

Reaching adulthood: completing human developmental stages

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The human development is a very complex yet fascinating part of our lives. We look back at the point we first remembered how young we were, the things we did that were so different from the things we do today. More often than not, we take for granted the stages where significant amount of changes that shaped us took place.

Our infancy and pre-school years show much of our earlier attitudes and behaviors which became cemented as we grow older. Our environment played such a significant role in making us the way we are today. As I have mentioned in the first project, we understand our being a male or a female when we realize the roles and activities attached to one's gender.

Even our parents dictate how we should act or what toy to play and we get punished by disobeying them. And at this stage we develop a concept of what makes us happy or sad, we can adapt to our environment and we avoid doing things that would result to an unfavorable consequence.

These things we undergo during our earlier years further have an effect on the next stage of our lives. What we liked to do, how well we can adapt to other people, how we behave or act upon exposure to a stimulus etc. continue in our middle childhood and adolescence years.

The middle childhood prepares us for what we will face in our adolescence years, the same way our infancy and pre-school years prepared us for the later years.

During our middle childhood and adolescence, we are thrust into a great deal of changes, whether mentally, physically, socially and emotionally. We like to

be independent and to go out of the familial circle that surrounded us when we were young.

In my experience, it was this time when I started making friends in school and in my neighborhood. I could also face other people who were not my age. This stage marks the awakening of cognitive and emotional aspects of one person. We learn to judge the people around us, to be curious of the things which we cannot easily understand, to feel different emotions that seemed so new.

The countless and various experiences we undergo during this stage further hone, change, influence or impact the way we are. They make our personality unique, mold our behavior and attitudes and develop our skills. Everything we have learned we apply to our present lives.

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My interview's particular experience shows this. He started using prohibited drugs during his adolescence. This kind of deed roots from many factors such as family problems, inferiority complex or social dilemma.

Dale says that all of his family's attention was on his younger sister, Mikaela. No matter how much good he does, his family doesn't seem to notice. So what he did was involve himself in things that would get him into trouble, if only to get his parents' attention.

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Changes and phenomenon in middle childhood, as noted in my first project, are stepping stones for the adolescence; changes and phenomenon in adolescence, as noted in my second project, are preparation for adulthood.

Adulthood

Adulthood is a hazardous and difficult journey for many people to take, and not just a destination of security and safety that we reach once and for all. It is a reference point from which other life stages are judged.

The experiences which became imprinted in our memories and the self beliefs and social standards that we have molded within ourselves affect us in our present actions and how we see ourselves. But, these beliefs and standards change when we are exposed to different stimuli or situation.

At this stage, I can already foresee my own future, in what is called self-schema. These are the templates of our future, and they tell us what we can be after several years, what our career would be etc. Still, I ask myself, what will I be really in the next years?

Since I would not be able to answer this question, I have interviewed Emelita Sacra, a 49-year-old single mother and currently taking over as line leader and quality control officer in a garment corporation. She was separated from her husband, but she manages to raise her daughter well.

Emelita used to dream of finishing just high school, since her family's source of livelihood is barely enough for the 11 members of the family. She studied hard and eventually earned a scholarship, her ticket to college.

But her dream faded when she chose to help her parents in meeting the family's needs. She was able to send two of her siblings to college, and that was enough for her even if she had sacrificed her own dream.

This shows that what she desperately wanted before was put aside by the emergence of a more important situation. She said that though there were many events in her life which affected her, only few values and interests changed. Some of which were the earthly things she wanted before, such as clothes, cosmetics and leisure moments.

But now, these things became unimportant because her daughter became her priority. Her situation now is a far cry from her situation before. Now that her daughter is in college, she has to work hard and limit the luxuries of life. Every spare time was spent doing extra works to be able to provide for her only child.

When she was a teenager, all that mattered was helping her family to earn money and send the children to school. Now, what matters is raising her daughter well and providing her education. This attitude is better explained by Jean Piaget's generativity, wherein Emelita thinks of the future of her daughter instead of her own life.

Emelita says that the values she learned from her younger years didn't change much. As to the moral aspect, nothing changed, but some things were added. She instilled to her daughter the moral values her parents taught her.

Basically, when we reach the adulthood stage, as I viewed my interviewee, there are changes in ourself concept. For example, we might have low self

efficacy before, which is our competence in accomplishing things. But because we have gone through many things, and we were able to endure the pains and dilemmas of life, we have increased our self efficacy considering the fact that we are older than before, we could handle and do things better now.

Another example of self concept that had changed during our adulthood years is the self awareness. Adults tend to be more focused and are aware of their responsibilities at their age. For example, my interviewee became aware of her role as a mother and father solely to her daughter. Aside from that, she also became aware of her priorities in the present time compared before. At this point in life, most people have grown matured, as to how they should act, how they should be, and what they should do.

Generally, lots of things have made their contribution to each of stages in life. Some factors that might affect each life stage are inherent and gene factor. Biologically speaking, this could really happen, such that our behavior and character could be attributed to the innate potentials of ourselves.

However, we could not deny the fact that the environment that we are living in has contributed big changes not only in our lives, but more specifically, in ourselves.

Those external factors are the ones we experience during our infancy stage to childhood, then adolescence stage, and lastly adulthood stage. The events in our everyday lives have impacts such that, we are not aware that those events molded us into what are now, and what we are going to be in the near future.

Thus, the human development is a very vicious path, if we are going to consider all the details. Yet, we could say that human development is like a metamorphose process of butterfly. The only difference is that, the butterfly would surely fly if it comes out from the pupae, but each of us has no assurance if we can soar high in our lives.

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