

Middle adulthood essay sample

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



The Dictionary of Social Work roughly defines middle adulthood as the period between forty-five and sixty-four years of age. There are four main tasks in this stage. They include meeting intimacy and family needs, satisfying achievement needs, taking care of elderly parents, and coping with end of life issues. Erikson identifies the need for achievement during midlife, which fits into his stage of generativity vs. stagnation. Success in adulthood is defined by feelings of connectedness and the ability to take care of others. Generativity is the satisfaction resulting from positive relationships with family and friends and the idea of leaving a heritage behind. Stagnation, on the other hand results from failing to accomplish earlier developmental tasks. Our text also points to the term “ sandwich generation”. These individuals are under the pressure of the needs of their own maturing children and their parents.

This paper focuses on an interaction with a 50-year-old female named Lynn. She actually fits all but a few of the major developmental tasks of her age. Lynn effectively meets intimacy and family needs in that she has a positive, loving relationship with all of her four children. She struggles, though, with intimacy between herself and her husband of thirty years. She finds him immature and in the “ dark ages” because he consistently ignores her requests to pay attention to her needs. “ For many, the transition to middle adulthood involves a drastic change of life such as divorce, an affair?.” (Furr, 127) Lynn, however, does not see herself as doing either of these things because of the way she values her marriage vows.

“ Fulfilling transition choices is highly satisfying and exciting for adults who have the resources and opportunities that enable them to act on their

choices.” (Furr, 127) Right now, Lynn has taken her first job in twenty-nine years since the birth of their first daughter. The job came to her unexpectedly and it was an opportunity to work in her youngest daughter’s high school. She jumped at the chance and feels satisfied and enriched by the experience.

Lynn is definitely a part of the characteristic sandwich generation. She has one brother but finds herself completely responsible for her home bound parents. Because her father has Alzheimer’s disease and stroke dementia, she is responsible for the entire coordination of his treatment. This causes her considerable stress as it conjures up old emotional tensions.

The only area where Lynn does not seem to identify with is in regards to end of life issues. “ Carl Jung believed that the primary goal of the second half of life is to confront death.” (Furr, 140) This is an issue because Lynn is losing her father rapidly. However, where most middle-aged adults might begin planning for their own retirement, Lynn is still financially supporting three of her four children. Physically, Lynn is experiencing menopause but as the book states “ Some people deny the natural changes in their bodies” (Furr, 141) and Lynn definitely does.

Adulthood is the longest stage of development in human life. It is usually the time of greatest productiveness and fulfillment. Lynn has successfully achieved three of the four major tasks of development: she has met intimacy needs, family needs, and satisfying achievement needs. She is beginning the process of coping with end of life issues as she confronts her father’s death.

Lynn is well prepared for Erikson's last stage of the lifecycle: integrity vs. despair and she will certainly face her life choices with much integrity.