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KEYNOTE FORUM | DAY 2

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Self-transcendence: The peak of Maslow's hierarchy

When I was a sophomore at Brandeis University taking Motivation and Personality with Abraham Maslow, I thought self-actualization was "as good as it gets". After all, I reasoned it was the top of the Hierarchy of Needs. Self-actualization was an impressive level of development which Maslow believed could be achieved by most people if the right conditions were satisfied. I was wrong. During my subsequent classes and individual talks with him, Maslow referenced the transcendent state and its religious/mystical quality. He treated transcendence as a major new development in his thinking about motivation and human nature. He spoke about transcendence in the following way: "It means a way of life and a world view generated not only by the hierarchy of basic need, but also by the need for the

actualization of one's personal, idiosyncratic potentialities (i.e., identity, real self, individuality, uniqueness, self-actualization). That is, it refers to the fulfillment not only of one's species-hood but also of one's own idiosyncratic potentialities." Maslow recognized that some self-actualizers rarely or never had peak experiences while for others these moments were frequent and transformative. He also recognized that these transcendents were significantly different from "merely healthy people". Transcendents have transcended the state of self-actualization along with numerous dichotomous cognitive and value states. They represent the new pinnacle of human nature and a model for emulation. Their guiding values are the highest values we recognize the B-Values. He described 25 distinct qualities that separated the transcendents from the rest of humanity. see how many you come up with before coming to this talk).



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Biography

L Ari Kopolow majored in psychology at Brandeis University where Abraham Maslow was his Mentor. With Maslow's guidance, he chose a career in medicine and obtained his M.D from the University Of Missouri School of Medicine and completed a Harvard Psychiatry Residency at Mclean Hospital. He has served as Instructor at Harvard, adjunct faculty at Georgetown, and Assistant Professor at George Washington University. He is a distinguished life fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, Primary Investigator in many international pharmacological studies, and a national speaker on Neurobiology of Depression and Stress Management.

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