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## UNIT 6 EMOTIONS, SELF-REGARD AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION\*

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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*Rishabh is 28 years old. He is bright and has a good educational background having secured high ranks throughout his academic career. However, he could not get into a good career and had to join a low paying and not that attractive job. He often compares himself with others of his class and age and feels depressed. He has been a very good basket ball player, singer as well as interested in robotics. But now he does not engage in any of these. He feels that life has been unfair to him and feels very low of himself. He finds it difficult to look forward with hope and aspirations.*

One thing that Rishabh is clearly lacking is a sense of appreciation and respect for oneself. Unless one feels good about oneself, one will not have the basic ingredient to look forward to in life. This respect or regard for oneself – known as self-regard – is an important concept when we discuss about emotions and their management. One needs to have self-regard or respect for one's skills, abilities and strengths, for who one is with whatever capacities or limitations. This self-regard is important in managing the emotions felt by one. In the previous Unit (Unit 5), we discussed about emotional self-control and assertiveness as two important skills in managing one's emotions. In this Unit, we will discuss two more abilities such as self-regard and self-actualization that play a role in intra personal management of emotions.

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### 6.2 OBJECTIVES

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After going through the Unit, you would be able to:

- know the meaning of self-regard;
- discuss the importance of self-regard in our life;

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- learn the strategies to develop self-regard;
- know the meaning of self-actualization;
- explain the importance of self-actualization in our life; and
- learn ways to develop self-actualization.

### 6.3 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF SELF-REGARD

Self-regard, in simple words, refers to the respect or regard that you have for yourself as a whole. When we say as a whole, it not only includes the positive qualities, strengths, abilities and skills that you have, but also the negative aspects, limitations and weaknesses or shortcomings that you have. So, it is viewing yourself in totality and respecting yourself for what you are. You not only celebrate your good aspects or positive things that you have, but also acknowledge the negative aspects and rather than criticize yourself, blame self or others, or be disheartened about it, you accept these and make conscious efforts to improve on those.

Now, to be able to respect yourself, you first need to understand yourself. Thus, the *pre-requisites* for self-regard are self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, and self-control. One needs to know and understand one’s positive and negative qualities, and assess these accurately without any boasting or blaming/complaint. Further, one needs to accept oneself and be confident of the way they are. However, it is not being arrogant or aggressive, but showing assertiveness. Thus, a person with self-regard will exhibit self-awareness, emotional self-control, self-confidence, self-assurance and self-worth. There is a feeling of adequacy, security and well-being. They feel satisfied with their self, are optimistic, well-adjusted and see themselves as being worthwhile.

Two main aspects of self-regard can be said to be (a) **positive attitude** (that includes accepting the limitations or negative points and working to improve them, and simultaneously being aware of the positive points without feeling superior or being arrogant about these), and (b) **sense of worthiness** (includes feeling adequate, capable, assured, and of value and significance).

Refer to the Figure 6.1 below.

