as a true test of; can you just talk as authentically as possible and let the cards lie where they may? Because you have no idea what the feedback is. Anyway, I just wanted to give that little interlude because I also think it humanizes me a little bit, and I'm all about humanizing people.

Okay, so this is the famous Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been depicted in all sorts of ways. Most notably as a pyramid, but sometimes on the internet, you see Wi-Fi at the bottom- well, obviously that wasn't Maslow's edition. [chuckles] Also, you might see in some examples, you see toilet paper at the bottom, and right now during the COVID crisis, that might be more relevant. But this is usually how this hierarchy of needs is presented. You have different levels of needs with physiological needs at the bottom, and then food and water; and then safety, security; love and belonging needs, which includes things like family and friendship and belonging to groups; confidence, esteem. Then the way it's presented is then self-actualization, creativity, is possible if you reach these levels- the lower levels.

Well, here's some things that might blow all of your minds, if you didn't know this already, but it turns out Maslow never actually created a pyramid to represent his hierarchy of needs. I've looked through as much of his writings as possible, and I asked, "Where's the pyramid? There's no pyramid in any of his writings." In fact, a pyramid betrays the spirit of self-actualization and creativity that he originally proposed. So, I felt as though it's my personal mission to set the record straight and talk about how self-actualization is important and plays a role in our modern world.

In fact, really what he focused on was the difference between deficiency needs and security needs. I'll just return in a second because life is not like a video game. It's not like you reach one level needs, like security needs, and then some voice from above is like, [mimic] "Congrats, you've unlocked belonging." Then you don't need to deal with security ever again- you're done with that, you're done with security, no. Maslow always made it clear that human development is a constantly two-step-forward, one-step-back dynamic where we're constantly choosing growth. Our North Star is growth, but fear can hold us back at any time. We can return to any of the basic needs, and that's human and that's normal. So that's a really important point I wanted to make.

Also, he really emphasized the difference between deficiency motivation and growth motivation. He said it's like putting a cloudy lens and replacing it with a clear lens. When you have a deficiency motivation, one of your basic needs or more than one of your basic needs, is severely deprived. That means that everything to you looks like what you desperately need. If you are desperately hungry, everyone looks like a hot dog to you. [chuckles] Or if you're a vegetarian, everyone looks like broccoli to you. If you're severely deprived of connection, you feel profoundly lonely. Everyone looks like a potential friend, someone that you need, you become very needy with people. If your basic need for respect or esteem is severely deprived that can lead to narcissism, actually. Because everyone looks like the only role that they play is to boost your self-esteem in some way, make you feel good about yourself.

Seeing the world through a deprivation lens and a deprivation motivation, it doesn't allow you to see reality in its totality. It doesn't allow you to see reality as clear as could be.

Once you enter the growth motivation of human existence, he called it the B-realm of human existence, the Being realm. If you can get to the B-realm it really is like replacing cloudy lens with a clear lens; seeing the world in all of its complexities, not having false dichotomies such as good versus evil, where everyone else is evil and you're the good one, or male/female. There are lots of stark dichotomies we have in our society that when you can see reality clearly, you can see much more of the beautiful colors of all these things.

Another thing that many people might not be aware about in the hierarchy of needs is not only did Maslow not draw a pyramid, but he also towards the end of his life- a little past couple year of his life, argued that self-actualization wasn't the highest motivation that humans could have. This is an unpublished essay that he always wanted to publish, called *Critique of Self-Actualization Theory*, in which he said, "It must be stated that self-actualization is not enough. Personal salvation and what is good for the person alone cannot be really understood in isolation. The good for other people must be invoked as well as the good for oneself. It is quite clear that a purely intrapsychic, individualistic psychology, without reference to other people and social conditions, is not adequate"

I think this is really important because a lot of people may-- For instance, I'll give you a specific example. David Brooks in the *New York Times* a couple years ago, he believed Maslow and Carl Rogers as well for the self-esteem movement, the narcissism as self-actualization being something that's selfish and individualistic. It couldn't be further from the truth in terms of what he actually believed.

