

Erickson's Stages of Psycho-social Development

These are very busy years as the child has greater mobility and autonomy. It is an age of very rapid learning in every way and it is the age of asking WHY? Guilt is essential to know which behaviors are dangerous and which will advance learning and growth. Unfortunately, children are seldom directed at the level of their behavior. Instead they are attacked as human beings for being "in the way," "too curious," as "driving me crazy with your questions." and "that is just your imagination..." On and on the child is shamed for learning, for being curious, for exploring their world - instead of feeling normal healthy guilt when behavior is corrected..

Consider all the stories in which you were excited, taking initiative to learn something and then the passion of your young soul was squelched with shaming and the talent lost to you, repressed and discouraged. I remember in 1st Grade the singing teacher - the revolting Miss Yearsly, playing notes on the piano and one by one we had to match the note with our voice, in front of the whole class. I was terrified, not quite understanding the request. Clearly whatever sound I made did not meet her expectation and with scorn and shaming she graded by singing ability to be F. However, on the other hand, when I wrote stories, I was sent to the Headmistress and given jelly-beans for being a good story teller. The effects of these very ordinary and every day experiences in a child's life, have long lasting and devastating consequences. We ourselves become the harsh, shaming inner critic and repress the child's natural and spontaneous expressions, sometimes for ever. You must recognize that you are now the dreaded Miss Yearsly to yourself and now the correction of the inner dynamic is yours to do.

Write a story of what happened to you and then introduce into the story the Fairy Godmother, the Loving Mother, who rescues from the wicked witch by caring about your feeling, telling you truth and encouraging you. Notice as I suggest this assignment all the self talk that comes up around not being able to do that, not being good at that and how you cannot give yourself permission to play.

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Up until about age 7 children are not capable of having anything much more than pre-conventional morality... i.e. conforming to what parents demand of them to avoid punishment and be. Once they go to school they will conform to the rules of the groups they belong too in order to avoid punishment and get praise and reward. Stages 3 and 4 are still this same dynamic but now reward and punishment include a larger circle of rules and norms and law of society. The focus in conventional morality is on what others expect - there is only an external locus of control and decision. There is no internal awareness of the still, small inner voice of truth, wisdom, intuition, that demands that only that which is loving is truly moral. Very few people will advance far enough to a level of post-conventional inner decision making.

Consider how you still, in unawareness do the "good, right and perfect thing," as demanded by your parents first, then your peer groups and school and then your society and country, even at the expense of your inner voice that you sometimes do hear, but ignore. You follow, blindly and deafly what others demand for reward or to avoid punishment. There was a series of experiments done that shocked the world into an awareness of how good, right and perfect people can commit atrocities because they have lost their connection to the spirit of love and truth within and blindly obey authority. This is truly essential watching for everyone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOUEC5YXV8U>

Notice the student ignores the inner voice of true care, and submits to the external authority

- Now consider how you yourself do what you are supposed to do despite not wanting to at the deepest level of your being.
- How do you still care what other people think?
- How do you still think others know something you don't?
- How do you still think others know better than you?
- How do you submit to authority even when the inner voice is warning you not to?
- How could you be a Nazi?
- Under what threat would you cave in and do what the authority wants or demands of you. When have you taken a stand against something you knew (CELLULAR KNOWING) was wrong. When have you gone against your cellular knowing and conformed to the external demands because of cellular memory of fear and shame?

Piaget's Pre-operational Stages of Cognitive development

Most of us as adults, even if we develop later stages of cognitive development, in some ways, remain stuck in this young stage of egocentric cognitive understanding. And, this means that we still assume that other people see, hear, and feel exactly the same as we do.

Piaget used a number of methods to study the mental abilities of children, for instance the three-dimensional display of a mountain scene. Often referred to as the "Three Mountain Task," children are asked to choose a picture that showed the scene they could see from where they were sitting. Most children are able to do this with little difficulty. Next, children are asked to select a picture showing what *someone else* would have observed when looking at the mountain from a different viewpoint.

Almost always the children chose the scene showing *their own* view of the mountain scene. According to Piaget, children experience this difficulty because they are unable to take on another person's perspective. For a short teaching watch this little video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4oYOjVDgo0>

How are we still unable to see a situation from another person's point of view. See if you can find in yourself tendencies, sometimes, the following:

- Focus on own perception and opinion
- Lack of empathy - inability to find in self the place of feeling in another
- Inability to recognize needs of others
- Excessive thoughts of how others might view them
- How often do you say, "I don't understand how could think/do/say that?" Think of the recent elections. Can you find within yourself the times when you have thought, believed, understood the world through the lens of the other person's beliefs and understandings? Are you aware that you too have had this vantage point and probably grown past it and now judge it. Can you truly not understand the perspective of another stage of development and state of consciousness?