

Psychology
deborah's dramatic
labor led her baby to



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Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental process. In the book *And I Do Not Want To Live This Life* by Deborah Spungen she explains the intense behaviors of her troubled daughter. This book begins with Deborah's pregnancy up until Nancy's mysterious death. Deborah's dramatic labor led her baby to be born with a discoloration in the skin due to insufficient oxygen. Nancy was choked by her mother's umbilical cord.

According to Deborah, Nancy had an odd behavior that consisted of crying loudly and throwing tantrums. Growing up Nancy was later diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 15. She was taken to many hospitals in attempt to get treated but her bad behavior gradually increased as she got older. As a young adult, Nancy moved out of her parents home and became an exotic dancer. She developed an addiction to drugs, such as heroin. Nancy was in an abusive relationship with singer Sid Vicious (John Simon Ritchie). In 1978, at the age of 20, Nancy Spungen was pronounced dead due to a fatal stab wound.

This book relates to psychology in many different ways. This book has multiple ideas we have discussed in class. In Chapter 12 the doctor explained, " based on reading your report, and talking to you, I'd say Nancy's a schizophrenic" Deborah finally had a valid reason for her daughters outrageous behavior she writes, " At last, after fifteen years of searching, someone had told us what was wrong with our child" (358). In class while learning about the nervous system we went in depth about neurotransmitters. We discussed that people who are schizophrenic have excessive levels of dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that regulates thinking. It is involved in sleeping, mood, and learning.

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According to the Psychology textbook, a person with schizophrenia has extremely bizarre behavior, a lack of engaging in everyday activities such as a job and have a difficult time understanding their own emotions. Nancy had all these symptoms she constantly harassed her parents, continued to get fired from jobs, and she had a hard time trying to figuring herself out such as quitting heroin and going back to heroin. Another cause of schizophrenia is marijuana. Nancy constantly smoked marijuana as a teen.

This influenced her siblings to start smoking. In Chapter 10, " She Nancy took a deep drag, held it in, and offered the pipe to Suzy. Suzy took it eagerly, puffed on it and coughed" (346). As the eldest child, Nancy was an influence on her younger siblings.

Suzy observed her sisters actions and copied Nancy's actions. She paid attention when being offered marijuana. She remembered her actions as she smoked from the pipe. Later on, Suzy replaced the behavior of smoking marijuana on her own. Deborah writes, " The room reeked of Marijuana. She Suzy has been smoking a joint" (349). We have discussed cognitive learning in class an understanding of what you know. This type of learning Suzy went through is observational learning she imitated/copied Nancy's actions.

Later on in the book David and Suzy where recreational marijuana users. Although they were able to manage their marijuana use they were influenced by their eldest sibling Nancy. In Chapter 13 Deborah mentioned some methods that influence a change in behavior. The new therapist explained to Deborah and Frank the use of positive reinforcement in behavior.

Deborah explains, " He mapped out a new strategy for handling Nancy, one emphasizing behavior modification through positive reinforcement" (442). This relates to the course because we learned about positive and negative reinforcement. These two ideas tie back to operant conditioning which is voluntary behavior. In order to try to create a change in Nancy's behavior, Deborah had to use reinforcement to create Nancy's desired behavior. In Deborah's case, positive reinforcement did not work on Nancy and became even more violent.

Nancy's parents used positive reinforcement multiple times to avoid Nancy's outrageous behavior. For example, in Chapter 12 Frank and Deborah kept buying all the clothes Nancy wanted to avoid another one of Nancy's emotional breakdowns. Deborah explains, " She saw a pair of Earth shoes she wanted and asked us to buy them for her. we did. Then she saw a blouse she wanted and asked us to buy them for her we did.

Then she saw a seater she wanted...we said no, that's enough. She began to curse at us on the sidewalk" (380).

Once the reinforcement of buying her stuff stopped, Nancy instantly got furious at her parents and made a scene in public. Throughout the chapters, I kept noticing Nancy's parents were unable to control her behavior. Nancy's parents had lacked in being interpersonal they had a hard time trying to relate to their schizophrenic daughter. In Chapter 16, " She's a heroin addict now she's on methadone. She had grown up drug dependent; now she was easing her pain through self prescription" (538). This reminded me of stimulus generalization we discussed in class. Although Nancy stopped

taking heroin she had a similar reaction to methadone. Nancy was able to respond in a similar manner to a new stimulus condition (methadone) that was similar to the original stimulus (heroin).

In my opinion, this book was perfectly written. Although it is a heartbreaking story I would not change how it was written. I enjoyed how the author Deborah Spungen was able to give a perspective on all of Nancy's family. She was able to write out how each person in the family was affected by Nancy's behavior.

I would recommend this book to anyone it doesn't matter if they are taking a psychology course or not. I appreciate how Deborah was able to share out such an honest, sensitive, and personal story. After researching I decided to read this book because it had good ratings. I also decided to pick this book because it is based on a true story. I enjoyed reading this book because it was told from the mother's perspective and how her daughter's life and death changed her life. I also became really curious as to how Nancy really died. As a teenager myself I was able to know how truly hard it is for a parent to see their child suffering from a mental disorder.

Deborah was to the point where she had to acknowledge herself that her daughter was going to die before her. Nancy felt the only way to ease her pain is by the use of drugs. It's shocking how the two things she loved the most punk rock and Sid brought her life down to the point where her death is still unknown.

Another thing that I found surprising was that Nancy was a smart student.

Although she had a bad behavior she had the opportunity to skip a year in <https://assignbuster.com/psychology-deborahs-dramatic-labor-led-her-baby-to/>

high school. I think this book was written for many reasons. It was written to create an awareness of self harm, emotional behavior disorders, help other parents suffering with a mentally disabled child, and just to share out this personal story with the world. Since Nancy gained fame while dating Sid Vicious I believe Deborah decided to clear out all the rumors that were spread out after her daughter's death.

It is a tragic story but it teaches the reader how difficult it is to raise a child with a psychological disorder. It also teaches the reader that self destruction is never the answer and leads to serious consequences. This book truly affected me on how I see life now. This book is a self check upon myself.

It taught me that self destruction is not the answer. Not only does self destruction affect you but it affects a family even more. Nancy's family went through so many downs in their life with Nancy. I was able to understand what it feels like to feel helpless and treating life as a punishment. I personally do not blame Nancy since she was diagnosed with special conditions since birth such as psychological disorder schizophrenia. Overall, this book has been a self reflection towards me and I hope this book helps other people learn more about a mentally disordered person and themselves.