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Understanding Self-Esteem: An Analysis through Childhood Development Using the Ego States of Transactional Analysis

Ronda Koch

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**Understanding Self-Esteem: An Analysis Through Childhood Development
Using the Ego States of Transactional Analysis**

**A Research Paper Submitted To The University Honors Department In
Completion of The University Honors Curriculum**

**By
Ronda Ridgeway**

The paper is nicely conceptualized + logically laid out. There is some ambiguity as to which ideas are your own + which are taken from other sources, though generally you cite sources well. Good reading list. Clear writing style. Conclusion seems short - What is your goal for the paper, + has it reached a stopping point? The intro needs to set the finite goal, + the conclusion needs to assess it. How does it end up related to interpersonal comm.?

(A-

Acknowledgments

Special thanks for the endless patience and understanding of Dr. Bryan Crow, who unknowingly was a guide in my life journey.

A separate acknowledgment to the never-ending inspiration of C.G. Jung, who seems to speak to me, at times, from the depths of the unconscious.

Introduction

The ultimate personal responsibility of individuals is to grow: physically, intellectually, and emotionally. For most of us this growth process is a natural, innate urging. The individual, during the course of his/her lifetime, may be considered on a personal journey, growing from dependence to independence.

How the individual grows seems to depend significantly upon his/her childhood experiences and his/her environment. The child's growth may be positive and healthy. If so, he/she most likely has been affirmed by the caregivers in his/her environment. On the other hand, he/she may have perceived that he/she was not valued or had little value. If so, the child's growth may take a destructive, self-defeating aspect.

The early childhood experiences may be thought of as the seeds of either global well-being or discontent. Dorothy Briggs writes that self-esteem ". . . comes. . . from the quality of the relationships that exist between the child and those who play a significant role in his[/her] life"(1970, p. 5). Briggs continues, "Every infant is born with the potential for psychological health. But whether that potential flourishes depends on the psychological climate he[/she] lives in"(1970, p.5).

Briggs also shows a relationship between a person's statement about himself/herself coming out of the "family" environment. "Whenever a person says, I m inadequate, he[/she] is actually telling us nothing about his[/her] person. . . . Instead he[/she] is

commenting on the quality of his[/her] relationships with others--from which he[/she] has constructed his[/her] self-image" (1970, p.19).

The life of an individual may be considered a personal pilgrimage to independence, where he/she at some early point in life, may face a "Y", or fork, in the road. The traveler will have to decide which path to take: either an affirming positive, and creative road or a self-defeating, blaming, and destructive road.

It is possible that early childhood influences may be linked with the child's growth in self-esteem. Out of the beginnings of dependency at birth, the child may be programmed and/or guided through contact with powerful, controlling influences in his/her life. These influences may very well plant the seed of self-esteem which will then guide the individual in choosing the path he/she will take while on his/her personal of growth on life's road. Pelham and Swann, Jr. state:

Before the development of a complex cognitive system capable of assessing specific beliefs about the self, children presumably learn that their environments are either friendly and satisfying or hostile and frustrating. Even very young infants, for example, seem to realize that they typically evoke either acceptance or disdain from others. Children presumably translate such early social experiences into a basic sense of pride or shame. This sense of worthiness may not only serve as a foundation of self-esteem, it may also influence the way adults later see themselves and their world(1989, p.672).

In other words, through early childhood experiences, the child may begin to develop general, global feelings, a core sense of self. This core sense of self might be compared to a backpack for the life traveler. Usually backpacks are carried on the back, out of

conscious view, but they can be taken off so the person can review the contents. With self-esteem, however, some of the contents may become lost in the often closed bag and may not surface for the traveler. The backpack being empty at birth is open and receptive. The backpack is then filled with significant life impressions, a reservoir of strength or weakness, that may aid or hinder the traveler on the growth journey, to form global self-esteem.

Susan Harter comments that [William] James (1892/1963) ". . . acknowledged that we make evaluative judgments about our specific successes and failures, he contended that over and above these judgments there is a certain average tone of self-feeling which each one of us carries about with him[/her], and which is independent of the objective reasons we may have for satisfaction or discontent" (1985, p.62).

