

# Life events essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

There are so many life events that will effect people throughout their lives. From the list of social readjustment rating conducted by Holmes and Rahe in (1967) I have picked the following to analyse, marriage, gain of a new family member, divorce and death of a spouse. I will attempt to incorporate all of these into a free flowing essay. The majority of people in their adult lives may have to adjust to these. From the list the following life event score the following points. Death of spouse 100 points, divorce 73 points marriage 50 points and new family member 39 points. The highest score is 100 points, so in my essay I aim to analyse some from the top of the list to ones in the middle of the list.

The social readjustment scale was the earliest attempt to look at the way life events have an impact on some psychological illness and disorders. The scale consists of 43 life we events that some times appear to come before illness. The score is out of 100 and this is called the life change unit, this will be the value given to the stress brought on by the event.

No matter which event we experience

Hobson (1981) believes following a life event we will go through seven periods of transition. Theses consist of

Immobilisation: – this being a state of shock we will go through.

Reaction: – this being a period of despair.

Self-doubt: – this being an altering mood between anger and apathy.

Letting go: – this is when we accept the reality and then let go and move on.

Testing: – is the new period in which we attempt to adjust.

Search for meaning: -this is an attempt to try and learn from the event and finally integration: – this being where we have integrated the event into our lives and not allowed it to dominate it.

All or some of these will be involved in some of the life events that people go through.

Even though marriage achieves a score of 50 on the SRE. Most people will marry at least once. Even in today's society people still marry, however the age at which we first marry is getting older. People are staying in long term relationships a lot longer before they get married. As they do this then their friends and relatives will start to see them as a unit. Eventually the couple will start to see themselves as a unit or us when talking about their family life. This then leads them to become aware of how much they depend on each other. If and when they both decide to get married they may go through a period of ifs and buts and have I made the right decision? Kurdet and Schmitt (1986) believe that marriages will go through three phases these are blending, nesting and maintaining.

In the blending phase, which is the first year of marriage, the husband and wife will learn to live and think of themselves as an attached pair. Any actions carried out by them will have further consequences for the other partner. The second one nesting normal occurs in their second and third year of marriage. In this phase the couple will look at and explore their compatibility with each other. During this phase the couple may have conflicts which make them feel attracted by marriage and also to be repelled

by marriage. The final stage is maintaining. this phase usually takes place around year four of a marriage. In it is where family is established and each partner s own personality re-surfaces.

Also in this stage any conflicts that have shown up in the nesting phase will have been resolved generally. Also most relationships will have improved. However the main areas where the appeal of marriage starts to drop is as soon children come in to the marriage gradually increasing only to drop to a low again when the children turn into adolescence. The stress induced by the introduction of children into the marriage will go and the marriage satisfaction will return as soon as the children leave home. This satisfaction will remain with the couple until their middle adulthood. Even though marriage is still good there are a number of people who will end up separating or getting divorced.

As I have mentioned in the marriage side that most couples will go through three phases, therefore the majority of divorces will occur in the first few years into a marriage. Turnball (1995) has found in his research that the rate of divorce is highest during or around the first five years and will the peak at fifteen to twenty five years. On the SRE divorce scores 73, this period is very stressful for both partners and any children that may be involved in it. In the majority of divorce cases the children will stay with the mother.

Some people believe the male will have more stress than the female As a result of this. As the mother will have to contend with dealing with the children she will have other things on her mind and not have as much time to brood over the failed marriage. In some cases divorce can be like loosing

your spouse, especially for the parent who does not have the children residing with them as they may also lose contact with any children they have. Any person, who goes through divorce will be under a great deal of stress, this could be due to many things. Including change of household income, loss of the family home, loss of stability. Some people may also feel the need to re-join the singles scene and find a new partner. This in itself adds a complete new level of stress.

In any relationship breakdown one or both parties are going to be under stress, this could be from the other person involved, family, friends and then there are the out side agencies like lawyers and solicitors. However in divorces it may be harder due to the finality of divorce and the knowledge that the people involved will now have to rebuild their lives again. Woollett & Fuller (cited in Cooper, 1996b) stated that divorced mothers will experience a greater sense of achievement in their everyday activities. Children who see their parents going through divorce may also experience the stress of it all. Some people may try to use the children as weapons in the divorce.

Loosing children in a situation such as divorce can lead to a similar amount of stress as the birth, or introduction, of children into the marriage.

Bee (1994) states that 90% of people will become parents. There are many people with different views to being a parent and how they should bring their children up. Becoming a parent varies from person to person on the meaning and impact that the child will bring. When people become parents the impact will be larger then any other passage in their lives and can happen within a wide range of ages. There are some couples who will be under a great deal

of stress although they don't have children. It may be that they are trying to conceive children. Each unsuccessful month their hopes will rise with the expected knowledge that this time might be the one only to have their hopes and dreams shattered when the female fails to conceive.

This in itself is an extremely stressful time. Many marriages will tend to suffer, even in some minute degree, when children come along, as new parents will not have as much time for each other as they did before. Ben (1994) believes that new parents will not have the time for each other e. g. for conversation, affection and intercourse. As stated previously the satisfaction of marriage is at its highest before children come along may not return to the same level until the children have grown up and left home. Once a child leaves home people may feel a loss similar to that of losing a partner.

Loss of a spouse has been rated the most stressful life event (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). Each individual will react differently when coping with the loss of a loved one. When we talk about the loss of a spouse we mean the death of a partner. One partner will die leaving the other behind to grieve and miss them. The occurrence of bereavement is a near certainty for one spouse, but the exact impact and duration of bereavement is much less predictable. The incidence of spousal loss through death has been estimated at 1.6% yearly for elderly men and 3% yearly for elderly women (Murrell et al., 1984). As the loss of the partner hits home the surviving one will be hit by stress.

This being the most stressful event any one will ever go through, there will be so many mixed emotions around at the time. Spousal bereavement is also

associated with prolonged or unresolved grief, traumatic/complicated grief such as searching and yearning (Prigerson et al., 1995), generalised anxiety or panic disorder (Jacobs et al., 1990), and even major depression (Clayton, 1990). Any one who has been through a loss will tell you that they wish no one to ever go through it.

Conclusion to this essay is that as we go into adulthood there is going to be times through that period where people will suffer periods of stress due to an event, which will change their lives forever. Any of the events I have mentioned will be very stressful for the person going through it at the time. When he/she is going through it they will feel that they are alone and no one knows how they are feeling. As Hobson (1981) believes following a life event we will go through seven periods to enable us to get back on track. While we are under this stress it may cause us to have further medical problems due to the level of stress.