In December of 1967, he got a heart attack, and as he was leaving the hospital during that time-- By the way, I looked through all of his personal journals because there's a two-volume set you can buy on Amazon. It's ranked very lowly. [chuckles] There's like 4 billion out so not that many people have read it, but I just devoured his personal journals and realized that he was really a man struggling to get his message out there. As he was leaving the hospital in 1967 after having his first heart attack- or a big heart attack that he did survive, he wrote this in his personal diary. He said, "New worries about the journals, what to do with them? The way I feel now, I just don't feel up to writing all the things I feel I ought to. The world needs my duties, wouldn't mind dying as a result, but I just don't have the stamina to do them. The thought is saved it all in little memos in these journals and the right person to come will know what I mean and why it must be done."

I almost fell off my chair when I read that. I felt a real deep sense of purpose to really get to the bottom of this mystery, and it took me on a journey for a couple years. Starting; I read his high school and middle school diaries. This right here is a picture of it. 1922 *Ye Diary, Records Of Ye Events, Happening of Ye Abe Maslow*. This is age 14, I believe. I read his personal journals as an adult, even visited his only remaining daughter who was still alive at the time, and unfortunately, sadly, she tragically passed away just a couple weeks ago. I also met Maslow's granddaughter, Jeannie, and that's a picture of Jeannie holding up a picture of Maslow, and her at the age of one or two. She was only about two years old when he died, but Maslow wrote in his diaries how Jeannie was one of the greatest sources of peak experiences that he had in his life. That she just brought him such joy, and so I was blessed to be welcomed into their home and to learn more about Maslow.

On June 7th, 1970, a little over 50 years ago, Abe Maslow was writing furiously in his journal at his home in San Francisco, and his wife, Bertha, was lounging nearby reading a book, I believe. He was writing furiously in his journal and his stopwatch went off, telling him it was time to do exercises. His doctor had given strict orders to exercise at various points in the day to rebuild his heart. He was so upset to have to be distracted from this theory- he was working on Theory Z- that he threw down this notepad and got up and started jogging in place furiously. [chuckles] He was not happy that he had to be distracted from his work. Bertha his wife noticed that he started walking in a weird way. Bertha said, "Abe, are you okay?" And by the time she got to his side, he collapsed. Dead at the age of 62, with so much of his own work unrealized.

It was such a delight for me to look through the rare archives, various things, I was very excited. With the help of some people, I was able to track down that notepad. This is the notepad I believe he was working on right up to the very last day of his life. You can actually see at the top, a note from his wife Bertha, saying, "This was the last piece of writing A.H.M did before he died June 8th, 1970." He was working on a set of axioms of humanistic psychology. He was working on a new book. I saw a draft of the book, a table of contents outline, to talk about how we can infuse humanistic psychology into every aspect of society; from humanistic politics, to humanistic art, to humanistic education. In fact, he was working on, potentially, a new book on humanistic education to talk about how we can treat children as though they're humans, too, they're whole people, and he was working on all of these.

I decided that a better metaphor to really honor the hierarchy of needs, but also put it on a firm scientific foundation than a pyramid, is a sailboat. The sailboat works, I think, in a couple of ways. It really illustrates this distinction between the boat of security. So, we need to have our boat secure, to a certain degree, or else we don't go anywhere. But if we have our boat secure, we don't go anywhere even with our boat secure, we need to eventually open that sail and travel in the vast unknown of the sea- the choppy waters of the sea. We need to move with our values, with open-heartedness, open-mindedness, despite the inevitable twists and turns that life will bring us. Also, while we're all may be moving in our own direction in that unknown of the sea, those waves can come crashing down and all of us at the same time, and it didn't matter before what direction we're going on, we all face the same thing, like we're doing with COVID right now.

This is my revised hierarchy of needs based on research and the new metaphor. In the boat, I have the needs for safety, connection, and self-esteem, which does maintain a lot of Maslow's original, although I've combined the physiological needs with the safety needs. Then in the sail, once we can open our sail and we move with the spirit of exploration, love and purpose in our desire direction; well, if we're really lucky, transcendence will emerge.

Maslow really did believe that transcendence was the highest motivation. He gave a beautiful address, the higher reaches of human nature at a Unitarian Church, I believe in San Francisco- First Unitarian Church- just before he passed away. Actually, just before his heart attack in 1967, he gave this beautiful talk on how the highest human motivation is transcendence. We're not fully self-actualized by just realizing our own full potential, but helping others realize their full potential.

