

Developmental interviews



Developmental Interviews School Age (6-12) Industry versus Inferiority. The little girl I interviewed for this section was 8 years old; she's in the third grade, an honor student, with several awards for reading the most books in her class, an avid soccer player, and has a pet guinea pig named Eva, who just gave birth to triplets. She shared with me that she enjoys many hobbies, but reading, learning new languages and soccer are her favorites. Her mom lets her choose what she will wear to school each day, though not her bedtime or how much time she spends watching TV. When asked what should be done if she really needed something but her sister had it and wouldn't share, she responded that she could always trade with her sister, or just wait until the sister goes to bed to "borrow" it. According to Erikson, her developmental level reveals she is age appropriate at Industry versus Inferiority, taking into account her many interests, as well as high level of achievement. According to Kohlberg she is at Stage 2 of Pre-conventional Morality, Individualism and Exchange; she said she would either try a trade off with her sister about borrowing something or just wait until her sister was not available and let her own needs justify using the object. Through interviewing this participant, I was surprised to find her so well read and currently learning Mandarin Chinese as her parents are not bilingual. The challenge was in getting this person to remain focused on the interview and not on everything that entered the room; although she agreed to be interviewed, she had difficulty expressing her feelings, as though she normally didn't do that very often. I learned that children can be surprising in regards to what they know and are interested in.

Adolescence (13-18) Identity versus Role Confusion. The young lady I interviewed for this section was 13 years old; she's in the sixth grade, a ballerina, and on the local Sea

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Turtle Patrol. She enjoys doing make-overs with her friends and shopping for fabric as well as cool clothes. She loves to sew, a skill passed down through many generations in her family; designing her own outfits makes her happy. She is currently busy with women's advocacy issues such as breast cancer walk-a-thons and has joined her father on many hunting trips. As well, she has several skeet shooting trophies for her age group; her grandmother is the Southeast Women's Division Skeet Shoot Champion. Together they belong to the Duck Hunter's Club; although this little lady tells me she has no intention of ever shooting a live duck. From March through August, she provides volunteer services to the protection of Sea Turtles on the shores of the Atlantic where they live, often getting up at 5:00am on mornings before school to check for new nests. When asked what she would do if she had to choose between being friends with someone nobody else would associate with, and going with her friends to a movie, she chose the current friends, with a possibility of getting to know the other person on a one-to-one basis over time. According to Erikson, she is on target for her age group, as she is exploring social opportunities for identity exploration and hanging out with peers. According to Kohlberg, she is at the Stage 3 Conventional Morality level of Interpersonal Relationships. It was amazing to me how many things this young lady is involved in. I felt challenged by the fact that she was doing something to protect the environment when it hadn't really occurred to me to get personally involved. I learned that young people are more globally aware than I thought they would be.

Late Adulthood (Age 55 or 65 to Death)
Integrity versus Despair. The woman I interviewed was 55 years old. She had earned a Bachelor's degree in Nursing, raised her family, suffered the death of her spouse, helped to raise grandchildren, and had recently gone back to

school to become certified to teach ESL. She is very much looking forward to her first assignment abroad teaching in an international American school in Alexandria, Egypt; she will leave in September. She seems to have made an excellent recovery from the caretaking of Middle Adulthood, and has a positive outlook on life. She said she's been through a lot in her life but there are three things she uses as a compass to guide her: 1) she knows she's only going to be in one particular spot in the journey of her life for a particular time and reason, if she can be of help or learn something new; she's very interested in that, 2) she knows not to ask more from life than she is willing to give, and 3) above all she avoids doing harm if possible. Her favorite philosophy is "whatever doesn't kill you just makes you stronger"; the man who drives the "lemon truck" is her best friend. She said she's not afraid of death, only afraid of becoming comfortable with status quo to the exclusion of new positive experiences. Her favorite breakfast is a bowlful of challenges, she quips. She is very actively involved with her grandchildren, joining them on their adventures and learning new things as they do. She said she really doesn't ascribe to any religious philosophy, however feels that whatever religion one participates in, they should first and foremost let the constructs of that religion do a miracle in their own hearts to the performance of human acts on planet earth. According to Erikson, she is age appropriate at Late Adulthood; she shows wisdom earned through a lifetime of experiences. She is actively making a contribution to her world and leaving a legacy for her grandchildren. According to Kohlberg, she is at the Stage 6 level of Post-Conventional Morality, applying Universal Principles to her belief systems and life experiences. What surprised me with this woman is that she is nowhere near ready to retire or become dormant; she challenges herself to

learn new things daily. In talking to her, I felt that she had so much more going for her than I do and yet I can't imagine taking on another thing; her story challenged me to do more with my life. I learned that possibly the best time of life is indeed, when the Middle Adult years are over; life is simpler and more fulfilling because one has time to enjoy the journey. I very much enjoyed applying these theories to this interview process; I learned so much about how we can grow and develop as humans and truly understand our journey.

References

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