

Life span development narrative



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Oprah Any person experiences growth of different aspects of personality during various points of time. In fact, it is the day to day good and bad experiences that shape the personality of an individual.

There are different theories of growth of personality of an individual. In this assignment, I will take up the case of well-known figure Oprah Winfrey.

Based on different theories of personality, I will study the factors which contributed to the growth of personality of Oprah Winfrey. I will discuss Oprah's family issues and support systems that may have influenced her developmental growth and adjustment. I will also distinguish between the influences of heredity and environment on her psychological development.

Oprah Gail Winfrey (born January 29, 1954), often referred to simply as Oprah, is an American television host, media mogul, and philanthropist. Her internationally-syndicated talk show, The Oprah Winfrey Show, has earned her multiple Emmy Awards and is the highest-rated talk show in the history of television. She is also an influential book critic, an Academy Award-nominated actress, and a magazine publisher. She has been ranked the richest African American of the 20th century, the most philanthropic African American of all time, and the world's only black billionaire for three straight years. (Wikipedia, 2008 ¶ 1) Oprah was born in rural Kosciusko, Mississippi to a poor teenaged single mother, and later raised in an inner city Milwaukee neighborhood. She later explained that her conception was due to a single sexual encounter that her two teenaged parents had; they quickly broke up not long after.

There are conflicting reports as to how her name became “ Oprah. According to a 1991 interview with the Academy of Achievement, Winfrey claimed that her family and friends’ inability to pronounce “ Orpah” caused them to put the “ P” before the “ R” in every place else other than the birth certificate. However, there is the account that the midwife transposed letters while filling out the newborn’s birth certificate. Her mother, Vernita Lee, was a housemaid, and her father, Vernon Winfrey, was a coal miner and later worked as a barber before becoming a city councilman. Winfrey’s father was in the Armed Forces when she was born. After her birth, Winfrey’s mother traveled north and Winfrey spent her first six years living in rural poverty with her grandmother, Hattie Mae Lee, who was so poor that Winfrey often wore dresses made of potato sacks, causing the local children to make fun of her.

Oprah was reared by her grandmother on a farm where she “ began her broadcasting career” by learning to read aloud and perform recitations at the age of three. Academy of Achievement, 2006) When Oprah was a child, her grandmother would take a switch, which is a flexible rod, typically used for corporal punishment of the birching type, (Wikipedia, 2008 ¶ 1) and would hit her with it when she didn’t do chores or if she misbehaved in any way. From age six to thirteen, she lived in Milwaukee with her mother, who was less supportive and encouraging than her grandmother had been, due in large part to the long hours Vernita Lee worked as a maid. Oprah has stated that she was molested by her cousin, uncle, and a family friend, starting when she was nine years old, something she first revealed to her viewers on a 1986 episode of her TV show, when sexual abuse was being discussed.

(Wikipedia, 2008 ¶2) Oprah was raped at the age of nine. Oprah skipped two of her earliest grades, became the teacher's pet, and by the time she was thirteen received a scholarship to attend Nicolet High School in the Milwaukee suburb of Glendale, Wisconsin.

After suffering abuse and molestation, she ran away and was sent to a juvenile detention home at the age of thirteen, only to be denied admission because all the beds were filled. At age fourteen, she got pregnant and gave birth to a son who died in infancy. As a last resort, she was sent to Nashville, Tennessee to live under a barber who she calls her father. She was under his strict discipline, but he was encouraging and made her education a priority. Vernon Winfrey saw to it that his daughter met a midnight curfew, and he required her to read a book and write a book report each week.

“ As strict as he was,” says Oprah, “ he had some concerns about me making the best of my life, and would not accept anything less than what he thought was my best. ” (Academy of Achievement, 2006 ¶ 1) Oprah became an honors student, was voted Most Popular Girl, joined her high school speech team at East Nashville High School, and placed second in the nation in dramatic interpretation. Oprah's broadcasting career began at age seventeen, while she was still in high school, when she was hired by WVOL radio in Nashville, and two years later, she began co-anchoring the local evening news and later signed on WTVF-TV in Nashville as a reporter/anchor. She attended Tennessee State University where she majored in Speech Communications and Performing Arts.

In 1978, she discovered her talent for hosting talk shows when she became co-host of WJZ-TV's " People Are Talking," while continuing to serve as anchor and news reporter. In January 1984, she came to Chicago to host WLS-TV's " AM Chicago," a faltering local talk show. In less than a year, she turned " AM Chicago" into the hottest show in town. The format was soon expanded to one hour, and in September 1985 it was renamed " The Oprah Winfrey Show. " (Academy of Achievement, 2006 ¶ 4) Oprah's career choice in media did not surprise her grandmother, who once said that ever since Oprah could talk, she was on stage. As a child she played games interviewing her corn cob doll and the crows on the fence of her family's property.

