

Malcom x research paper example

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Biography

Malcom X was born on 19th May 1925 as Malcom Little in Omaha, Nebraska. His mother was Louise Norton Little and his father Earl Little. Earl was an outspoken Baptist minister, a civil rights activist and a staunch follower of Marcus Garvey. As a civil rights Activist, Earl's activities led to death intimidations from the Black Legion, a white supremacist organization. Before Malcolm's fourth birthday the family relocated twice to try to fend off the death threats. Despite relocating, suspected members of the Legion burnt the Little's Michigan home in 1929. Earl was murdered two years later. Louise underwent emotional breakdown several years after Earl's death. Malcolm and his siblings were placed in different foster homes (Marable, 2012).

Malcolm graduated from junior high at the top of his class. However, his favorite teacher told him that his ambition of becoming an attorney was unrealistic since he was ' a nigger'. Malcolm dropped out of school. He engaged in odd jobs in Boston, Massachusetts where he stayed for a while before travelling to Harlem, New York where he was involved in petty crimes. By 1942 Malcolm was managing numerous prostitution, gambling, and narcotic rings.

Malcolm was arrested in 1946 in Boston alongside his friend Malcolm " Shorty" Jarvis. They were convicted on burglary charges and sentenced to 10 years in prison. During his time in prison, his brother Reginald visited him and enlightened him about Islam. Reginald belonged to the Nation of Islam (NOI) organization led by Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm studied the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the activities of the NOI. Malcolm was released on

parole in 1952. He changed his name from Malcolm Little to Malcolm X. Since Malcolm was articulate and intelligent, Muhammad appointed him the national spokesperson for NOI. Malcolm used the media to popularize the NOI and its activities. The NOI support surged from 500 followers in 1952 to around 30, 000 in 1963. However, Malcolm's faith in the NOI was tested in 1963 during the intense lobbying from the civil rights movement. He found that contrary to the NOI teachings which advocated for abstinence from sexual intercourse until marriage, Elijah Muhammad had several affairs with women. Malcolm had stayed celibate in line with the NOI teachings until his marriage to Betty Shabazz in 1958. Subsequently, the NOI silenced Malcolm for 90 days following Malcolm's unpleasant comments regarding President J. F. Kennedy's assassination.

In March of 1964, Malcolm ended his relationship with Elijah Muhammad and the NOI then formed his own religious group, the Muslim Mosque, Inc.

Malcolm attended a pilgrimage in Mecca during the same year where he shared his thoughts with believers from different cultures. The response was overwhelming. On his return, Malcolm started a new integrative outlook that aimed at spreading the message to all races. However, following his renouncing of Elijah Muhammad their relationship became volatile. The NOI tried to assassinate Malcolm X on several occasions and they succeeded on 21st February 1965 when three gunmen shot him several times inside the Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom.

Malcolm X's life in relation to Erickson's developmental perspectives

There are many instances in the life of Malcolm X that coincide with Erickson's perspective of development. Erickson provides eight stages of psychological development. These stages are: between birth and one year, early childhood, preschool years, early school years of between 5 and 11 years, early adulthood, adulthood, and during old age (Fadiman, 2002).

The stages that are more vivid in the biography of Malcolm X are between stage three and stage eight. Stage three which explores pre-school years is when children begin to assert themselves but still have no control over the world. This is apparent from the biography when before Malcolm's fourth birthday he has to relocate severally with the family as his father tries to evade the Black Legion. Consequently, stage four is about the interaction of the child between the age of 5 and 11. During this stage, Malcolm is forced to interact with other children in a foster home as his mother is admitted to a mental institution. According to Erickson, children develop a feeling of competence and believe in their abilities to accomplish tasks. This is seen when Malcolm graduated from junior high top of his class and believes that he can become a lawyer.

Stage five of Erickson's perspective of development is during the adolescent stage where children explore their individuality and cultivate a sense of self. Those who receive proper advice and encouragement emerge with a resilient sense of self, autonomy, and control. However, those like Malcolm who do not get proper counsel emerge from this stage feeling apprehensive and confused about their abilities and their future. In Malcolm's life bad advice from his favorite teacher leads him to drop out of school.

Erickson's stage six refers to the period of early adulthood which is marked with exploring personal relationships. A child looks to develop skills learned from previous stages. People who have poor sense of self have fewer commitments to relationships. This is manifest when Malcolm engages in odd jobs in Boston before leaving for Harlem where he is also involved in petty crimes and later establishes various illegal activities.

Stage seven refers to where people become proud of their achievement and seek to have lasting partners. For Erickson, people develop a sense of unity. This is seen when Malcolm is arrested alongside his buddy Malcolm "Shorty" Jarvis. This shows that he is no longer working alone and has combined with Jarvis to continue their illegal activities.

Stage eight is that of regret and despair as people reflect on their lives (Erickson, 1993). For Malcolm this stage arrived when he was in prison. He reflected on his life and it seems that he was not happy with his accomplishments so far. He decided to change after learning about Islam from his brother Reginald.

References

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