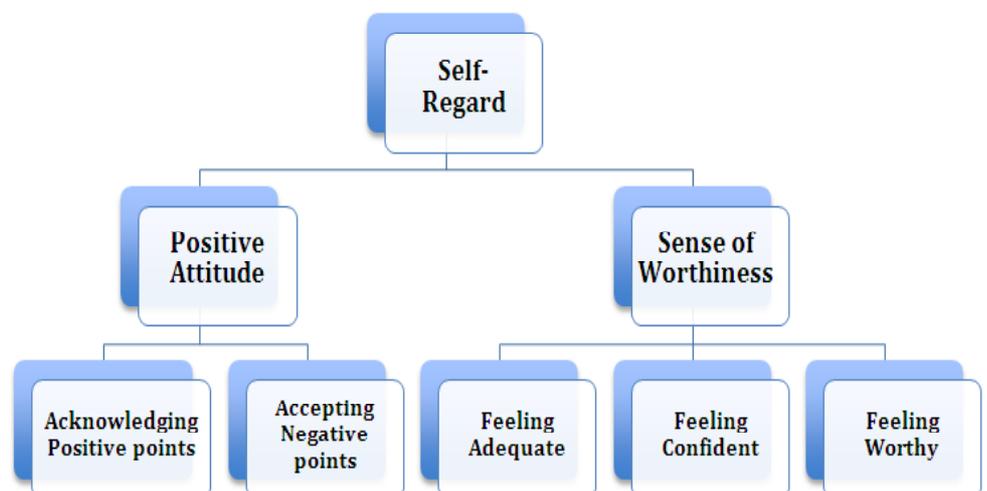


Fig. 6.1: Aspects of Self-regard

Let us now see a few definitions of self-regard below.

- Hewitt (2009) states self-esteem (or self-regard) is a term used in psychology to reflect a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgement of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs (e.g., 'I am competent' or 'I am worthy') and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame.
- Branden (1969) considers self-regard or self-esteem as the sum of self-confidence (a feeling of personal capacity) and self-respect (a feeling of personal worth).
- Olsen, Breckler & Wiggins (2008) describe self-esteem (or self-regard) as a disposition that a person has which represents his own judgement of his own worthiness.
- Mangal & Mangal (2015) define self-regard as a unique ability, disposition or component of one's EI that may help him in (i) getting necessary awareness and making proper evaluative judgement about the strengths and weaknesses of the self, (ii) having necessary confidence in the functioning of the self, and (iii) respecting and valuing the self by accepting it in its existing form with all of its limitations and strengths.

Thus, self-regard refers to paying regard or respect to oneself. It does not depend upon the approval or assurance from others. It does not depend on any external factors such as age, gender, class, caste or race. For instance, it may not be that a person from high caste or high social class or living in metro city or bungalows will have more or less self-regard as compared to the person from low caste, class, or living in rural area. Self-regard depends entirely on how do we evaluate ourselves, what worth we assign to ourselves with full cognizance of all our strengths and limitations.

Self-regard is similar to self-esteem but it differs from self-concept. *Self-concept* refers to what do we think about ourselves, what our self comprises of or includes. In other words, we can describe self-concept in terms of its aspects or components. *Self-esteem*, on the other hand, refers to the evaluative component, how do we evaluate ourselves, positively and negatively. Thus, it is the value that we assign to our self. *Self-regard* refers to paying respect or regard to our self with full awareness of all our positive and negative qualities. It can also be termed as self-worth denoting the feeling of worthiness about one self. Thus, in comparison to the term self-concept, other terms such as self-esteem, self-regard, self-respect and self-worth are used synonymously.

Regard or respect for one self contributes a lot in our personal and professional success. For instance, Rey, Extremera & Pena (2011) have pointed out that self-esteem acts as a mediator between emotional abilities people have and their life satisfaction. Another study (Ruvalcaba-Romero, Fernandez-Berrocal, Salazar-Estrada, & Gallegos-Guajardo, 2017) has tried to identify the mediation function of the variables of self-esteem, positive emotions, interpersonal relationships, and social support between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. It was found that self-esteem, positive emotions, and interpersonal relationships together are those that contribute with 50% of the variance for life satisfaction.

Self-esteem or self-regard also helps in effective interpersonal communication as such people understand their own thoughts, emotions in a proper way. Since they evaluate themselves with regard to their positive and negative aspects, they are in a better position to reflect on themselves which guides them how to function and conduct themselves in different spheres. They believe in their capacity and consider themselves as able to deal with situations. However, they do not have feelings of superiority; nor do they feel inferior with regard to their negative aspects. Self-regard is about self-acceptance and self-respect. This foundational ground makes it possible for the person to grow and branch out and have a positive impact on one self as well as others. In the process, it contributes to psychological health and well-being.

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## 6.4 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SELF-REGARD

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Self-regard is a crucial skill that has implications for emotional intelligence as it helps manage our emotions successfully. Two approaches can be discussed below related to the development of self-regard (Mangal & Mangal, 2015).

