

Erik erikson and an eleven year old boy



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Introduction “ A little like the unfolding of a rose bud, each petal opens up at a certain time, in a certain order, which nature, through its genetics, has determined. If we interfere in the natural order of development by pulling a petal forward prematurely or out of order, we ruin the development of the entire flower” (Boeree, 2003). I will observe an eleven year old boy using Erik Erikson’s psychosocial developmental theory. Erik Erikson is a Freudian ego-psychologist who believed that some of Freud’s theories were correct.

Erikson expanded Freud’s genital stage into adolescence plus three stages of adulthood (Boeree, 2003). He is known for his work in refining and expanding Freud’s theories of stages.

Development, he says, functions by the epigenetic principle (Boeree, 2003). This principle states that each stage has a central task, and if it is not fulfilled at the proper stages in which they are supposed to take place, then the person develops too little of a negative or positive influence or too much of a positive or negative influence. (Example: trusting too much or too little). Just as the quote above about a rose bud written by C. George Boeree says, if we don’t experience each stage of Erikson’s stages of development at the time that it was supposed to take place, the unfortunate result is that the entire flow of personal development is ruined or delayed. Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory consists of eight stages that take place from birth until death, but I only emphasize about the first four stages in my theory to analyze if the eleven year old boy whom I will interview, is at the appropriate psychosocial developmental stage of Erikson’s theory.

The first of the eight stages developed was the psychosocial crisis, Trust vs. Mistrust, which occurs from birth to the age of eighteen months (Boeree,

2003). If during that age the child receives proper care, the result is the maturation of sensory, perceptual, motor functions and social attachment. If the proper balance is achieved, the child will develop the virtue hope, a belief that things will turn out well anyway even if things are not going their way (Boeree, 2003). A sign that a child is doing well in the first stage is when the child isn't overly upset by the need to wait a moment for their parents to satisfy their needs: " Mom or dad don't have to be perfect; I trust them enough to believe that, if they can't be here immediately, they will be here soon; Things may be tough now, but they will work out" (Boeree, 2003).

This kind of learning gets us through disappointments in love, our careers, and many other aspects of life. The second stage is for toddlers, from eighteen months to three or four years old (Boeree, 2003). Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt is this stage's psychosocial crisis, which is developed when the parents permit their child to discover and explore their surroundings. Through discovery and exploration, the child learns autonomy, this means independence. Parents during this stage need to be " firm but tolerant" so the child learns to possess both, self-control and self-esteem.

Stage three is for preschoolers. From three or four to five or six, the central task of this stage is identification and through the psychosocial crisis initiative versus guilt. The result is that the child is able to find purpose from enjoyable learning. They're able to have the courage to imagine and pursue valued goals. Parents are supposed to allow their kids to try out their ideas. " But if children can imagine the future, if they can plan, then they can be responsible as well, and guilty.

If my two-year-old flushes my watch down the toilet, I can safely assume that there were no “ evil intentions. ” It was just a matter of a shiny object going round and round and down. What fun! But if my five year old does the same thing...

well, she should know what’s going to happen to the watch, what’s going to happen to daddy’s temper, and what’s going to happen to her! She can be guilty of the act, and she can begin to feel guilty as well. The capacity for moral judgment has arrived” (Boeree, 2003). What this author means from Erikson’s theory is that we learn a little more of the differences between right and wrong through age, especially in this stage. If there is too much guilt within a child, they will not make an initiative to start something they’re curious about since they won’t possess enough confidence to do it. If they possess enough confidence in themselves to start something then the enjoyable learning process begins.

It is sort of when a child is learning from mistakes and parents need not be too critical of their mistakes. They are learning. In the fourth stage, friendship, skill learning, self-evaluation, and team play are supposed to take place during middle childhood, ages six to twelve years old. Through elementary education years, the child gains competence to acquire skills and enjoy achievement.

The school plays a major role in the result of the developmental crisis of initiative versus inferiority (Wong, 1998). The child soon learns that he can win recognition from parents, teachers, and peers by performing well in school. The attitudes and opinions of others become very important. Children

who are not able to perform well in school may consider themselves a failure and feelings of inferiority may arise. Inferiority means that the child feels less valuable, unworthy or of less importance compared to others. If children are praised for doing well in school, feelings of Industry will result.