The need for security in my model comprises safety, connection, and self-esteem. I include in the need for safety things like lack of extreme poverty, having some sense of food certainty. I was just really surprised when I looked into the psychological literature just how much food certainty really affected our minds and our ability to concentrate. Not just self-actualize, but even our lower needs like connection. Secure attachment, I include that. I include a lack of harshness and unpredictability in the environment. As in an environment so unpredictable that you can't feel like you've any sense of coherence in the environment. I include all of that under the need for safety and it's a very important part of that boat- of the sailboat.

Need for connection, things like need for belonging, need to be accepted from others, your whole being accepted. Needs for intimacy and relatedness, I also include as part of connection. I actually have two sub-needs. We can get really nerdy, [chuckles] which I do in my book for sure. We have two sub-needs; the need for belonging and the need for intimacy. I argue are correlated with each other but should be teased apart. Too many people in the psychological literature treat them as equivalent. But it's very important to recognize you can have this very strong need to belong- to be accepted by a group, for instance- but those group members don't really care about you. They only care about you to the extent to which you're furthering their agenda or their ideology.

That's fine and that can be absolutely fine, but ultimately, unfulfilling unless you have at least a few people in your life that actually really care about the totality of your being. Not just one aspect of you, but that there's a real relatedness there. So, I thought it was very important to distinguish between the need for belonging and the need for intimacy.

You can also have this need for self-esteem. Feeling of self-worth, competence, healthy regulation of narcissism. I've done quite a bit of research on narcissism. Again, all my papers are under the Research tab at scottbarrykaufman.com. It's really important to distinguish between a healthy self-esteem and narcissism. People who score high on narcissistic questionnaires feel as though maybe perhaps they're better than others, but they don't necessarily feel a stable sense of self-worth. People with a stable sense of self-esteem feel a stable sense of self-worth, and they feel a sense of competency or mastery. They feel like they're owners- they can control their future, their authors- it's the word I'm trying to to think- authors of their lives.

Then now with safety, connection, and self-esteem; with that foundation, we can open up the sail. Say, "Time to open up the sail, folks." Whereas safety is the base of the boat, exploration is the base of all growth and exploration consists of various sub-needs. I have six sub-needs of exploration, which I outline in detail in my book, but they can be actually broken down into two main classes; behavioral exploration and cognitive exploration.

I'm just going to focus right now on cognitive exploration. Behavioral explanation would be things like adventure-seeking, and social exploration, and things that fall within the extraversion-introversion continuum or the big five. But cognitive exploration is something that's not as recognized and that's a form of exploration that forms its own hierarchy. I have some papers talking about this hierarchy. One in particular I'm thinking of with Colin DeYoung and some other great colleagues of mine, which you can find on my website. But cognitive exploration, in general at the highest level, is just your flexibility and willingness to explore different ideas and experiences.

It can be broken down into intellect and openness to experience. The intellect domain comprises things like IQ, and intellectual ravenous, intellectual curiosity. Intellect can be correlated with the executive control brain network, which is a series of brain regions that work together to help us with our working memory, helps us inhibit ideas that are not relevant, help us to flexibly have control of our attention. Meditation really strengthens up this executive control network- I should say, a specific type of meditation, which is more of a return to the breath kind of meditation. There's other kind of meditations that work on the other brain network that I'm about to talk about. But intellect is strongly tied to the executive control network.

Whereas openness to experience; open to experience is correlated moderately with intellect, but they can be teased apart. It's very possible for an individual to score sky high on intellect, but not so high in openness to experience, or the vice versa; score very high in openness to experience, but not so high in intellect. Openness to experience, the whole domain of openness to experience-- Well, I'll get to that in a second. Let me just talk about openness to experience.

These are some items on the questionnaire; I'm curious about many different things, I have a diversity of interests, I like to reflect and play with ideas, I have an active imagination, I have a deep appreciation for beauty. I get deeply immersed in music, I believe in the importance of personal growth, I need a creative outlet. My colleagues and I looked at various different fields of human creative achievement, and we had people rate their performance in various levels of it. Across four demographically diverse samples, we replicated over and over again that openness to experience was the strongest predictor of creative achievement, more so than IQ tests, more so than divergent thinking tests.