1. *Appropriate learning experiences in the developmental period*

Self-regard is an acquired phenomenon. As the child is born, she/he starts to develop the concept of 'I', 'me', 'myself', and form opinions, thoughts and feelings about oneself. In this process, the experiences arising out from parental practices, home environment, school environment and neighbourhood affect the child in a significant way. It results in forming a positive and negative attitude towards oneself.

Learning experiences during the developmental stage affect the child's all round development in physical, social, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects. Parents need to follow a parenting style that nurtures the child. The child needs to feel accepted, listened to, and cared for at home as well as at school since they spent a lot of time in these two places. The kind of behavior, feedback and expectations received from significant others impact the social and emotional development of the child to a great extent. Hence, parents, teachers, family members, peer play a crucial role in generating appropriate learning experiences that shapes the development of respect for the self in the child.

2. *Development of different attributes of self-regard*

As we have seen earlier, self-regard includes different pre-requisites such as self-awareness, self-concept, self-acceptance, self-control, self-confidence and self-respect. These can be called the different attributes of self-regard which are necessary to achieve self-regard.

The first thing required is *self-awareness* or knowing about oneself. One needs to know one's thoughts, feelings, strengths and weaknesses. It includes accurate assessment of oneself on different aspects and evaluating on different criteria. All these leads to development of understanding about the self.

*Self-concept* is the sum total of the self-awareness and self-assessment by the individual. It includes what all the individual thinks she/he is having – the abilities, skills, thinking, emotional and behavioural patterns etc. It is the totality of the individual including both positive and negative aspects, and contributes to who the individual is in a total sense.

*Self-acceptance* is also an important attribute of self-regard. Unless one accepts oneself with an open mind, one cannot have respect and regard for oneself. So accepting one self for whatever positive and negative qualities one has paves the way for respecting oneself.

*Self-control* ensures that one is able to control one's emotions, generating feelings of adequacy and control. This creates a positive impact on the person and creates respect for oneself.

*Self-confidence* emerges out of accepting oneself for what one is, in totality. When one is at ease with oneself, feels comfortable in one's skin, one has regard for oneself.

Development of all the above ultimately leads to respect or regard for oneself. One becomes optimistic, hopeful, and achieves success and well-being because of all these attributes in self-regard. Hence efforts can be made on creating learning experiences around these in early developmental years to facilitate the development of self-regard.

### Self Assessment Questions 1

1. What are the pre-requisites of self-regard?

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2. Differentiate between self-concept and self-esteem.

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3. Explain self-acceptance.

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## 6.5 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION

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We all know the story of Thomas Alva Edison, the famous scientist, whose zeal for experimentation made him the great scientist that he is. It reflected his incessant desire to fulfill his innermost desire and potentialities that he had within him. Similar was the case with Lata Mangeshkar, the famous playback singer whose passion for singing along with her determination and eagerness for it despite the initial odds took her to the pinnacle of glory who had become a legend in her own lifetime. She had sung thousands of songs in 36 languages and dialects including Russian, Swahili and Latin in a career spanning over seven decades.

All these examples point out the ability or attribute of self-actualization. Here we will discuss about the meaning of self-actualization, its role in emotional intelligence, how it is important for success in life, and strategies for development of self-actualization.

Each individual has their own potential, strengths, talents and inner desires. The success and happiness of the individual are influenced by an understanding of these and taking steps to realize this inner self with its full potential. Maslow (1954) has used the term self-actualization as a higher order psychological need that people strive towards once the lower order needs are satisfied for them. He has proposed a need hierarchy model (see Fig. 6.2) to explain the hierarchical structure of human needs. The model in the form of a pyramid structure presents the lower order needs at the bottom proceeding to higher order needs towards the top.

