**[90-day assignment] – FLE 716-3 Essay on Adulthood and Aging**

**Write an essay on one of the following topics. The essay should be 4-6 pages in**

**length, double-spaced, and should express your understanding of the essential**

**elements of the course.**

**Using one of the adult developmental theories discussed in class or one found in your**

**developmental reading, write a 4-6 page paper explaining where you are in your current**

**life stage and explain how your orthodoxy affects the way you view the resolution of the**

**tasks associated with that stage. Be careful not to be too self-disclosing as submitted**

**assignments may be read by many. Confidentiality is not guaranteed.**

Erik Erikson’s 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development deals with the stages of development from birth till death.In this case, the paper will be focusing on the adult stages of the theory, what is currently being experienced in these life stages and how this orthodoxy affects the way I view the resolution of the tasks associated with that stage. According to Erikson, when an individual has been faced with each stage’s crisis the individual develops psychological strengths or character traits that aids the development of a more confident and healthy person. This theory gives us a way to view the development of a person through an entire lifespan. (Lewis, R., 2020). The first stage of Erikson’s theory is trust vs. mistrust which begins at birth to 18 months. This stage the child is extremely dependent on them and if they are refused attention in a major way they can then develop fear, anxiety and mistrust.

Stage two is called autonomy vs. shame and doubt, in this stage they gain their independence and this helps the child’s self esteem build. If children lack the chance to assert themselves, they will battle with feelings of inadequacy and self doubt. This stage begins at the age of 18 months to 3 years old. Around the age group, 3 to 5 years old, they reach the stage of initiative vs. guilt. They learn that they can take initiatives, control what happens and create a positive self-image. But if decisions are not made by the child, they may not be equipped to take initiatives, they begin to lack ambition, and could be filled with guilt. (Lewis, R., 2020).

Stage four focuses on industry vs. inferiority which begins at the age of 5 to 12 years old. This is the stage they learn new skills, the following stage is in the adolescence category and focuses on identity vs. confusion. At this stage the individual faces the challenge of developing a sense of self by examining their beliefs, goals, and values. If the individual does not search for their identity, they may not develop a strong sense of self. (Lewis, R., 2020). Intimacy vs. isolation at age 18 - 40 years old begin to develop safe relationships filled with commitment and love but if this stage is unsuccessful they will be unable to build committed relationships which can lead to loneliness and depression. (Lewis, R., 2020). At this stage, I personally see how real life gets, having to develop and maintain committed relationships. I am currently at this period of Erikson’s theory where the young adulthood stage now begins. Tasks associated with this stage are focusing on forming intimate relationships with other people but once that is unsuccessful it can lead to loneliness and isolation. On the other hand, once it is successful, relationships will be created with endurance and security.

According to this theory, every stage builds on each other and accomplishing the stage prior is also critical to be able to develop intimate relationships. Finding my identity such as my values, morals and beliefs really helps with the development of relationships. Based on the values you develop leads to which company you choose to help you deal with the issues that you face. I now choose persons around me that impact me the way I want to be impacted. I chose my life to be solely based on my relationship with God. It is impossible to find a better friend than God, something I have recognized and being aware of that allows me to not put added pressures on friends to be something that they cannot be for me. The fact that I know and believe God can be the only one that is continuously trustable and shows me the grace that I need, I have now learnt the ability to try to give that same grace for my friends.

My values and beliefs all stem from the Bible which leads to me striving to have a deeper relationship with Him. Because of this, God shows me the people who are there for me and who allows me to feel comfortable and not judged when I come to them to talk, the ones who are there for a season or permanently. As of recently, the lesson that I have been learning is grace, a virtue that is not common and like any new skill difficult to develop. I honestly think that Christian-living should lead you to always being genuine to everyone around you, yet personal with the circle you chose, who is there for you in your darkest moments. Relationships can be difficult to maintain due to life becoming so busy and having your personal issues to face. However, I have understood that despite life being busy I had to be mindful that we need to check up on friends.

Growth is inevitable. I was forced to learn that maintaining connections are important despite disagreements or not having the same opinions. In life you realized that it is not just you, it is critical for emotional connections. As humans we need interactions and without that comes isolations which in itself is not the best for us to survive. It just is not sustainable. I recently started overcoming the feeling of being socially isolated because of life. Mentally I would assume that because I had an introverted personality trait I could stay to myself and do all the things I loved doing. Well that was short lived because life does have a way of humbling you to teach you lessons. It is only recently I realized that I was sabotaging myself when I stayed away from the people that truly love me. There will come a time when you just have to choose growth if you want to begin the journey of happiness. Isolation leads to mental and physical destruction for the human body. Social isolation’s adverse health consequences range from sleeplessness to reduced immune function. Loneliness is associated with higher anxiety, depression, and suicide rates. Isolation and loneliness are also linked to poor cardiovascular health and cognitive function. (<https://publichealth.tulane.edu/blog/effects-of-social-isolation-on-mental-health/>)

Studies have demonstrated that those with a poor sense of self tend to have less committed relationships and are more likely to struggle with emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression. (<https://www.verywellmind.com/erik-eriksons-stages-of-psychosocial-development-2795740#toc-stage-6-intimacy-vs-isolation>). I can see how easy it is to become isolated based on the type of personality you have. Because of my introverted personality, maintaining relationships was difficult. But when I do find someone that I can keep close to, I really have to try hard to show love to them the way they need to be loved. I have not yet perfected maintaining friendships but the fact that I am aware that I should make myself feel better and I do try every chance I get to be there for them when I should. In this time where social media is striving, it can be “easy” to maintain friendships because there is constant communication with each other. However, intimate friendships have to be more than just chatting online but getting deeper with those persons you consider. Showing up for them when they need you vice versa and showing you care by randomly calling them to check up on them.

Successful resolution of this stage results in the virtue known as love. Love, according to the theory, refers to the ability to form lasting, meaningful relationships with other people. Love is defined by multiple scripture verses; one of them is I John 4:16, “God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.” (NIV, The Holy Bible, 2022). That alone defines how I show love to the people around me. It helps me treat people with respect on a daily basis. Reflecting on that verse, allows you to understand that to love means you have to live in God and God living in you, which means that you should read more of His word to live in Him. Understanding what love is allows you to react proactively, I Corinthians 13 speaks on certain characteristics of what love should look like.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails…” (I Corinthians 13:4-8, NIV, The Holy Bible, 2022). I Corinthians 13, is one example of learning pieces of how to show love to persons around you because that is how God shows love to you. My goal is to continuously live by this scripture and in my opinion if a child was to be exposed to this scripture before reaching the age where the theory explaining the virtue of love will now be developed, could develop it beforehand just by reading His word. However it is a theory and I do agree that it can help lead to the development of this virtue, love.

In conclusion, I have learnt that growth is constant. Growth is critical for a life pleasing to God. We all have to face these stages and it is important for us to make sure that we pass each level successfully or else it can lead to negative impacts in your life. A person who lives in loss, depression, confusion should never be a goal to strive to achieve. If we leave with one lesson it would be to make sure and strive for positive growth always.