We found that there were some specific nuances. Whereas openness was a better predictor of the arts, whereas intellect was a better predictor of the sciences; but nevertheless, both predicted overall creative achievement. We also, with my colleagues- most notably, I'd like to give a big shout out to Roger Beaty, who's doing a really terrific neuroscience work on the creative mind- in human brain mapping, I think this was the first study where we showed that the architecture of the particular brain network called the default mode network- so not the executive attention network, but a different brain network, which I'm going to talk about in upcoming slides as well- showed that the basic efficiency- individual differences and the efficiency of that brain network correlated with openness to experience questionnaires. It's a really neat linking between brain structure- or the efficiency, I should say- the efficiency of a brain network and personality; the personality characteristics most correlated with creativity. We thought that was a really cool finding.

I refer to this brain network as the imagination network. It includes areas in the medial prefrontal cortex. Whereas the executive function areas correlated with intellect are mostly on the outside lateral surface of the brain. The imagination network regions are correlated with the medial lobe and a lot of these regions also have to do with the social imagination. In particular, allowing us to project ourselves into the future and imagine what we'd be like in the future. The imagination network in recent years has been associated with cognitive processes that are all associated with creativity and innovation. I should use the word innovation at least once, [chuckles] my talk is linking self-actualization innovation.

A lot of these processes; daydreaming, imagining and planning the future, retrieving deeply personal memories, making meaning out of your experiences, personal-meaning making, monitoring one's emotional state, reading fiction, reflective compassion, perspective taking. A lot of this research linked to this network in a different guise, confirmed by early studies in the 50s on creativity. E. Paul Torrance went to a couple elementary schools in the '50s and really wanted to know what would creativity look like. In adult, what would be the most important characteristics for people growing up for creativity?

He noted a couple of characteristics that he called the beyonder characteristics. Things like love of work, persistence, purpose in life, deep thinking, tolerance for mistakes, openness to change, risk-taking, feeling comfortable as a minority one- being in classroom and having an opinion that no one else agrees with but you really believe in it. He also believed that imagination or falling in love with a future image of yourself; he actually found his dataset was a big predictor of lifelong creativity.

This is a great quote of his that I love, "Life's most energizing and exciting moments occur in those split seconds when our struggling and searching are suddenly transformed into the dazzling aura of the profoundly new; an image of the future. One of the most powerful wellsprings of creative energy, outstanding accomplishment, and self-fulfillment seems to be falling in love with something; your dream, your image of the future."

Moving on up on the-- Well, not really up because this is not a pyramid, but the higher need for our sailboat is love and that's universal love. I distinguish that from the need for connection. It's treating people as ends in themselves, having universal acceptance of others, trying to see the best in others via the dignity and worth of each individual. Need for purpose is even a higher goal and it can be integrated with the need for exploration and the need for love, where you have a purpose that you realize that really moves that boat in a specific direction. Then if we're lucky, healthy transcendence can emerge.

Healthy transcendence can be put in a whole continuum based on the extent to which we have no connection between self and world- we're all about the self and never about the world- to the flow state that **[unintelligible 00:34:11]** has talked about, where we are immersed in an activity that is meaningful to us. Mindfulness, gratitude-- [crosstalk] [chuckles] I have Alexa talking there.

**Alexa:** Good morning.

**Dr. Scott:** Good morning, Alexa. [crosstalk] I can't turn Alexa off. Gratitude, love [crosstalk]--

**Alexa:** In 1967, became the first African American Justice on the US Supreme Court.

**Dr. Scott:** That's cool.

**Alexa:** He once said, "In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute."

**Dr. Scott:** Oh, Alexa, thank you for that.

**Alexa:** Anytime. Have a good morning, Scott.

**Dr. Scott:** You too, Alexa. Okay, so love, awe, inspiration. Then at the highest level of the continuum, we can have peak and mystical experiences, which are really are the most wondrous moments in life where we feel connected to all of humanity. My colleague and I- most notably, David Yaden, who's done some wonderful work on self-transcendence- we created the Awe Experience questionnaire. You can take all of these new tests that we created at selfactualizationtest.com. That link there is the bottom of this slide.

Our Awe Experience questionnaire allows people to look at different components of the awe experience and see to the extent to which an experience met the criteria. Such as; I sense things momentarily slow down, I had the sense of being connected to everything, I felt closely connected to humanity, I perceive something that was much larger than me, I had chills, I tried to understand the magnitude of what I was experiencing.