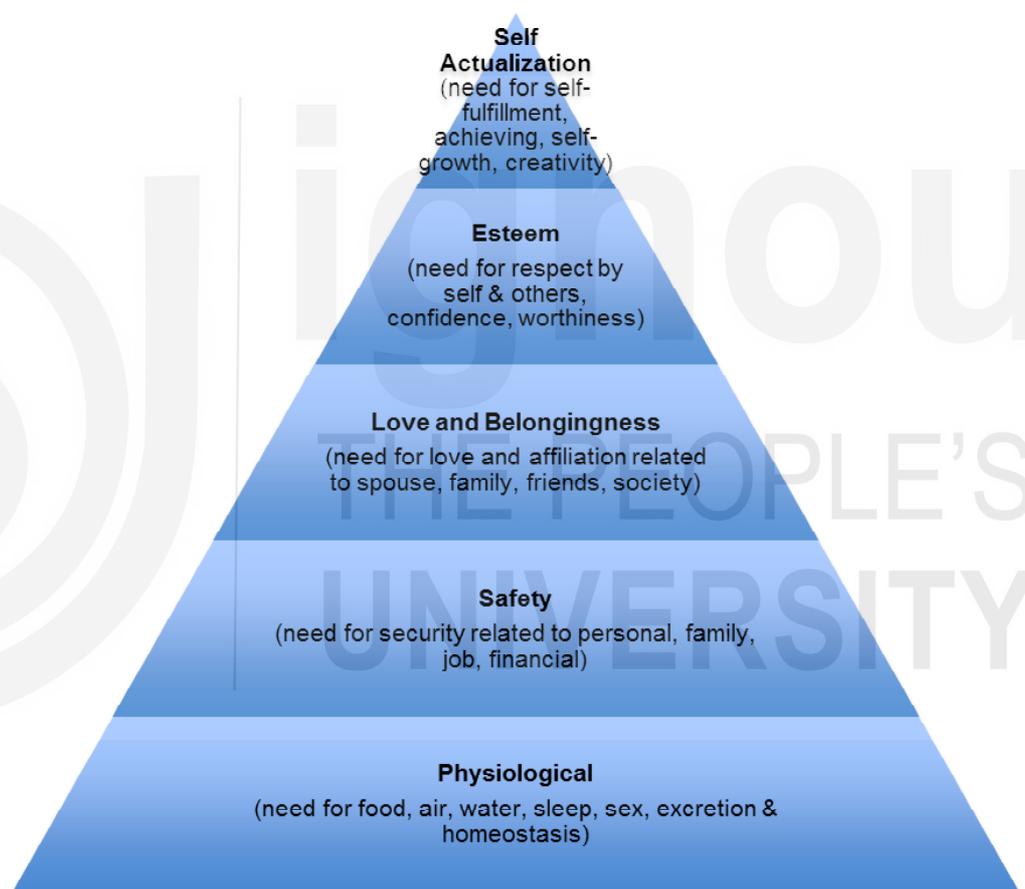


Fig. 6.2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The physiological needs at the bottom are the most basic needs that are required to be satisfied first before one thinks of other needs. Similarly, one can think of self-esteem needs only when all the other lower level needs are satisfied. Self-actualization is the highest need that depends on the satisfaction of all other needs below it and going beyond it. It represents fulfilling all one's desires, capacities, potentials etc. For this, one needs first to gain a complete understanding of oneself, assessing oneself accurately, controlling one's emotions, putting confidence on oneself, having respect and regard for oneself, and an intense desire or drive to work towards achieving one's goals and realizing one's potentials.

However, it may be pointed out here that Maslow's theory has also been criticized on the ground that we do have evidence for the fact that people may strive towards higher needs even in the absence of satisfaction of lower level needs. Thus, we can see examples of famous painters/artists or writers who excelled despite their poverty and deficiency in basic resources. So, it may not always be a hierarchical order of satisfaction of needs.

