

Levels of Existence As Seen By Clare Graves

Clare Graves's theory holds that human beings develop through a series of "levels" or behavioral states. At each level a person learns and acts in a way that is consonant with the particular level. This table provides a schematic outline of Graves's theory. Each level is designated by two letters (e.g., F-S). The first letter stands for the neurological system on which the level is based and the second for the existential problems it is dealing with.

Level	Learning System	Thinking	Motivational System	Specific Motivation	Means Values	End Values	Nature of Existence	Problems of Existence
A-N	Habituation. (The individual adapts to his environment by a process of becoming accustomed to certain things, e.g., a baby gets used to his mother's breast, clothing, face, etc.)	Automatic	Physiological	Periodic physiological needs (e.g., hunger)	No conscious value system; values are purely reactive	No conscious value system; values are purely reactive	Automatic	Maintaining physiological stability
B-O	Classical conditioning. (The individual learns through the association of one thing with another, as when he begins to salivate when his mother prepares to feed him.)	Autistic	Assurance	Aperiodic physiological needs (e.g., warmth)	Traditionalism	Safety	Tribalistic	Achievement of relative safety
C-P	Operant conditioning. At this level, people learn best when they are rewarded for learning tasks.	Egocentric	Survival	Psychological survival	Exploitation	Power	Egocentric	Living with self- awareness
D-Q	Avoidant learning. People at this level learn best when they are punished for errors. Without some punishment, D-Q individuals may not learn at all.	Absolutistic (thinking in terms of dogmas, rules.)	Security	Order, meaning	Sacrifice	Salvation	Saintly	Achieving ever-lasting peace of mind
E-R	Expectancy. E-R types learn best when the outcome of their behavior meets their expectations; that is, when they behave in a certain way and get the reward that they expected to get. E-R people learn best through their own efforts, with mild risk and with considerable variety in the learning experience.	Multiplistic	Independence	Adequacy, competency	Scientism	Materialism	Materialistic	Conquering the physical universe
F-S	Observational. F-S people learn by watching other people and observing how they react. Their learning is through vicarious experience.	Relativistic (things depend on particular situations)	Affiliation	Love, affiliation	Sociocentricity	Community	Personalistic	Living with the human element
G-T	At the G-T and H-U levels, since people are in the second ladder of existence and all basic systems are now open, learning in any form can and does take place. Here it is not new means, but changes in other aspects of the total system, such as the relative dissolution of fear, which accounts for changes in ability to learn.	Systemic	Existence	Self-worth	Accepting	Existence	Cognitive	Restoring viability to a disordered world. (How can we live in a world with so many conflicting value systems and no assurance as to which is right?)
H-U		Differential	Experience	??????	Experiencing	Communion	Experientialistic	Accepting existential dichotomies (e.g., life is the most precious thing there is, yet my life is unimportant)

from "Human Nature Prepares for a Momentous Leap." The Futurist, April 1974