Lecture 14

• Executive function
  o A key aspect of the self is its **executive function**, which enables the self to:
    ▪ Make choices
    ▪ Initiate actions
    ▪ Exert control over self and world
  o Executive function is experienced when:
    ▪ One weighs options
    ▪ Makes a clear decision
    ▪ Forces oneself to do something
    ▪ Restrains an impulse

• Key questions
  o Question 1: Are there basic goals that we all pursue?
    ▪ **Maslow’s need hierarchy**
    ▪ The self-actualized person
      ▪ **Self-actualization**: becoming the person that one has the potential to become
      ▪ Self-actualized people are:
        o Independent and autonomous
        o Remain true to themselves in the face of unpopularity
        o Nondefensive and easily accepting of others
        o Identify with the welfare of other people
  o Question 2: How are goals construed and organized?
    ▪ **Goal-striving**
      ▪ Personal strivings: goals a person regularly tries to attain
      ▪ People vary in their **construal** (understanding) of personal strivings
        o Degree of commitment
        o Anticipated outcome of goal pursuit
        o Appraisal of threats/demands in goal pursuit
        o Level of abstraction
      ▪ People vary in the **organization** of their strivings within a goal system
        o **Level of inter-goal conflict**: extent to which pursuit of one goal interferes with another
        o **Goal differentiation**: extent to which people perceive their goals as distinct
        o **Goal integration**: extent to which people possess superordinate goal categories that connect different subgoals
    ▪ Consequences of construal and organization
      ▪ Construal and organization can affect **goal engagement**
        o Perception of threat → less goal engagement
        o Higher inter-goal conflict → less goal engagement/greater negative affect
      ▪ Can also affect **well-being**