

# Lifespan development of howard hughes essay sample

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Howard Hughes, aviator, businessman, and film director, was born December 24, 1905 in Houston, Texas, to Howard Hughes Sr. and Allene Gano Hughes. Although Hughes is largely known for being one of the wealthiest yet famously recluse men, Hughes possessed an abundance of professional accomplishments before withdrawing from public life (A&E, 2011).

Howard Hughes Sr. a successful million dollar drill manufacturer, and the owner of The Sharp-Hughes Tool Company, was an absentee father. Hughes Sr. was known as flamboyant, living a gregarious lifestyle (Bouton, 2001). Allene Hughes, a stay-at-home mother, suffered with a debilitating case of germ-phobia. Her obsession with germ's hindered her ability to raise Hughes Jr. in a 'normal' environment. Hughes's mother would inspect his genitals, mouth, teeth, and feet daily; repeatedly washing his body with Pine Tar Soap. Pine Tar soap is recommended by doctors for scalp and abrasion treatment. Allene convinced herself, the only way to ensure cleanliness was to use the soap abrasively, leaving Hughes with bloody abrasions (Rojas, 2009).

Allene Hughes died unexpectedly when Hughes Jr. was 16. Following her death, Hughes Sr. experienced feelings of loneliness and abandonment. Hughes Sr. made the decision to remove Hughes Jr. from private school, bringing him home to live in California. Two years after Allene's death, Hughes Sr. died of a heart attack, leaving 19-year-old Hughes Jr. as the sole beneficiary of the families million dollar estate and ventured toward becoming a well-known movie producer (Bouton, 2001).

Hughes gained fame in 1938 as a record-setting pilot, flying around the world in 91 hours. Striving for social and personal achievement, Hughes became a famous aviation endeavor, building the world's largest airplane, 'The Space Goose' (Rojas, 2009). Although Hughes was a successful billionaire of his era, his eccentricities began to dominate his mental state. Hughes childhood development was hindered by the emotional confinement of his mother.

Early in life, Hughes learned how to manipulate sympathy from individuals surrounding him. Hughes attracted attention or avoid unpleasant situations by complaining of an illness (Bouton, 2001). Manipulating his parents into showing attention, Hughes would show physical signs of illness, in the attempt to summons both parents to his side. Similar to his mother, Hughes developed debilitating symptoms of germ phobia. In all appearances, Hughes was capable of a life with all aspects of normalcy, millions, success, and woman. Hughes' heredity emotional instabilities stood in the way of his normal psychological development (Rojas, 2011). In early years, his mother's obsession with germs transfixing into his emotional psychological development, not allowing Hughes to live a normal childhood.

Hughes' mother was the most influential person in his life. The unnatural closeness of Hughes and his mother would metaphorically pave the way for his future relationships. Throughout Hughes' numerous love affairs, his intimacy issues restricted him from obtaining a healthy and successful relationship. The bond between Hughes and his mother destroyed his ability to love and commit to one woman (Rojas, 2011). In 1925 Hughes married

hooker, Stella Rice after a one night stand. Not wanting to limit himself to one woman, Hughes divorced Stella a year later. Hughes believed, "Vaginas could be found in any woman and not just Stella" (Bouton, 2011. p. 6). Thus began Hughes spree of intense womanizing. In the 1930s, Hughes established himself as a 'ladies' man', dating Eva Gardner and Kathrin Hepburn.

Hughes was involved in four serious plane crashes. The first crash, Hughes was thrown into the dashboard of the cockpit. Hughes injured his occipital frontal cortex; the area of the brain responsible for 'error detection' (Rojas, 2011). In 1946, the fourth crash left Hughes disfigured, burning 70% of his body. Hughes underwent several reconstructive surgeries followed, and under a doctor's supervision, Hughes was prescribed codeine to manage pain, ultimately becoming addicted to the medication.

By the 1950s Hughes' mental eccentricities became noticeable to the public. Hughes' accountant reported Hughes was living in one room of his mansion for several months (Bouton, 2001). Hughes covered the door and windows with masking tape, believing the tape prevented germs from entering his 'germ-free environment'. He began using tissues to pick up items in the home, and refused to use of dishes or glassware. "He burns his complete wardrobe when he is exposed to anyone who is sick" (Bouton, 2001, p. 3). Hughes began to experience severe panic attacks, caused by extreme fear of dirt and germs.

Hughes eventually became a recluse, locking himself in dark rooms in a medicated induced daze. Although Hughes was paranoid with contracting

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diseases, he bathed infrequently and did not attend to his personal hygiene. Though he had an on call barber, he only trimmed his hair and cut his nails once a year (Rojas, 2011). Along with the barber, Hughes also had several doctors residing with him, all on a substantial salary. Hughes refused to follow the advice of the doctors'. The doctors wanted to assist Hughes in withstanding prescription drugs; yet the doctor's residing with Hughes were the same doctor's prescribing the addictive medication. Hughes addiction increased to higher levels of Codeine and Valium.

Hughes suffered with two personality disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder and paranoia. Hughes cognitions cannot fully be considered, because visible behaviors were reported only; however, a proper diagnosis of Hughes may have been supplied postmortem (Pastenrak, 2010). Hughes' obsessive compulsive disorder may be a result of his genetic link to his mother. However, the damage to Hughes' brain and the intake of multiple prescriptions may be a contributor to his mental illnesses. During the four months Hughes locked himself in his screening room, he would review film clips, often naked, and urinated in bottles. Hughes had a large supply of Kleenex boxes in his room, which he would continually rearrange, stack, and occasionally wore the boxes as shoes (Pastenrak, 2010).

Hughes displayed obsessions through his paranoia; resulting in phone taps, private investigators, and his attempt to purchase several restaurant chains throughout America (Pasternrak, 2010). Hughes's aversion of germs may have manifested in compulsive hand washing and the use of tissues.

Environmental influences, such as stressor's and the nurturing of his mother may have contributed in the development of Hughes' OCD The cognitive - behavioral therapy may have been a successful theoretical approach. In the 1950s, knowledge of OCD did not exist. If treatment plans were in place, rather than the media ostracizing Hughes' disorders, he may have had the opportunity to live a healthy life.

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