So reaching this highest level of-- Not level. Again, I shouldn't use the word level. In that sailboat, when we're integrated whole humans, we can get our basic needs met to a certain degree. We feel safe and secure in our boat, and our sail is open and we're vulnerable, and we're realizing our purpose with a spirit of exploration and love; well, we're very lucky. Sometimes that feeling of transcendence will emerge and come upon us, and we can then feel what it means to be truly, fully human.

Thank you for listening to my talk today. A lot of the ideas I talk about is presented in this book that I recently published called *Transcend: The New Science of Self-Actualization*, which can be found on Amazon or if you want various links, you can go to transcendbook.com and choose which link. Also for the first time in my life, I'm doing an online course. I'm taking my Columbia University course that I've taught and I'm putting it online, and you can register for that at transcendcourse.com.

I just want to thank everyone for listening today and whatever time I have left for this webinar, I'm happy to do some Q&A.

**Jessica:** Scott, first of all, that was just the sweetest little interruption ever. I know some hearts were warmed in the question section. Also wanted to tell you that throughout, you were getting dozens of messages telling you what a great job you are doing and thank you for your authenticity and your candor.

**Dr. Scott:** Thank you. I couldn't see anything. This was the first talk I've ever given like, this was zero-- Not even the faces, but just no words and it was a little hard for me, so I really appreciate you saying that. I would love if you can save that log for me.

**Jessica:** I will.

**Dr. Scott:** Thank you.

**Jessica:** What a beautiful test. Really cool question in the comments; is the navigation- pardon the sailing reference- of these levels sequential, or simultaneous, or episodic?

**Dr. Scott:** Oh, what a great question. Well, I'll tell you the way I think about it is that I view this as an integrated hierarchy of needs, in the sense that each one rests very necessarily on the other. It's like a series of a Russian nesting dolls. I don't know if anyone has ever seen a Russian nesting doll, but each outer layer needs the other layer or else it will collapse. I think that instead of like a-- it's not like a vertical thing in the sense like you go up levels. We're a whole vehicle. You simply cannot separate one from the other.

That's why I wanted to have a dynamic sailboat because we're all walking around in our lives as integrated whole human beings, and the point there for transcendence is to be as harmonious as possible within yourself, to not fight a war within yourself. I believe that real peace comes from within, actually. Those who are most likely to fight wars are those who are least integrated within themselves.

**Jessica:** Which leads well into the next question, which is; what have you found is the biggest obstacle for people to pursue or achieve innovation and self-actualization? How has it overcome? So biggest obstacle to self-actualizing.

**Dr. Scott:** I view self-actualization, in a lot of ways, as synonymous with creativity- as Maslow did as well, and he wrote an essay on that. He said that I think that I think they're the same thing. The biggest obstacle to creativity in a lot of ways is not feeling freedom of expression, not feeling freedom of-- I'm not just talking about freedom of speech. I know that's important too, but freedom of bringing your whole being in a society, whatever it could be. You could be LBT-- Like anything, any of the spectrums, autistic. I'm all about every single spectrum, I don't discriminate any spectrum, I love it all. In creating a society where everyone on-- Again, because I've done work on what's called 2e children, twice exceptional. Children who simultaneously have amazing areas of creative and intellectual gifts, but also have an area of learning disability. Well, their biggest barrier to self-actualization is that we live in a society with a false dichotomy; that you're either gifted on the one hand, or you're learning-disabled on the other. And transcending that dichotomy.

It really is that freedom to show that you're a multitude, you're a complex being, and to be able to express that truth.

**Jessica:** I love that so much. Reminds me of Walt Whitman quote, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself."

**Dr. Scott:** That's one of my favorite quotes.

**Jessica:** Oh, I love that one ever since I was little.

**Dr. Scott:** "I'm large, so I contain multitudes." Yes, I love it. [chuckles] Well, we bonded over a lot of mutual interests.

**Jessica:** Yes, absolutely. Lover of complexity, lover of all of the multitude. A piece of which you mentioned goes into the next question, which is; how can we better promote self-actualization in K-12 education?

**Dr. Scott:** A topic very, very near and dear to my heart that I'm considering writing a book someday on humanistic education. Maslow was working on such a book and he never got a chance to publish it. It's so hard **[unintelligible 00:42:13]** in two minutes reform education.

