INTRODUCTION
The Top One Percent

"I think it significant that in more than a quarter of a century since Maslow's death, there has been no sign of a decline in his reputation, whereas Freud's and Jung's are heavily bullet scarred. This, I believe is because there is a sense in which Maslow has not come into his own. His significance lies in the future and will become apparent in the 21st century." [9]

COLIN WILSON

New York in the late '30s was experiencing a golden age, perhaps the most luminous period in that great city's history. While war seemed inevitable in Europe, New York was, as Abraham Maslow described it, "the new Athens." Great minds gravitated there, drawn by the city's cultural riches and the open-armed welcome it offered scientists and academics who fled the Nazi menace overseas. It was a heady time for a man of great intellect like Maslow to become a professor at Brooklyn College. Even with an IQ approaching 200, Maslow found the array of genius around him dazzling.

Two minds seemed to soar above the others. One was Ruth Benedict. By this point, Benedict had published her groundbreaking work, *Patterns of Culture*, in which, through the study of three Native American tribes, she identified how different cultures develop distinct personalities that they pass along to future generations within that

culture. The book changed the way people thought about culture and swayed the debate about cultural equality. In addition, Benedict had mentored Margaret Mead, a young anthropologist who had already made a significant impact on the field.

The other extraordinary individual was Max Wertheimer. Wertheimer had developed important ideas on Gestalt theory and, with his colleagues Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Koffka, founded the school of Gestalt psychology that saw the brain as a holistic mechanism capable of great leaps of thought. He'd been an influential innovator in Czechoslovakia and Germany, inventing a lie detector and developing remarkable theories on movement perception. He escaped the Nazis in the early '30s and he was working on a text that would encapsulate his life's work. (That text became the landmark book, *Productive Thinking*.)

Both Benedict and Wertheimer had made pivotal accomplishments. What struck Maslow, however, was not their level of achievement or their drive. After all, there were many noted professionals in New York at the time at least as driven as the two. What Maslow found remarkable was their uncommon degree of sensitivity to others, their uncompromising integrity, and their passionate devotion to a mission greater than themselves.

Fascinated by what he saw in these two individuals, Maslow studied them more closely. He began to jot down notes about their unique personality characteristics. He observed that, though they were remarkably knowledgeable in their fields, they demonstrated a childlike, creative openness toward new discoveries. They were busy and driven to excel at all times, yet they focused their egos upon tasks and problems rather than personal gain. They simply did not

act the way most accomplished people acted—and certainly not the way the average person acted.

Maslow knew that what he saw in Benedict and Wertheimer had implications for all of humanity. The way they approached the world signaled something, if only he could identify it. For several months, he wrote about them in his journal, trying to understand them. He listed their attributes and compared them to the attributes of others. He studied the differences between the two, noting that one was a woman who achieved her Ph.D. relatively late in life after a traumatic, lonely childhood and a difficult marriage. The other was a man trained as a musician and lawyer before discovering his driving passion. She grew up in America. He grew up in battle-torn Europe.

Then the pivotal insight came. Maslow looked down at his descriptions of Benedict and Wertheimer and realized that he was not looking at lists of the qualities of two people. Instead, he was looking at a description of a *kind of person*. The two were different in many ways, raised in different environments, but what was most notable was what united them. Each was more authentic than most people were. Each was fully dedicated to the process of actualizing his or her potential, being the best version of him or herself, and yet equally dedicated to being fully human. Each laughed with gusto, lived on the verge of reckless abandon, and embraced life. Could it be that this is what a human being is actually supposed to be? Maslow wondered. Why are these two people able to reach such levels of excellence? Are there others?

This line of thinking ran straight up against Maslow's Freudian and behaviorist training, all of which taught him to draw conclusions

from society's sickest individuals rather than its healthiest. But what if doing so left a gaping hole in the understanding of human potential? What if there were more like Benedict and Wertheimer? What could one learn from a clinical study of these people? Would it be possible to discover the inner forces that drove the highest and best of humanity?

The new idea was electric and overwhelming in its implications. With rare exceptions, psychology and psychiatry had examined only the failed—or at least the foundering—specimens of humankind. But that evening in Brooklyn, Abraham Maslow uncovered evidence of a new kind of person: the *self-actualizing* individual. This discovery would launch an avocation to find more of the people somehow engaged in the process of making their latent and potential selves real. Eventually it would become a relentless, glorious obsession and it would set into motion a new school of psychology. Third Force psychology would challenge old-school ideas with the revolutionary concept of self-actualization. It would lead Maslow to discover significant evidence that concealed within every normal human being is the nucleus of a potential superior self. It was a genuine breakthrough.

And it would be largely unacknowledged.

For the next thirty years of his life, Maslow studied this new paradigm of human potential endlessly. In 1943, he presented a paper that featured his Hierarchy of Human Needs. This would turn out to be the one piece of his work that nearly all his academic peers in psychology enthusiastically embraced. He identified five levels of human desires and requirements. With the first four (termed deficiency needs), a person feels virtually nothing if these needs are

satisfied, but anxious if they are missing. The fifth level was different, though. Maslow termed this highest level of the pyramid, Being needs or B-needs. This was the level of self-actualization. This was what Maslow saw in Benedict and Wertheimer. This fifth level made us the best we could be.