Here is an example of what Alan S. L Wong does with his children to help them feel valuable: “ I tell my boys that no one is last in the Wong family ... you are either first, second, third or fourth. I stress that each one of us is different with strengths in different areas. Encourage self-competition and a spirit of excellence to be the best that he can be (that is, in comparison to his potential and not in comparison to others)” (Wong, 1998). Methods I will ask the eleven year old boy questions about his goals, achievements, hobbies, and whether or not he enjoys school and why. I will take note of his emotions during our meet, (ex: shy or outgoing, humble or loud). I will also have him answer the questions on paper so I can take note of his writing skills.

I will play a card game with him, “ Go Fish” to see if he was able to follow directions. By analyzing writing skills and a game, this will give me an idea of what his academic performance might be like. I already have permission from his father to observe the eleven-year old boy. Already, I have seen a glimpse of some of his background information.

He is an average eleven year old that has a lot of ambition to compete. He was in numerous gymnastic meets and won first place out of the entire state of Michigan for his age. He is extremely athletic and enjoys aggression. I want to observe how the boy answers my questions, if he is shy, humble or

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shows anger or his face blushes from embarrassment. I want to observe how out-going the boy is by writing down questions on a piece of paper for him to answer by himself.

When I can see what kind of writing skills he possesses, I can make an assumption what his academic experience might be like. I will ask him the following ten questions: 1) Do you have any hobbies? What are your hobbies? 2) Do you have any goals? What are your goals? 3) Did you ever receive something that made you happy? (Rewards, win a game) 4) Do you enjoy school? Why or why not? 5) What is your favorite subject? 6) Are you doing well in school? 7) Do you get along with other students in your classroom? 8) Do you have a best friend? 9) Do you feel good if you win a game? Do you feel bad if you lose a game? 10) What does the word “fragrance” mean? During the time that I ask him questions, I will observe whether he is afraid to ask any questions if he does not understand something I am asking. For question ten, I do not expect the eleven year to understand what the word “fragrance” means so I am waiting to see if he asks me before he puts down an answer. This lets me know if he is afraid to initiate (take charge) by asking a question. Normally good students ask questions if they do not understand something and if there is too much guilt within a child, they will not make an initiative to start something since they do not possess enough confidence.

If he goes ahead, answers the question, and tries his best to answer, I will let him know what the correct answer is. I will observe how he responds to my correcting his minor mistake. After the questioning, I want to play a game with him, “Go Fish” to observe and take note of his attitude, behavior,

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affect, and so forth. After taking note of what I have observed, I will then look at Erikson's psychosocial chart and see where the eleven-year-old boy developmentally stands. After finding out where he stands on the chart, I will take note whether or not the positive psychosocial crisis outweighs the negative psychosocial crisis.

Results November 23, 2007, at 8 o'clock at night, I observed the eleven year old boy. When I first asked him if I could interview him, he instantly smiled and even his mother said he would love to do it. He continued showing his wild cartwheels to his cousin in the hotel lobby. When he was finished playing cartwheels, he looked at me and said " Are you ready? " I responded, " I am ready when you are". He walked over to the chairs near the windows of the hotel lobby. He took a quick glimpse at the chairs but decided to sit on the floor where the coffee table was sitting.

I allowed him to sit where ever he would like. I was observing if he was going to ask where we should sit or he would do this on his own. Sure enough, he did it on his own. I sat at the coffee table at the opposite side of him. When I was getting my paper and pencils out, his face was blushing red and pink.

I asked him how old he was and he said, " I just turned 11 in October". I am deaf and he is hearing, so the way we communicated was that I asked him the 10 questions one by one and he answered using his voice, then I asked him to write his answer down. I read his answers but to my surprise, he did not number them. He wrote his answers in a written one page format.

He was consistently self-evaluating himself as he spoke, and he took his time while he wrote. He was in no hurry. Onto question two, " Do you have any

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goals”, he responded with an eyebrow up, “ what do you mean by goals? I had to give a few examples and he responded, “ Oh! ” I noticed he spelled archeologist as “ archaeologist”, adding an “ a” in the word. He spelled college wrong, “ colledge”. He told me that both of his parents graduated from college.

He wrote down that he likes school because “ you learn more everyday so later in life you have knowledge to make it through. ” Again, the boy’s mature and intellectual answer shocks me because I was not expecting the child to explain in depth about what he will need later in life since he is only eleven years old. I asked him what his favorite subject was in school. He wrote down that he likes art. He looked up at the picture on the wall and he told me that his father is an artist and they went to the art museum earlier that afternoon.