[laughter]

**Dr. Scott:** I'll say this; a model where we shift from focusing on achievement and individual comparisons to each other- in order to get into a good college, in order to move up the academic ladder- as opposed to a model of self-actualization, where the focus is on helping the sacredness of each individual grow, and helping what's unique about every individual, not what we all share in common with each other.

SAT scores is something we share in common with each other. A person's SAT score is not the most unique aspect of a child's soul. If anyone disagrees with that, that's cool. I actually love people who disagree and I love heated debates, but I just don't believe it is. I think that there's a whole-person approach that we could have that honors the unique development and journey- the unique hero's journey in Campbell's phrasing- of each child in that school. We could re-conceptualize guidance counselors as dream directors, which is something that the Future Project and organization that I absolutely love and I've been an advisor of for years, has been trying to do. They've created a full-time position in the schools of the Dream Director to really truly figure that out.

It can be done. There's a lot of pessimism amongst educators, "Oh, we can't change. This is how we've done things. If we change, then who knows what'll happen?" Well, I can show you data, I can show you what happens. There's been tests, and there's a lot of positive things that happen once you start to say that you care about a deeper aspect of a child than how they're doing relative to their peers on tests.

**Jessica:** I can't help but think that-- I love how all these questions are literally **[inaudible 00:44:28]** into each other. What does ungifted mean? I thought all humans were born with gifts. Of course, this question ungifted is referring to the title of one of your books; *Ungifted*.

**Dr. Scott:** Yes, so that's a description of how I felt as a kid. If you read my book, it's very personal, and each chapter starts with a personal story about me. As a child, I couldn't understand why- like, "Who are these gifted kids, and why was I the complete opposite?" [laughs] That really impacted my identity, impacted my self-esteem. Also, I use that word because I want to show how absurd-- If we use the word gifted to talk about a particular class of human, then doesn't that mean there also exists a class of human who are ungifted? I wanted to point out the absurdities of the linguistics there was also.

Now with all that said, I want to be very, very clear. I am an advocate for gifted education. I think that it's important, and unfortunately, they lose a lot of funding because they're misunderstood what their purpose is. A lot of the gifted educators that I've had the pleasure of working with in the past couple years are some of the most compassionate individuals who care deeply about not letting kids fall between the cracks. They're working hard to find the kids, maybe the poor kid who is in the school where everyone else has given up on them, but that kid is ready for advanced material three, four grades ahead. We're not doing society any service by letting those kids fall between the cracks.

So, I am an advocate of gifted education, but I believe in a dynamic, gifted education selection process, where we're constantly assessing with the universal screening. I have a lot of nuance around this, I'm not just like anti-giftedness, if that makes sense?

**Jessica:** Of course, all good things are nuanced. Speaking of nuance; how do we keep transcendence going, while lower needs aren't at least temporarily being met, for example, during long-term unemployments brought on by quarantine and COVID? Basically, how do we keep ourselves actualizing and transcending amidst a lot of uncertainty and instability around us?

**Dr. Scott:** It's a great question.

**Jessica:** It's a great question. [laughs]

**Dr. Scott:** I think that it may require some post-traumatic growth. It may require going beyond- recognizing that a lot of our assumptions have been shattered, and we've experienced a seismic, psychological earthquake, and accepting it. Some people have not accepted our situation with COVID. I'm not getting political about this whatsoever, I stay away from politics, but I'm saying there are people out there who want to just think that we've returned back to normal. I think a healthier psychological mindset is one of post-traumatic growth, where we recognize we're going through a collective trauma right now in lots of ways. We're all in this together, we're all in the same sea, folks. We've been in our own boat-- [crosstalk] What did you say?

**Jessica:** We're all in the same boat, literally.

**Dr. Scott:** Well, we're not all in the same boat, but we're all in the same sea. It's really important to recognize that, and really help each other and realize that it's okay for our priorities to change. Let's use this moment to self-actualize more than we ever have in our entire lives before, by recognizing that what really matters to us, really hone in that purpose, really hone in those values. I think a lot of people are doing that during this time, in a way they never have before. They're growing in lots of ways and feeling greater connection.

For instance, I've never felt so connected to my parents in my entire life. I'm not just saying that because I think they're on this webinar.