As Maslow (1954) puts it, "*what a man **can** be, he **must** be. He must be true to his own nature. This need we may call self-actualization.....it is the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming.*" Thus, self-actualization can be described as self-fulfillment, to fulfill the potentials what the individual is capable of achieving.

Carl Rogers (1961) also talks about self-actualization in the context of a fully functioning person. Such a person continuously works towards self-actualization, i.e., towards achieving their full potential.

This sense/meaning is reflected in the definition of self-actualization as given by Collins English Dictionary (2009) which describes self-actualization as "the process of establishing oneself as a whole person, able to develop one's abilities and to understand oneself." Thus it is seeing and understanding oneself in a comprehensive manner rather than a fragmented understanding.

Stein and Book (2006) refer to self-actualization as an ongoing, dynamic process of striving toward the maximum development of your abilities and talents, of persistently trying to do your best and to improve yourself in general.

Mangal & Mangal (2015) define self-actualization 'as a component of one's EI representing his need, urge and desire for developing and becoming what he is able or capable of becoming in tune of his own potential, talent and creativity lying with him directed towards his self-satisfaction, real happiness and success in life.'

The Mother, the spiritual guru and founder of Auroville and Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry, India (Sri Aurobindo Ashram 2001) says that one must become aware of what is the highest in oneself, what is most true, most universal and eternal in one's consciousness. Here, the Mother is not limited to self-actualization, but goes beyond it to a higher level of transcendence, i.e., going beyond oneself, becoming selfless, and engaged in the service of mankind.

Analyzing all these definitions we may note the following:

- Self-actualization reflects one's drive to fulfill one's potential
- It reflects one's persistence to continue on the path of one's goal or desires.
- It underlies one's basic desire to understand oneself fully.
- It views oneself as a whole person, a fully functioning person, achieving what one is capable of achieving or realizing.
- It emphasizes the individual's innate tendency to be the best possible version of oneself that one can be.
- It indicates the highest level of self-growth by reaching one's actual self with the realization of the potentials within the individual.

- It involves awareness, acceptance, appreciation, regard, empathy, flexibility, and creativity that help the individual in the process of connecting with one's inner self and actualizing their potential.
- It gives rise to real success and happiness by being honest and authentic to one's true self.
- It aims at realizing the highest in one's consciousness, thus it goes beyond oneself and beyond self-actualization and characterized by selflessness.

Thus, we can see that self-actualization can contribute towards being emotionally intelligent that will make the individual self-aware and self-sufficient and also foster healthy relationships with self and others. It will thus lead to effective intrapersonal and interpersonal management skills.

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## 6.6 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SELF-ACTUALIZATION

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Self-actualization is a process and it is dynamic in the sense that a lot of factors influence it in addition to the satisfaction of lower level needs as proposed in Maslow's theory of needs. However, once the basic needs are satisfied, and the individual progresses to achieving the higher level psychological needs, self-actualization comes across as a highest goal for the individual. Although, in the revised theory, Maslow talked about a sixth need, i.e., the need for transcendence, many people may not fulfill this need for self-actualization also. Various steps and strategies can help the individual progress in the path of actualization of oneself. These are described below.

1. *Awareness about oneself*

The first step on the path of self-actualization starts with a detailed and complete awareness about oneself. One needs to understand one's strengths as well as weaknesses, aspirations and apprehensions, goals and hurdles/obstacles, desires and dis-likings etc. so that one can evaluate oneself properly.

2. *Complete acceptance of oneself*

The next step after knowing about oneself is to develop a complete acceptance for what one is. While highlighting the positive aspects, one need not avoid or feel ashamed about one's negative aspects. One should be equally accepting of both positive and negative side.

3. *Controlling of one's emotions*

This plays a crucial role as unless the person learns to have emotional self-control, one will not be able to develop acceptance of oneself in totality including the negative aspects of oneself. Controlling here does not mean suppression, but management of emotions so that you understand the nature and reason of your emotions and can take steps to manage these triggers of your emotional output. One needs to overcome many hurdles/obstacles when trying to actualize oneself, i.e., fulfill the inner potentials, giving rise to the need for managing one's emotions. Hence it is imperative that we learn to

manage our emotions so that it facilitates our progress on the path of self-actualization.

