

Self-psychology case study essay sample

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According to Heinz Kohut, our sense of self is based on the notion of being the center of attention as it relates to our personal ambitions, and fantasies, and how this notion is reconciled by our experiences with others. (Süsske n. pag.). Our notion of the “ self” or what Kohut refers to as “ Narcissism” is based on our efforts to achieve our pleasures and our attempts to embody in reality this notion of self (Süsske n. pag.). The decisions we make, the paths that we pursue, our long term plans, and the way we interact with our peers is based on our perception of who we are based on these endeavors.

However, our notion of the self does not always agree with the results of our endeavors in reality and this often leaves us in a state of being fragmented (Süsske n. pag.). There are times wherein the manner that we react in a certain circumstance, how our peers relate to us, or our efforts toward our goals fall short of our expectations. This results to a state of fragmentation which we identify as the feeling of being depressed, anxious, discouraged or the lack of vitality.

In order to cope with the difference between our ideal sense of self and the reality of our experiences with others, we construct self-object experiences. (Süsske n. pag.). These are objects that try to nurture the self, a projection of our self and others, created by our psyche creates as a form of defense mechanism (Süsske n. pag.). These are our rationalizations of the events that do not meet our expectations. These perceptions allow us to accept the disparity between our ideals and our realities.

I can relate a recent personal experience to Kohut’s notion of fragmentation. This was during my high school years when I failed to perform according to

my expectations. I have always thought of myself to be an achiever. This is probably influenced by how my parents raised me as a child. My parents constantly assured me that there was nothing that I could not do as long as I focused myself on doing it and because of that I eventually played the role of the achiever. Be it in academics or in extra-curricular activities, I always sought to be the among the best, if not the best, and eventually it became a reality.

During the earlier years of my childhood, I was constantly among the top of my class despite that I never did any extra effort to study. Nonetheless, my sense of self was enforced by my classmates through how they related to me. I was frequently among the students whom they frequently consulted when it came to class assignments and projects. I also performed well in extra-curricular activities such as being a key member of my school's baseball team. Being my team's shortstop, I felt that my teammates, as well as my coach, saw me as an important member of our school's little league team. These factors contributed to my notion of my identity as an achiever.

However, this perception was soon challenged when I got older. Things started to become more difficult as I moved on to high school. My subject became more difficult as I started taking more serious subjects like Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. It was during this time that my performance in my subjects started to decline. As the academic pressure became more challenging the competition in becoming a part of the school's baseball team also became tougher. Each member was constantly pressured to perform since there were plenty of others who were eager to take his spot.

At that time, I was still used to not having a real study habit and I still thought that I would eventually perform well in class as soon as I got used to it. The idea of studying my lessons at night when I got home was still remote. Although I did recognize that I needed to step up my performance as an athlete in order to maintain my position as a starting shortstop. Aside from my passion for the game, the fact that being a member of the school's team also meant that you were popular in school probably contributed to my decision to focus my attention on baseball.

My performance in class continued to decline as I concentrated on my training until it came to the point that I was among the bottom performers of my class. I refused to accept this at first and I rationalized this by believing that I would soon perform better in my subjects when I get used to it. Months went by and although I maintained my position in the team, I was never able to pick up my performance in class. It was then that I started to accept that I could not perform well in class anymore while being a student athlete. I justified my fate by saying that my classmates who performed well in class were geeks and I was not a geek. I was an athlete.

I was bitter for a long time because I always believed that I was not the stereotype jock. It is a popular notion that jocks are not good in class my defiance against this label was the source of my pride. I considered it an achievement being a student-athlete while performing well in my subjects and for a time I felt that it was who I am. I was a bright, student-athlete. However, since the reality no longer measured up to the ideal, I resigned myself to what I had become—a stereotype jock and for a time I was depressed.

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In order to accept the reality, I eventually played the role of the stereotype jock. This is probably what Heinz Kohut referred to as a self-object that a person creates in order to achieve self-cohesion. It was due to this notion that I eventually did not make any effort to perform in class. I even bullied those who were doing well. In my mind I thought that since “ I ” was the “ jock ” those who performed well in class should play the role of the “ geeks. ” In my rebellion against myself I eventually became a misfit. I became so far away from my original notion of who I was and in order to accept it I gratified myself by bullying others.

This transformation did not remain unnoticed by my parents and soon my father talked to me about it. He first told me that I have changed and he pointed out how different I was from the person that I used to be. Then he asked me about what I wanted to be when I got older and surprisingly, I still answered what I have always wanted to be since I was a child—a lawyer. I could never forget what my father told me after that. He said, “ You only become the person that you think you are and right now, you are not acting like the person that you say you want to be. But I believe in you and I know that you are going to be what you want to be if you only put your mind to it. ”

My conversation with my father woke me up and it made me evaluate myself. I tried to analyze what I had become and I realized that I have changed a great deal from what I have always believed myself to be. I made some introspection and thought about my decisions and where they have taken me. Eventually I realized that it all began when I could not cope with the academic pressures. I remembered how I used to do well in my subjects and examined why I could not perform in class the way I used to during my <https://assignbuster.com/self-psychology-case-study-essay-sample/>

earlier years until it occurred to me that my subjects then were a whole lot easier compared to my subject at that time.

It was also at that point that I decided to try doing more studying. It was not easy for me at first since I had a lot of catching up to do but after a year I eventually developed a study habit. I did not become the best in my class but I started doing well and eventually I got back to be among the top of the class. My original notion of my identity was eventually reconciled with my reality and it was because of an epiphany that came to me after doing what I presume was self-psychological examination.

Works Cited

Süsske, Rudolf. “ Mean by the ‘ Self’? Associations on a Theme.” 2000. the Self Psychology website. 3April 2008.