

# Working with adults



Working with Adults Working with Adults Erickson's eight stages reflect on life from the time of babyhood through death. There are conflicts met in each stage of growth. The last stage or those of the elderly are sometimes the most difficult because they require reflection which few of the other stages do. The mature individual will have conflicts with integrity and despair and will have the important event of reflecting on and accepting one's life as it happened. This paper will discuss an elderly female woman who we will call May and how her reflection and conflicts are affecting her life in the sense of Erickson's eight stages.

Erickson tells us that the review of one's life helps the elderly person to increase their well being by looking at the conflicts in their life and comparing them to past experience. He felt this was the stage in life in which the task was to look back and try to integrate the feelings and memories of the past into the present. Sometimes this is a difficult task but if the person is able to do this they will be able to deal with the negative experiences they have had and turn them into integrity and wisdom.

May is seventy two years old which would put her in Erickson's's eighth stage of life or that of maturity. She had many conflicts and challenges. She raised three children, two boys and a girl in a small town. She had some difficulty relating to them when they were young and she sees little of them now. She developed breast cancer a couple of years ago and had surgery and chemotherapy. Her tests are now negative. She lives alone, has very little income, and has no transportation.

May has many things to deal with to come to the point of coherence in her lifetime. She will need to reflect back on her time with her children and be able to determine in her own right whether the conflicts she had could have

been changed or were they just what had to happen at that time in her life. She still has fear of loss of life because of her breast cancer and every time something happens, she is sure it is her cancer coming back and the worst of all of her conflicts is that she is so lonely.

The services she uses are meant to help her with these conflicts. She has visitation which helps her with the loneliness she feels. She is in the breast cancer support group which helps her deal with her fear. She does have phone calls from her children but facilitation of visits from them might be the one greatest thing that could happen to help her reflect back and resolve that part of her life. Certainly in Mays case each of these things become necessary for May to establish coherence and wisdom in the later part of her life. May will continue to need support now and may need more support as she ages to establish the dignity that she can achieve.

#### References

Brown, C., Lewis, M. (2003). Psychosocial development in the elderly: an investigation into Erikson's ninth stage. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 17(4) 415-426.