

The psychology of personality psychology essay



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Oprah Winfrey is one of the most influential black American women. She was born on January 29, 1954 in Kosciusko, Mississippi of USA. When she was young, she lived in a very poor surrounding with her grandparents despite her parents were separated. At the age of six, she moved to stay with her mother. Consequently, she was being sexually abuse and molested by male relatives and she endured the hardship. Right until she was fourteen, she moved again to stay with her father in Nashville Tennessee. Living with her father was not the hope she was looking for because that her father was loving and yet a real strict towards Oprah. She created conflict with her father's high standards by dealing with drugs, rebellious behaviour and even lost a premature baby. She eventually settled down after being awarded with a University Scholarship. Although, her early years in life were filled with hardship, she still graduated as an honours student. Oprah graduated as a BA in Speech and Performing Arts from Tennessee State University. She was highly inspired by her father's high standard to aim and achieve more from life. She began her career in the media industry and worked as a news anchor and reporter for television station in Nashville on the WTVF-TV station at the age of nineteen. She started to enjoy her work where she was able to be herself and express her own opinions and share her true feelings when she shifted to morning talk show " AM Chicago" at WLS-TV in Chicago. The show had become the number one ranked right after she started and it was renamed as " The Oprah Winfrey Show" after a year. Her show went on to become one of the highest ranked television talk show programs in history with twenty million American viewers every week. She had become famous by hosting her own show, which she really enjoyed that as her career (Fry).

Section B

“ A theory of human behaviour emphasizing the drive to overcome feelings of inferiority by compensation and the need to achieve personal goals that have value for society.” – Individual Psychology by Alfred Adler (Mifflin, 2007).

Adler's theory talked about birth order and parenting style impact on personality in his assumptions of human nature. Oprah Winfrey was the only child in her family. According to Adler's theory, only child will tend not to lose primacy and power, besides, he or she will mature at early stage of life and may have certain issues in places where they are not the centre of attention. I believe that Oprah never loses her power based on Adler's theory in birth order, that's why she is able to build up herself again after all the hardships she has been through.

But what about her parent's parenting style? Basically, her parents were separated from each other and she had been put to a very poor environment with her grandparents when she was six. Thus, she was being neglected instead of pampering, in result, she received too little of attention from parents, and being sexually abuse and molested right until she was fourteen. She was able to endure all the hardships because she believed in her power, which I think the power comes from the nature of birth order that she had it.

Upon staying with her father, she started to receive parental love for her father, although it was just single parent's love, but I guess she would have been very grateful and appreciate the love. But her father was very strict as well, he had a very high standard for Oprah to aim and achieve more from <https://assignbuster.com/the-psychology-of-personality-psychology-essay/>

life. Due to high standard, her behaviour had caused conflict with her father's strict rules. But she eventually settled down everything after being awarded with a University Scholarship.

She changed her wild behaviour because she knew she had a goal to accomplish from this university. As Adler said in his theory, behaviour may change throughout a person's life span in accordance with goals.

According to Individual Psychology theory, life is a dynamic towards completion, perfection, superiority and mastery, which Adler is referring to human motivation as "striving for superiority". Oprah acquired this human motivation from her own power and will, her father's love and standard, and the scholarship. "Striving for superiority" is when one overcompensates for the feeling of inferiority and motivates the individual to seek for perfection and drive him or her to the goal for a total future (Mitchell). I believe that Oprah's "striving for superiority" is what makes her to be a very successful and talented television talk show host. But according to Adler, he said sometimes inferiority complex might happens as well, inferiority complex is defined as people couldn't overcome it and running away from the challenges, I bet this complex happened to Oprah when she was staying with the mother, which she was sexually abuse and molested. Due to unable to against, she developed "inferiority complex" and endured through all this suffer.

Adler also described four different styles of life, which can be created by ourselves because we, human beings are non-deterministic and the life style is developed from the creative power of self (Luttrell, 2009). The four styles

of life according to Adler are ruling, getting, avoiding and socially useful.

Each of the styles is conceptualized in terms of degree of social interest and activity. I think that different people at different stages and environments in life might eventually shape their personalities based on Adler's styles of life.

For instance, Oprah was given a very poor environment at the age of six, thus, she would be the "getting" type at that moment. She wanted to expect to be given everything she needed as a child, such as parents' love, hugs, kisses or even being pampered. Unfortunately, she couldn't get it. In spite of that, she compensated her inferiority and developed superiority complex, thus, she has been shaped from "getting" type to "socially useful" type. Adler explained that "socially useful" type exhibits activity in the service of other and they always confront the life problems and endeavour to resolve them in a manner consistent with the needs of other individuals. Up until now, Oprah still belongs to this style of life; she has touched millions of lives in American and other countries. There are few of her achievements and deeds that really opened my eyes. She was the first black person that was being listed in Business Week as one of America's top 50 most generous philanthropists (Manohar, 2010). She also invested \$40 million in the making of Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for girls near Johannesburg in South Africa, which the project was started in January 2007. Even Nelson Mandela congratulated and applauded for her effort of overcoming her own disadvantaged youth to become a benefactor for the people. In my opinion, Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology theory has explained much for me to understand more about Oprah Winfrey's background, development, accomplishments and so on. Besides, I would say Oprah Winfrey is a very

resilient woman, believing in her own power and healthy striving for superiority to compensate all of her past. As Adler believed that healthy striving is for self-realization, in contributing to humanity, dealing with life's problems, and in making the world a better place to live.

Section C

Alfred Adler talked about birth order and parenting style is impactful to the new born baby's personality. According to Adler, the only child never loses primacy and power, mature in early stage of life and may have issue in places where they are not the centre of attention. I am the youngest in my family and I have two brothers and one sister, but I would consider myself as the only child. This is because; I had been staying just with my parents since I was 12 years old. My eldest brother pursued his career as a singer, my elder brother is a married man with wife and children and lastly my sister got married to faraway place from our hometown. I believe that Adler's explanation about birth order is reasonable, because I've been holding up to these primacy and power in my life and I eventually getting mature than other people around my age. For example, I already started to question myself what and how should I end up in my later life, how can I contribute to my parents and "Who Am I"? Guess I found my answer when I was sixteen years old and these primacy and power eventually shaped who I am today. Next, I would classify my parents' parenting style as pampering but somehow they are very strict, just like Oprah Winfrey's father. So, they are not spoiling or over-protect me as a child. Adler proposed superiority complex and inferiority complex, which I think it happens to everyone at different stages of life. I had developed inferiority complex before when I was

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myself better and I joined many church activities that helped me to find my identity and role. I eventually developed the “ socially useful” personality type. Most of the church activities that I had participated were mostly charity and volunteer works, guess all these had shaped me to exhibit activity in the service of others. Thus, I am able to confront life tasks and attempt to resolve problems in a proper manner with the needs of other individuals. Although, I am a “ socially useful” type right now, part of my “ getting” type and “ avoiding” type are still reside in me, just not that influential anymore. Here I am today, a leader for Famine 30 2010 camp in my own college with full of passion to help the poverty children all around the world.