The development of this core sense of self, or global self-esteem, is an individualized process. It may be possible that the various life experiences form a definable core sense of self within the child somewhere between the age of five and nine. Briggs states, "By five, each child has usually collected enough reflections about himself[/herself] to form his[/her] first overall estimate of his[/her] worth. He[/She] may not feel good about himself[/herself] at all times, but if by and large, he[/she] feels basically lovable and worthwhile, he[/she] can be glad he[/she] is himself[/herself]" (1985, p.19). Studies by Rosenberg (1979) and Harter (1982b; 1983) suggest a later age more appropriate for clinical study, ". . . one can reliably access general self-worth. . . in children over the age of eight years" (Harter, 1985, p.67).

The difference between the two statements may stem from different perspectives. The comment by Briggs stems from an emphasis on the feeling state of an individual. The Rosenberg/Harter studies may have looked at the feeling state, but would also consider the person's thinking and behavioral influences in an assessment. Although age is used as a way to identify a general time reference for the development of a core sense of self, the highly individualized process of growth should not ideally be limited to chronological age. *Right*

So, with a backpack of life experiences relating to perceptions about one's self, the traveler usually has enough inner convictions and impressions about the self to consciously and/or unconsciously decide which road to journey down when ^{*facing*} (faced at) the crossroads of life.

Since the traveler's backpack of experiences have such a vital force and can be an important resource, let's explore this backpack of self-esteem.

Self-Esteem

Much diversity arises when exploring the subjective nature of self-esteem. What exactly is self-esteem and where does it originate? Although the motivational origins of self-esteem were alluded to earlier, let's take a closer look at self-esteem and its focal areas. By studying the origins of self-esteem first, we may in some way better understand its diversity and the difficulty in defining it.

According to Wells and Marwell (1976, p.65), the development of self-esteem is viewed in connection with three primary areas of human motivation: the cognitive, mental part; the affective, feeling part; the conative, behavioral part. Harter uses William James as a source to associate the feelings of self-esteem with the three motivational centers. Harter comments,

. . . the emotions that were aroused by one's self-definition, for example, pride and vanity, as well as shame and mortification, were an integral part of the self-system. In fact, James divides the various aspects of the self into three parts: (1) the constituents of the self namely the domains of self evaluation [evaluation inferring a cognitive process], for example, the material me, the social me, the spiritual me; (2) the feelings and emotions they arouse [the affective], for example, specific forms of self-appreciation or self-dissatisfaction as well as (3) the acts that they prompt [the conative] (1985, p.85).

While a global sense of self may be in conflict with some of the more external influences on self-esteem, both do exist. Harter writes,

We retain the notion of global self-esteem while at the same time focus on the constituent parts of the whole, since the two are not identical. That is, Rosenberg (1979) argues, that we acknowledge the phenomenological experiences of general self-worth over and above the evaluation attached to more discrete characteristics of the self. He claims that both exist within the individual's phenomenological field as separate and distinguishable entities, as each can and should be studied in its own right (1985, p.62).

Although the emphasis of this paper is to investigate a global sense of self, in order to show a rich relationship between self-esteem and childhood development, some of the more specific areas creating and propelling self-esteem will be addressed.

One of the more comprehensive definitions for detail^{(ed)?} analysis belongs to Coopersmith. According to Coopersmith (1967), the development of self-esteem is influenced in four major areas: (1) the display of respect, acceptance, and concern shown by others; (2) in experiencing personal success and failure; (3) values and aspirations, (4) and resiliency from negative messages.

Several examples of the influence of the family environment in its relation to self-esteem have already been addressed earlier. These examples have inferred an importance in the communication of respect, acceptance, and concern to the child. One of the earliest childhood experiences in the child may center around body sensations, the various communication surrounding the infant's physical presence. Alexandra Harrison writes, ". . . we can assume that the infant builds his[/her] body image from his[/her] growing awareness of his[/her] body and from the ways the parents reflect back to him[/her] their feelings about his[/her] body" (1983, p.92).

Additionally, a child may derive sense of well-being, physiological and other, through caregiver verbal and non-verbal

communication, in their ability to express in various, consistent ways respect, acceptance, and concern. John Mack writes, "Human well-being and the sense of having worth or value are intimately connected. The psychological structures that regulate self-esteem may emerge out of the early positive affective expressions and states of well-being of infancy. . ."(1983, p. 25).

