

The discordance of dr. john elder jr.'s life course theory and 56 up



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Introduction

In opposition with two of Dr. John Elder Jr's four determining factors for a life's trajectory, the lives of Suzy and Symon, as seen through the documentary 56 UP, display the impossibility of predicting the future of one's life based upon their family's social patterns and their opportunities. This conclusion was made based on Dr. Elder's four major principles for determining a life course and the study presented in the Documentary 56 Up. The Life Course theory asserts that the following four indicators can predict an individual's future: socio-historical/geographical location, social ties to others, personal control, the timing of lives (Elder 1960s). This documentary follows 13 people throughout their lives, in 7-year increments, to study how they have developed since the age of seven. By examining the events of Suzy and Symon's lives, it can be understood that their outcome contradicts two large statements made by Dr. Elder. Specifically, his claims that socio-historical condition and social ties to other people can effectively predict an individual's future are proven inaccurate through this study. Despite Suzy's fortunate financial upbringing and damaged relationship with her parents, she develops into a successful mother of many and strays away from a notorious career. Symon also experienced a traumatic childhood through the absence of his father and the death of his mother but his aspiration to become a loving parent satisfied him. These testimonies fully display why an individual's future cannot be discerned based upon their origin.

Suzy

Suzy was sent away to boarding school at a young age where she was forced to grow up quickly. This transpired during a multitude of family issues that would be damaging to her overall attitude towards life. She became rebellious and unhappy for a while until the introduction of his husband. The reporters noted that contrary to 7 years prior, Suzy seemed happy and was longer "Nervous...chain-smoking...and uptight" (Apted "56 Up" 1: 04: 00). When asked, "What happened over the past 7 years?", Suzy replied, "I guess Rupert"(Apted "56 Up" 1: 04: 09). This notable change displays a critical transition in Suzy's life. Their relationship would eventually produce multiple children, allowing Suzy to be the loving mother she sought as a child.

Being sent away to boarding school and meeting her husband were two very unexpected events to Suzy. When she was sent away from her home, Suzy states that while the experience allowed her to grow, it was very uncomfortable and unnatural. Romantic relationships and the role of motherhood was completely dismissed before meeting Rupert, her attitude being described as, "very, very cynical"(Apted "56 Up" 1: 03: 54). As a young adult, Suzy stated that while she would like to have children, she, "Wasn't very child minded at that moment.(Apted "56 Up" 1: 08: 07)." Both of these opinions would completely change through the introduction of her husband. Her unexpected love for Rupert would alter the rest of her life with the role of a mother over three children.

Rupert not only allowed for Suzy to let go of the bitterness from the past but to move forward towards being a mother as well. While she admits that they have, "worked through the hard times" (Apted "56 Up" 01: 04: 46), she found herself very happy with the family she was able to raise her kids in. <https://assignbuster.com/the-discordance-of-dr-john-elder-jrs-life-course-theory-and-56-up/>

Their love allowed for Suzy to feel fulfilled as a mother and granted her the ability to become what she never had. Despite her own mother's failure, Suzy was able to recover and become a "tremendously successful mother" (Apted "56 Up" 1: 08: 46) showing her situations unexpectedness.

The most notable choice that Suzy made during her life was her decision to allow herself to love and to be loved. This includes her marriage to Rupert and the fulfillment she experienced as a mother. Instead of dwelling upon her difficulties as a child, she chose to make the best out of every situation and to appreciate every trial. At the end of her interview, she encourages the audience saying, "We all make mistakes, that's how you become who you are." (Apted "56 Up" 01: 09: 28-29) "He decided to move through the difficulty, allows her to be happy at 56.

Symon

Symon went through three major transitions throughout his life that altered his life course. When Symon was 21, he was granted the opportunity to become a typical office worker. Out of distaste for the "grey, grubby office" (Apted "56 Up" 01: 26: 11), he chose to continue as a factory worker. At 35, the death of his mother forced him to reprioritize the important aspect of life to live a fulfilling life. He would later marry, and then remarry at 42, granting him the responsibility and the blessing of being the father he sought as a child.

The absence of his father and the death of his mother were both unexpected events that would be influential on the remainder of his life. As mentioned

before, Symon's non-existent relationship with his father put a financial
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strain upon him and his mother growing up. The feeling of being abandoned would later encourage him to have his own family and host foster children. The unexpected death of his mother was a total surprise to Symon because of her young age. He regretting not," saying" I love you" every day"(Apted " 56 Up" 01: 18: 16), after witnessing her struggles as a single mom.

Symon's key relationships were with Vienetta and the children that they raised together. After many years of marriage," the chemistry is still there"(Apted " 56 Up" 01: 27: 19), and despite them being very different people, they've had more ups than downs. Symon finds true satisfaction through his ability to love his children. These relationships occur following Symon's decision to foster more children, and the constant satisfaction he receives through the program. Symon's family provides him with far more enjoyment than any career could.

Symon's choice to continue to be a factory worker would limit his career opportunities for his entire life. He believes that" You need to push yourself and go on"(Apted " 56 Up" 01: 26: 03) and that if he did push himself," (he) would've been an accountant"(Apted " 56 Up" 01: 26: 05). Rather than lacking the opportunities because of his socio-economic condition, Symon found his own decision making as more influential in his life course. Instead of through material wealth, Symon felt fulfilled through his family. His decision to foster children while maintaining many of his displays his dedication towards simply being loving towards kids who feel absent of love. Symon's family situation completely transformed from broken to extremely inclusive and caring.

Conclusion

At the end of their interviews, Suzy and Symon both appeared to be satisfied with their own lives because of their home and work life. Regardless of some past mistakes and difficult situations, Suzy believes that her experiences may not have been enjoyable but they have shaped her into whom she has become. Her expectations for the future are not defined as she pursues her job as a full-time mother, active in her family's life. Symon notes that he believes that his life has had more ups than downs and that he is optimistic toward what the future holds. He concludes that simply because he may have chosen a wrong path, doesn't mean it's the end of the road. This positive mentality displays his ability to keep moving despite mistakes in his past. He plans to continue working because, "When you stop working, you suddenly get old"(Apted " 56 Up" 01: 27: 48). His equanimity will allow him to continue working while maintaining his happiness.

In both of these examples, their lives' starting point did not affect their life course. Both Suzy and Symon had absent or emotionally traumatic relationships with their parents, however, both of them aspired to change their social ties. Rather than following in their family's footsteps they chose to pursue parenthood while simultaneously achieving great joy through it. It is unreliable to assume an individual's future relationships based upon the previous failure because it is dependent on the individual's heart, not others. Suzy was fortunate as a child but her personal choices trumped her expensive schooling and successful upbringing, resulting in the lack of a defined career. While Symon could work a higher-income, more notorious job, he chose to pursue working in the factory based on his happiness and <https://assignbuster.com/the-discordance-of-dr-john-elder-jrs-life-course-theory-and-56-up/>

interests. The four life principles were unable to predict an individual's interests and passions, so determining their future career is improbable.

Works Cited

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