4. *Decide your goals and show perseverance*

Once you know about yourself and accept all the aspects of yourself, and has learned to manage your emotions, you need to set your goals towards actualization of your potentials. This will help one to live a complete and authentic life in touch with one's true self. The inner potential needs to be reflected in the formulation of the meaning and purpose of one's life. Goal setting should be accompanied by perseverance to achieve it despite whatever obstacles may come. Thus, it requires that determination, persistence, resilience, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, self-confidence be developed in the person.

5. *Looking for opportunities*

A positive mindset always attracts opportunities and opens up ways towards realizing one's goals. Hence, one needs to cultivate a positive attitude, optimism and looking with hope towards future however adverse the situation may be. Here, the person can also look upto others such as family, teachers, peers and other significant people around, or sources of knowledge to take inspiration and see things in perspective.

6. *Cultivating a proper mindset*

The ultimate truth of life is that we do not compete against each other, but we compete with ourselves. In the absence of this, the world is marred by conflicts, disturbances and unhappiness. If we aim at realizing the full potential that is there within each one of us, and get support from others around, then there will not be any scope for competition and challenges. Since each one of us is unique in our development, context and experiences, it can never be a comparison and competition with others, but it should always be a competition with the self. You are testing yourself that you are growing, improving, making yourself better and transforming yourself

Self-actualization is the highest need that human being strives to fulfill. We may note here that once the person is able to live the purpose of his/her life, it does not mean that self-actualization stops. Rather, the process of self-actualization is dynamic and it is never ending. Once the person reaches the set goals, there is always a scope to develop further and go still higher level in life. Thus, it is not static.

**Self Assessment Questions 2**

1. According to Maslow, 'what a man *can* be, he \_\_\_\_\_ be.
2. Self-actualization refers to fulfillment of the higher level material needs. (True/False)
3. How does Rogers describe self-actualization?

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## 6.7 LET US SUM UP

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In the present Unit, we discussed two more components, namely, self-regard and self-actualization that help in the process of intrapersonal management of emotions, and thus contribute towards the development of emotional intelligence. In the earlier Unit, you have learned about self-control and assertiveness as factors crucial for emotional intelligence. Here, we discussed the meaning of self-regard and self-actualization and the various attributes involved in these. Finally, different strategies and ways were described that help in the process of development of self-regard and self-actualization in human beings.

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## 6.8 KEY WORDS

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**Self-regard** : Self-regard refers to paying respect or regard to our self with full awareness of all our positive and negative qualities.

**Self-actualization** : Self-actualization can be described as self-fulfillment, to fulfill the potentials that the individual is capable of achieving.

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## 6.9 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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### Self Assessment Questions 1

1. The pre-requisites for self-regard are self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, and self-control.
2. Self-concept refers to what do we think about ourselves, what our self comprises of or includes. In other words, we can describe self-concept in terms of its aspects or components. Self-esteem, on the other hand, refers to the evaluative component, how do we evaluate ourselves, positively and negatively.
3. Self-acceptance is an important attribute of self-regard. It refers to accepting oneself with an open mind, When one accepts one self for whatever positive and negative qualities one has, it paves the way for having respect and regard for oneself.

### Self Assessment Questions 2

1. *must*
2. False
3. Rogers (1961) describes self-actualization in the context of a fully functioning person. Such a person continuously works towards self-actualization, i.e., towards achieving their full potential.

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## 6.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the meaning of self-regard and how it is important for emotional intelligence?
2. Discuss various factors that will facilitate the development of self-regard in oneself.
3. Explain the meaning of self-actualization as proposed by Maslow.
4. Describe the various factors that one needs to take into account to facilitate the process of actualizing oneself.

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