[laughter]

**Jessica:** What's up, parents. [chuckles]

**Dr. Scott:** I'll find out if they're on this webinar, they'll call me after this. I've never talked to them so frequently and enjoyed it [laughs] so frequently. [laughs] I love it when mom calls now. I'm like, [mimic] "Oh my God. I love my mom, she's called." You hold onto things that are precious in your life when there's scarcity, and that might be a positive that comes out of all this.

**Jessica:** Yes, Scott, and I love the bit about acceptance being so essential. That brought to mind one of my other favorite quotes by Carl Rogers, which is that, "The curious paradox is that only when I accept myself just as I am, then can I change."

**Dr. Scott:** Exactly right. I love that. Cool.

**Jessica:** We have a lot of practitioners, and maybe we have time for one or two more questions, but we have a lot of practitioners on the call today. There have been some questions around the idea of; has there been any focus on applying the sailboat concept of self-actualization or a transcendence framework to clinical training of psychologists and therapist? So essentially, how can practitioners apply that model in their work with patients?

**Dr. Scott:** Thank you. I love that. I am very clinically psychology minded. I did my Ph.D at Yale, I was mentored very strongly by Jerome L. Singer who recently passed away. I took his clinical psychology course and had great discussions with him on how to apply models of creativity to clinical practice. In fact, my first ever publication was co-authored with him on applying Robert Sternberg theories of successful intelligence, applying that to the clinical practice, which incorporates creativity in there. My sailboat model is too new. Keep in mind, my book just came out a couple of months ago-- [crosstalk] What did you say, Jessica?

**Jessica:** I said, your book it just hatched. It's-- Yes. [laughs]

**Dr. Scott:** Thank you. I would love- and I mean really deeply love- to collaborate and work with clinicians on incorporating some of this into training programs. It's a dream of mine, actually, and a goal of mine. Well, I just hope I can have a long life and be able to extend this work to that sphere and work more with the APA members. Actually, really it is a dream of mine, so thanks for that question.

**Jessica:** Oh, that's wonderful. Well, now, people have one of many call to actions. Last question, which I think is a perfect question to end on and this came in through the chat; how can this work be applied for people of color? I'm asking because I am African and the love part, especially self-love, would need to be in the security part as well. In other words, could some strata fit into the two dimensions more dynamically than what the boat model implies? In case that question-- Maybe that made perfect sense to you, but I'm taking that to simply mean; how can this be applied to what's happening now with people of color?

**Dr. Scott:** I think big-time. I want to say this; if we channel the spirit of the humanistic psychologists-- Keep in mind, they were working and spreading their message in the '60s during the Civil Rights era. I've been trying to think how we can apply some of the deep principles of like Carl Rogers notion of universal positive regard. Trying to think of techniques for active listening as well is another technique that Carl Rogers talked about. I'd love to organize and work toward a world where everyone is truly listening to each other's pain and experiences and showing that they matter. That we matter. That people of color matter. That their voices are worthy of being heard. They're just as fully human as any of the rest of us.

I think the humanistic psychology principles I'm trying to bring back, couldn't be any more in line with this drive to make sure that all of our inhabitants of our society, for lack of a better word, have the opportunities to self-actualize and become fully human. So, I'm all about that.

**Jessica:** Wonderful. I think that puts a nice bow on it and gets us right at about time. Scott, is there any last little nugget, or takeaway, or call to action that you would like to share [crosstalk] channeling Maslow? [chuckles]

**Dr. Scott:** Channeling Maslow? Well, I actually think the last point I made was a good way to end this. But just more generally, I recognize a lot of the pain going on in this country right now and in the world, and I feel it. I feel it. I'm a very highly sensitive person, so I can feel the emotions of others. I really think that this-- Like I want to bring humanistic psychology back. I really do, and I think that it's so needed in the world today. I just thank everyone for being a part of this experience today and really appreciate it, so thank you.

**Jessica:** Thank you so much, Scott. One last little thing that I will add, exciting news in our virtual new world, is that we just opened registration for the virtual APA 2020 Convention. If you go to convention.apa.org, you can now get nice discounted Convention tickets. I just wanted to put that out there for all of you who are wondering if Convention is still happening.

Thank you so much again, Scott, and I'm sure this is not the last time we'll be hearing from you.

**Dr. Scott:** Thanks for having me here today.

**[00:55:20] [END OF AUDIO]**