In this variation of Maslow's Theory, 'Love and Belonging' and 'Esteem' are switched. This illustrates that true belonging is not unconditional and that to belong genuinely, one must achieve some form of notoriety or success. Whether directly or indirectly, this version of Maslow centers around the, “You must_____, to ______.”

Example: You must receive a high GPA to be celebrated and recognized for your academic achievements.
Variation Two:

In this version, ‘Love and Belonging’ is at the very bottom level of the hierarchy of needs. This illustrates that we in society will willingly sacrifice the foundations of our basic life needs (sleep, food, healthy behavior) for a chance to feel accepted and to experience a sense of connection and belonging.

Example: I stayed up late texting and didn’t get much sleep to be a part of the group chat.

Variation Three:

From the Blackfoot Nation, this variation depicts a model that informed Abraham Maslow in his work. This model illustrates that we come into the world self-actualized with greatness embedded in us from the start. This variation shows that each member can have their individual and collective basic needs and goals met through the community. It concludes with the gift of passing knowledge, and stories through our lifetimes allow for cultural perpetuity.

A Modern Interpretation

In this model, Maslow’s Theory is no longer in a hierarchy. All needs are vital, and depending on the situation or context, one specific need may be of greater importance to us at that moment. This modern interpretation focuses on the individual, knowing that they can and will change at any moment.