

Thought Paper
PSY 1100
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Erik Erikson was a huge influencer in the field of psychology. He formed an eight-stage psychological development theory that seems to have been influenced by Sigmund Freud. In each stage, Erikson believed people experience a conflict that serves as a turning point in their development. These conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. During these times, the potential for personal growth is high, but so is the potential for failure.

After reading over these stages I found very interesting his fourth stage, Industry vs. Inferiority. This lines up perfectly with the Latency stage from Freud's theory but has a different meaning. According to Erikson children begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments and abilities socially. Children who are encouraged and commended by parents and teachers develop a feeling of competence and belief in their skills. Those who receive little or no encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers will doubt their ability to be successful.

Further explained in "Invitation to the Life Span" it's states,

"As children gain control over eliminative functions and motor abilities, they begin to explore their surroundings. Their parents still provide a strong base of security from which the child can venture out to assert their will. The parents' patience and encouragement helps foster

autonomy in the child. Highly restrictive parents, however, are more likely to instill the child with a sense of doubt and reluctance to attempt new challenges. If caregivers demand too much too soon, refuse to let children perform tasks of which they are capable, or ridicule early attempts at self-sufficiency, children may instead develop shame and doubt about their ability to handle problems.”

When I was the age of six I would talk to people and my dad would always get mad and tell me to be normal! I was a very hyper kid with a lot of steam to burn off. So I would be silly and say things that I feel is normal for kids of that age (now know that because I work with boys at a residential treatment facility). I started feeling like I was not normal. Like if he (my father) was not there to just keep me away from people. To hide who I was and what I wanted. To let others know that I was a good person and a likable boy. Even if he thought I was not. I have a video of my father helping instill this behavior in me. He had brought a video camera home from work one day and he was asking all of us kids some questions and I was hyper like always. He began to get very upset at me and told me “be normal” many times. He told me I could stop and go to my room if I didn’t want to be a normal boy. These words were a constant in my young life and I still to this day think that I am so different from others cause I am not normal.

As I grew up I found myself trying to be different from others and find ways to separate myself from the norm/ popular crowd. Music was an obvious choice that I found

to come very easy to me. Clothing styles followed closely behind. Then by poor grades in school and rebellious behavior. I became very good at music over the years and it was my vice for many things in my life. I was awarded honors by the state of Utah and was one of the best of my age group. When I started seeing others that were fabulous musicians I found myself not wanting to play anymore. I felt as if the one thing that I was good at, the one thing that made me normal was striped away from me. I felt inferior again. I still to this day on occasion think that I am worthless cause I am not the normal person. That everyone is judging me, and that I have nothing worth giving back to society.

At age seven schoolwork became difficult for me. I became very hyper at school, and then became the class clown. All the children would laugh at me being hyper and see “something special” in me. When I made the class laugh it brought me to life! I would feel as if I fit in with them. I felt strange, yet normal at the same time. I had a teacher give up on me and she sent me to resource (the special needs class) because I was too much for her to handle. So I had gone from being the top reader in my class in 1st grade class to the kid with the retards. I spent my day with kids that had down syndrome and M.S. I saw that I was now really different from my other classmates and I thought I was unintelligent. This would permeate my life for years to come. I still feel this way on occasion. I saw other kids going into AP classes and this stage really effected my whole scholastic experience and is the reason I am still here at Salt Lake Community College today.

I found my “Industry” in School through music. I was almost automatically good at music, I never had to practice to be proficient. Music showed me that I have strengths and also weaknesses. I found that if worked hard I could become self-sufficient and undertake anything. I would urge all elementary teachers or people interested in this field to analyze your personal ethics as a teacher. Are aware of the impact that you can have on a child’s whole future? Do you realize that if you are not unbiased from your personal convictions that your rash actions can affect a person and his whole family and generations to come? You might want to keep your self in check by not having problems with transference or bigotry so that humanity can start to flourish and not be bogged down by us over diagnosing kids with problems!! Everyone is scared of risk but teachers need to be willing to sacrifice their own comfort to serve the young minds of today. I didn’t realize I was so passionate about ethical teachers in our school until I started think about what has brought me to this point in my life. And it all boils down to some bad parenting and an impatient teacher during my Industry vs. Inferiority stage.