

Eriksons stage of Industry (competence) vs. Inferiority - 5 - 12

Eriksons 4th stage of Psycho-Social Development outlines what happens during the primary school ages of 5 - 12, where children are expected to prepare for being competent in the world through education and intellectual understanding about the external world, and how to manipulate this world to get their own needs met. When children are not guided and taught with respect and reverence, and instead are shamed and criticized any competence they achieve is rooted in avoiding being shamed and frightened by other adults. Herein lie the future fears in relationship to authorities and bosses, systems and learning leading to under-achievement out of avoidance of feelings and over-achievement and perfectionism to get the need for approval met and avoid the shame of disapproval.

- Think about all the ways in which you felt shame as you learned to read and write, do sums and arithmetic. Share your stories with one another - this takes the stick and loneliness out of the shame you experienced.
- Can you see that not only did you have natural inner talents and proclivities but that a lot of your learning was influenced by the hated teacher or the beloved teacher? You all have stories about this to share too. What was your favorite subject? Your worst? Why?
- These teachers, the good ones and the bad ones are now the role models for you to use in learning how to reparent yourself around work, getting things done and taking pride in your accomplishments.
- Consider what defenses against shame need tending to? Procrastination, avoidance, perfectionism, rage at others for not doing this right (projection). How do these early experience stop you from being creative, fulfilling your potential in what you have to offer the world?
- How did you get to feel and experience yourself as inferior to other kids in certain areas?
- How did your intrinsic worth get lost and become dependent on grades and achievement?

Kohlbergs Conventional Stages of Moral Development

In the next stage this same line of understanding is applied to society in general with the idea that if an exception is made for one person then the whole society would collapse into anarchy. There is not capacity yet to consider motive and long term outcome. The rule is the rule and it must be obeyed by everyone to maintain societal law and order.

In general this is the highest stage of moral development in any society. Post conventional morality does not exist because very few people turn inward and live a life rooted in truth and love. They obey the externals to get needs met and avoid feelings of shame. The pre-conventional and conventional states predominate in any society at this point in the evolution of humans.

- Consider times in your life when you have insisted the law is the law, even when internally a little voice was protesting against the harsh punishment of the law. Eg. do you have any problem with the death penalty? Does this fit with your ideas or is it against

your ideas about morality? Do you consider each situation individually based on motive and outcome? I remember when my granddaughter was 2 and I stepped off a path in a nature reserve to get a picture. She was deeply distressed and grabbed my leg, saying, "No granny, no granny, stay on the path." This is actually where most people are in their development.

- Take a risk and try on disobeying a rule that is actually silly and ridiculous and see what fears come up for you from childhood.
- Under what circumstances might you break the law? Think if you could break the law to help someone, save a life, help an immigrant, hide a Jew so they would not be sent to a concentration camp, refuse to tell something that could harm others even if tortured, kill out of mercy, get a divorce even if the church says it is a sin.... befriend someone even though the group says they are wrong and bad? The list goes on and on.

Being moral does not necessarily mean being loving. Being loving requires subscribing to a new and different law than the one of law and order.

Piaget's concrete Operational Stage - 7 - 11

Moral reasoning is very much tied up with the child's cognitive capacity as outlined by Piaget. During this stage children start to:

- think logically about concrete events - i.e. they can see physical cause and effect
- understand the concept of conservation; the classic example used by Piaget is that the amount of liquid in a short, wide cup is equal to that in a tall, skinny glass
- use inductive logic, or reasoning from specific information to a general principle
- able to deduce how someone else might see something

The world is very concrete, the focus is external. There is no capacity yet to generalize cause and effect and logic to the inner world of emotions and needs, which to one degree or another are repressed and not in awareness.

Consider for yourselves:

- How often do I ask myself what the underlying emotional cause is of the external and outer behaviors of my life? Can you see that reparenting requires you to ask this question and get aware of internal motivation leading to external behaviors. There is not an external cause for the external behavior. This is difficult to understand at this stage of development. It would seem as if something external is causing my current behavior. Eg. I hit my wife because she nags me...
- Notice everytime you blame a decision on some external factor - do not judge it, but correct it by recognizing the internal motivation.
- Notice how you are rule bound about how people should behave without consideration for deeper understanding of motive
- Notice how every answer is in the rational, logical mind, not the emotions and needs
- Start noticing how the divorce between inner motivation and outer logic and reasoning cause harm to yourself and others