He pointed at the picture on the wall and said, “ That is a cool picture”. He told me that his father taught him to pay attention to an art’s texture, shape, and color. He has excellent listening, social, and learning skills for his age because of the way he moves his head inward to listen to me. I was expecting a very simple one answer, “ art” but he explained art deeper than an average eleven year old. I asked him if he learns a lot of things from his parents and if he gets along with them, he answered “ yes”. I asked if he feels a lot of pressure from his parents to do well, he said “ no” and shook his “ no”.

He stated that he has a best friend and he took him to a water-park. For question nine, “ Do you feel good if you win a game? Do you feel bad if you

lose a game? ” I was expecting his answer to be that he felt bad if he lost a game and felt good if he won a game. While observing, I felt that he was a bit of a perfectionist and demanded too much of himself for his age but my expectation was fortunately not met. He answered, “ After a meet I feel like some pressure is relieved because it lets me know I have nothing to fear now the meet is over. If I don’t win, and I don’t try my best that’s one thing, but if I tried my best and I didn’t win I just did my best and it makes me feel good.

” There were a few grammatical errors such as missing commas, and the spelling of relieved was wrong but overall I was quite pleased with his answer. He said to me that if he tried his best, that was all that mattered. For my last question, “ What does the word fragrance mean? ” He laughed and quickly responded “ Smell”. I asked if that was an easy answer and he laughed and said it was an easy answer. We also played the game “ go-fish” on the coffee table. I asked him to explain the rules of the game to me so that I could observe his skills of following directions.

I understood what he was explaining quickly. Turned out the deck of cards was missing one Jack and one Queen, so we both won the game. He laughed and said, “ Tied game! I thanked him for allowing me to interview him and asked him if he would like to learn a little about Erik Erikson. He obliged. I explained to him that Erik Erikson has eight stages of development as a theory and I was observing his behavior to see where he stands for his age.

He asked me, “ Oh like a time-line? ” I said, “ Yes, something like that”. On the next page, you will notice he drew out a very small time line at the top of his paper with arrows. After our interview was finished, he helped put all of

my belongings into my backpack. The Boy's Answers: Discussion When I asked the boy if I could interview him, he was very excited. This gave me the impression that he is out-going and likes attention. Shy children normally do not like the extra attention.

He is very well-mannered. I was quite shocked about how intelligent and mature he behaved for his age. He is optimistic. His face blushed and he was signing correctly as best as he could. He learned sign language just three months ago and he already knew how to sign the alphabet. He tried to accommodate my hearing loss by enunciating as best as he could and use sign language.

This tells me he has good interpersonal skills. I think it is interesting that he is only eleven years old and he is already thinking about college. I actually felt touched after he said his answer about him doing his best if he lost a game and if he did his best, then he feels good. The boy is bright and intelligent.

The one thing that I would have done differently during the interview was not to expect such unintelligent answers. I was quite surprised to know how much eleven year olds can understand. I never told the boy where to sit in the beginning of the interview. He took it upon himself to sit at the coffee table. He has assertive skills which is the major skill that was required to move up to the next stage of Initiative vs. Inferiority.

He became more assertive and took more initiative as our interview progressed, especially during the card game. I know now that the boy has already accomplished what he needed from the third stage. In conclusion, <https://assignbuster.com/erik-erikson-and-an-eleven-year-old-boy/>

after taking note of what I have observed, I looked at Erikson's psychosocial chart to see where the eleven-year-old boy developmentally stands and he does stand on the fourth stage. Erik Erikson's psychosocial fourth stage's basic conflict is Industry vs. Inferiority. From ages 6 to 12 this stage takes place mostly in the school atmosphere and the child must deal with demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence.

The fourth stage is the life stage of achievements and accomplishments. The boy has mentioned that if he tried his best if he loses, then he does not feel upset. He has lost a few gymnastic games but he is still optimistic. His father and mother continue to teach him new art skills.

He gets along with his peers. He is bright, charming, and out-going. The positive psychosocial crisis far outweighs the negative psychosocial crisis. This tells me that he is developmentally on the fourth stage of Erik Erikson's psychosocial stage and he will enter into the fifth stage at the correct time period that Erikson suggests on his psychosocial chart. REFERENCES Boeree, George.

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