Although respect, acceptance, and concern provide a significant influence in the development of self-esteem, Coopersmith also included one's encounter with success and failure, which might be defined as the child's encounter with mastery. Harter credits William James as one of the first to significantly note the relationship between an individual's sense of accomplishment and one's sense of self in terms of value. "He considered self-esteem to be the ratio of one's successes to one's pretensions, and in so doing implied that the relationship between our competence and our aspirations was a critical determinant of how we evaluate the self" (1985, p.55).

James mentions both competence and aspirations as key influences in our perceptions of self. As stated earlier, Coopersmith also noted the significance of values and aspirations, one of the more abstract and intangible self-esteem descriptors. Aspirations and values may largely be modeled by the child's caregivers. It is through the contact with significant people that a child, in this close association with his/her powerful and controlling caregivers, may admirably adopt their values and aspirations.

This adoption of caregiver values and aspirations creates a conscious and/or unconscious ideal self, a system of thinking,

try to stick with communication-related aspects of these theories + ~~focus~~ focus less on personality development

feeling, and behaving that this is the way to do things, the way to act and react. This alignment with the caregivers and adoption of their value system may be termed "identification." Paul Mussen states, ". . . through parental identification the child incorporates the culture's moral standards, values, and judgments" (1979, p.82). To clarify, identification is ^{with?} the standards that the caregivers deem important. Additionally Mussen writes, ". . . identification may account for the adoption of a model's complex integrated pattern of behavior, rather than the adoption of direct responses. . . [and] are emitted spontaneously, without specific training or direct rewards" (1979, p.81).

Identification may create within the child an idealized self. Whenever the child notices a discrepancy between his/her real (perceived Real) self and an ideal self, he/she may experience internal dissonance. Self-esteem may consequently be enhanced or weakened by the child's ability to deal with negative messages as mentioned in Coopersmith's definition of self-esteem. Virginia Demos comments, ". . . the capacity to tolerate moderately intense negative states is likely to lead gradually to a trusting of one's inner experiences, which represents a basic component of the capacity for positive esteem" (1983, p. 57).

Coopersmith's four areas of self-esteem development all have an interrelatedness. There does not seem to ^{be} have a beginning or end, just a continuing chain, or more appropriately a circle, of triggers and reactions that become part of a child's global perception of self. The complexity and interrelatedness of the different aspects in Coopersmith's definition of self-esteem, when analyzed, is

symbolic of the complex nature of self-esteem within the individual, the complexity of self-esteem development from feelings, growing with cognition, and manifesting in behavior.

Ultimately, however, self-esteem development is influenced in two spheres, sources outside the individual and sources and resources from within. Self-esteem relies on this dualistic nature throughout the life of an individual. John Mack comments that self-esteem has " . . . one element deriving from approval by [and interaction with] others, the second growing from satisfaction taken in independent self-generated activity" (1983, p.14).

[Now that the topic of self-esteem has been explored, let's return to the traveler and his/her life journey. As the traveler, the child is aided or hindered in his/her life journey through his/her core self, represented in the form of the backpack. Remember that the backpack is usually out of sight, but not always out of mind, for it is a combination of feelings, thoughts and actions, eventually representing an inner guide. The traveler, however, has a more visual, more interactive, conscious sense of self that tends to be more dependent of external influences, changing, growing, and responding to others. Since this aspect of self-esteem is more visible and interactive with the external environment, we may consider this a separate aspect from (his) global self-esteem, the backpack. This more visible, externally influenced self might be like a utility belt for the traveler. The belt is filled with views of self from other people, not developing primarily from his/her core self. If an item on this utility belt becomes significant, then the traveler may toss this item into the backpack.]

sounds like you're sayin' you're exhausted the topic

The backpack and utility belt may be filled with useful, helpful items, allowing the individual to enjoy the trip and handle detours and obstacles. On the other hand the backpack and utility belt may contain outdated, useless items or tools that are not only inefficient, but are also an unnecessary burden and a self-defeating resource.