Oprah later acknowledged her grandmother's influence, saying it was Hattie Mae who had encouraged her to speak in public and " gave me a positive sense of myself. " (Wikipedia, 2008 ¶ 5) In 1991, motivated in part by her own memories of childhood abuse, she initiated a campaign to establish a national database of convicted child abusers, and testified before a U. S. Senate Judiciary Committee on behalf of a National Child Protection Act. President Clinton signed the " Oprah Bill" into law in 1993, establishing the national database she had sought, which is now available to law enforcement agencies and concerned parties across the country.

Academy of Achievement, 2006 ¶ 8) Seen nationally since September 8, 1986, The Oprah Winfrey Show became the number one talk show in national syndication in less than a year. In June 1987, in its first year of eligibility, The Oprah Winfrey Show received three Daytime Emmy Awards in the categories of Outstanding Host, Outstanding Talk/Service Program and

Outstanding Direction. In June 1988, The Oprah Winfrey Show received its second consecutive Daytime Emmy Award as Outstanding Talk/Service Program, and she herself received the international Radio and Television Society's "Broadcaster of the Year" Award. She was the youngest person and only the fifth woman ever to receive the honor in IRTS's 25 year history. (Academy of Achievement, 2006 ¶ 5) Oprah Winfrey has always excelled at snaring newsmaker guests. Oprah currently lives on "The Promised Land", her 42-acre estate with ocean and mountain views in Montecito, California, outside of Santa Barbara.

Oprah also owns a house in Lavallette, New Jersey, an apartment in Chicago, an estate on Fisher Island off the coast of Miami, a ski house in Telluride, Colorado, and property on the island of Maui, Hawaii. She also owns a home on the island of Antigua. Oprah's show is based in Chicago, so she spends time there, specifically in the neighborhood of Streeterville, Chicago, but she otherwise resides in California. Her Hawaii property was featured on the cover of O at Home and on her TV show. Winfrey also owns a home in the exclusive town of Avalon, New Jersey.

(Wikipedia, 2008 ¶ 24) Oprah and her partner, Stedman Graham, have been together since 1986. They were engaged to be married in November 1992, but the ceremony never took place. Oprah believes that the reason she never had children was because her students at South Africa's Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls was meant to be her daughters. "I never had children, never even thought I would have children.

Now I have 152 daughters; expecting 75 more next year. That is some type of gestation period! ... I said to the mothers, the family members, the aunts, the grannies – because most of these girls have lost their families, their parents – I said to them, ‘ Your daughters are now my daughters and I promise you I’m going to take care of your daughters.

I promise you. ’” (Wikipedia, 2008 ¶ 26) Humanistic theory gives importance to healthy concept of self in a personality. The focus of the humanistic perspective is on the self, which translates into “ YOU”, and “ your” perception of “ your” experiences. This view argues that you are free to choose your own behavior, rather than reacting to environmental stimuli and reinforcers.

Issues dealing with self-esteem, self-fulfillment, and needs are paramount. The major focus is to facilitate personal development. Developmental Psychology, ¶ 1) One of the key features of Oprah Winfrey’s television persona is that her own private life has been an essential element of her talk-show format of public therapy. Her poor black background and her past and current problems with child abuse, men, and weight have made Oprah an exposed public personality on television and have allowed her loyal audience to feel that they “ know” her quite well.

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) describes learning in terms of interrelationship between behavior, environmental factors, and personal factors. It also provides the theoretical framework for interactive learning used to develop both Constructivism and Cooperative Learning. (IDEA, 2007) The Social Cognitive Theory is relevant to health communication. First, the

theory deals with cognitive, emotional aspects and aspects of behavior for understanding behavioral change.

Second, the concepts of the SCT provide ways for new behavioral research in health education. Finally, ideas for other theoretical areas such as psychology are welcome to provide new insights and understanding. Also, it is known to many of us, Oprah is an individual who is a very successful black American today. These qualities naturally inspired many individuals such as me. She established a foundation to assist women, children and families in the United States and other countries of the world. Therefore, undoubtedly, I can say that the social cognitive theory suits the best for Oprah.

In conclusion, despite her dysfunctional home life, fortunately, through her emotional, cognitive and social capabilities over the course of her life span, she could interact with other individuals in society. It is shown how Oprah initiated a movement to provide security to children. She encouraged people to contribute to fight against evils in the society by giving importance to charity. Her social nature is what people love the best in her as it shows her humble kind human within. It is the social interaction which has given perfection to positive qualities of Oprah Winfrey.

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