The development of the Hierarchy led Maslow to delve even deeper into the study of Self-Actualizers and into what he termed metamotivations. Yet the more he did so, the more the academic establishment resisted him. He was a threat to the status quo—upsetting the apple cart of Freudian and behaviorist psychology—and few chose to follow him along this path. Still, Maslow did not go quietly. In a 1950 paper, he declared, "It becomes more and more clear that the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy. The study of self-actualizing people must be the basis for a more universal science of psychology." [10]

Rather than rally his contemporaries, though, this paper distanced them further. In their eyes, his new theories were too radical. His Third Force psychology not only challenged the established and profitable Freudian and behaviorist schools, it overran the customary barriers that insulated the disciplines of science, philosophy, and religion in comfortable, logic-tight compartments. There was general agreement in traditional schools of psychology that Maslow had lost it, that he made his only real contribution to science (the Hierarchy) early in his career.

Maslow continued his work throughout the '50s and '60s, but if you were to examine the leading intellectual magazine literature of that time, you would not find him there. Maslow had identified

a kind of human being—an individual whose life was passionately devoted to a mission or cause greater than self—and something else: B-values. These values he described as the ultimate values which cannot be reduced to anything more ultimate, primarily Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. It was a model to which all of humanity could aspire, but it remained, as he termed it, the unnoticed revolution.[11]

A frustrated Dr. Maslow turned to business organizations and management as a real-world testing ground for his theories. The management of Saga Foods Corporation of Menlo Park, California, embraced his ideas and applied them to their company. They were so thrilled with the results that they offered him a fellowship. Maslow wrote to British philosopher Colin Wilson about his success there, saying, "[Saga Foods is run with] an effort to appeal to the very highest in human nature, and to set up a work situation in which self-actualization and personal growth become more possible. And in which, as a kind of a by-product—a synergistic by-product—they simply do a good job. It makes a better team. Everybody is both happier and more efficient. If America sweeps the world, *this* is the way it is going to sweep the world." [12]

A reenergized Maslow saw the business community as a platform from which to launch his theories to the mainstream, bypassing the academic establishment. Sadly, time ran out for him. He died suddenly in Menlo Park on June 8, 1970, at the age of sixty-two.

Although death cut off his work so abruptly, Dr. Maslow left many threads for others to pick up and develop. For more than twenty years, I have sought to unravel and follow these threads. Using the works of Maslow and other great thinkers as a foundation, I have hammered out many original and easy-to-use tools for assisting

the life-changing self-empowerment of all kinds of people. These methods have been presented to everyone from corporate executives to U.S. Air Force officers to high school seniors. Most people not only understand them easily, but also adopt them readily.

In my work as a consultant, I have been able to marry the management concepts Maslow developed near the end of his life with modern ideas. Like Maslow, I have used them to help business organizations grow and prosper. Yet, I've learned that success in such an environment depends on continuous superlative leadership at the top. Sadly, that quality of leadership is much too rare. I am now convinced that, as important as enlightened organizations are, our greatest need as a society is the progress and enlightenment of the individual. The revolution that Abraham Maslow envisioned must spring from the grassroots rather than wait for inspiration and direction to trickle down from the top.

Over the years, I have discovered that modern minds have trouble applying the classical terms of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness to the hard practicalities of life. In order to make these ideas more accessible, I have chosen to supplement them with the reasonably parallel—and more action-related—terms Integrity, Excellence, and Caring. While we cannot see or examine a MetaValue, we can detect its presence and influence in the same way Dr. Maslow did. When he observed a Self-Actualizer living a life of remarkable *Integrity*, he deducted that the MetaValue of Truth was influencing that life. When he detected *Excellence*, he concluded that this was an expression of the MetaValue of Beauty. A *Caring* individual is one expressing the MetaValue of Goodness. The terms Integrity, Excellence, and Caring represent the MetaValues of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness made visible through action.

MetaValues are not something someone created; they are realities that were discovered. The best evidence for this is the fact that all normal people, regardless of race, religion, or culture, share and recognize MetaValues on some level. I learned that even the most materialistic business people, perplexed by the challenge of applying MetaValues to their work, readily respond when asked, "Would you hire an associate you knew to be lacking in Integrity? How about one who was uncaring and indifferent about his fellow workers, customers, and the community in general? Would you want to employ people who could not be motivated to strive for high levels of Excellence in their work?" The answers to these questions are so obvious because MetaValues are universal realities that transcend cultures and the barriers between science, philosophy, and religion.

In my judgment, we can no longer afford for Maslow's "unnoticed revolution" to continue to go unnoticed. Attempting to navigate through the world without a true understanding of our potential is akin to ignoring the benefits of medical advancements or breakthroughs in technology. This is especially true in times fraught with unprecedented challenges and an equally unprecedented need for us to bring out the best in ourselves. Would we have been willing to forestall the implementation of life-saving vaccinations or the wonders of the personal computer for decades? Why, then, would we be willing to delay the acknowledgment that we can all be much greater than we already are?

I had hoped that someone would write a book that would bring Dr. Maslow's MetaValue discoveries directly to the people. I longed for a book that was true to the fearless, pioneering spirit that drove him toward new paths in human potential. I hoped this book would correlate the science of self-empowerment with some of the highest

known philosophical and spiritual insights and present them in a form that people could understand and apply to their lives.

Since no one has written this book, I decided to write it myself.

MetaValues made a remarkable difference in my life. I am confident that they can make a remarkable difference in yours. Dr. Maslow believed that MetaValues would one day change the world. By reading these pages, you have joined in this quest. I look forward with great anticipation to what we will discover.