As the traveler approaches the "Y" in the road, he/she probably already has had life experiences that have created an inclination toward the self-affirming path or the self-defeating path. The nice thing to know about life journeys is that the traveler can at anytime decide to take off the utility belt or discard items from the belt that no longer serve him/her. Although usually one does not disregard his/her entire sense of self, it is possible, or he/she may review the contents and clean house accordingly.

Additionally, it may also be possible through human spirit alone, even while working with inefficient tools, to blaze a trail off the established path in the destination to the alternate route. The traveler may also be fortunate to meet experienced fellow travelers or a trail guide, who may assist the individual in lightening his/her load and/or finding alternate routes that the inexperienced traveler might have overlooked.

Nice analogy

Transactional Analysis

As described in earlier sections, the influences of caregivers seemed to play a significant part in the development of self-esteem in the child. The early "family" situation does, indeed, provide a dynamic environment, full of verbal and non-verbal, conscious and unconscious messages. Transactional Analysis will be a tool used, here, to understand more fully the influence of caregivers on the growing child, and in some instances, ^{subject?} provide insight(ful) when specifically looking at child development. In Games People Play, Transactional Analysis is considered the "psychology of human relationships" (Berne, 1964, backcover). By understanding the psychological orientation of the people involved in social interactions, and in particular, more significant interpersonal settings, we can begin to understand how their psychological states influence communication. The interactions between each of the participants, and the roles each person plays create what Eric Berne, originator of Transactional Analysis, termed "games." According to Games People Play, games are ". . . an ongoing series of complementary ulterior [social] transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome" (1964, p.48). In this book Berne suggests that games often are ". . . repetitious, superficially plausible, with a concealed motivation. . ." (1964, p.48).

The fundamental element of any social transaction according to transactional analysis, is termed a "stroke." In Games People Play, "Stroking" may be used as a general term for intimate physical

contact; in practice it may take various forms. . .[and may] denote any act implying recognition of another's presence" (Berne, 1964, p.15). Stroking may therefore be considered an important act in the development of self-esteem in the child. Remember Coopersmith's definition of self-esteem included "display of respect, acceptance, and concern." Stroking is the vehicle in which to convey, or not convey respect, acceptance, and concern. These three characteristics may combine to form what may be generally considered "love." Corsini and Weddings write,

Through the early interactions with parents and others, a pattern of stroking develops, which may be either supportive or attacking. From this stroking pattern, the child at some point early in life makes a basic existential decision about himself[/herself], essentially that he[/she] is either o.k. as a person or not o.k. (1989, p.408).

This also describes the "Y" or crossroad for the traveler, who must at that point make a conscious/unconscious decision.

Strokes may be demonstrated in segments of social ^{interaction} (intercourse,) ^{the concept of} ~~viewed from within~~ with games held within, a larger sphere of social influence. This

larger sphere is known as a script." In Beyond Games And Scripts, Berne describes scripts as ". . . an attempt to repeat in derivation form not a transference reaction or a transference situation, but a transference drama . . . which are intuitive artistic derivations of these primal dramas of childhood" (1976, p.51). Caregivers, therefore, are credited with providing through the "family" unit a pattern that is then carried with the child through childhood, to be enacted in adulthood.

omit,
no need
to go
into all
the
Freudian
theory

Earlier when detailing Coopersmith's definition of self-esteem

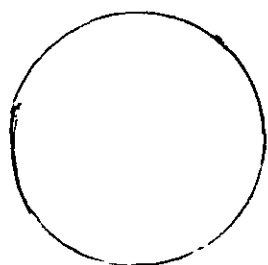
in the category of aspiration and values, identification was mentioned to help explain help explain how adoption of certain standards occurred. The same process could be similar for script adoption for the child. Mussen said that identification ". . . may account for the adoption of a model's complex integrated pattern of behavior" (1979, p.82).

Do you mean "since there is evidence"?

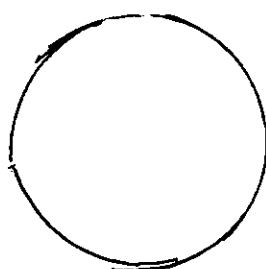
(Since there is a supported tendency) that the child may be scripted by the caregivers, much would be learned by understanding the influence of these psychological states of the caregivers.

Beyond Games And Scripts notes three general psychological states defined as "ego states" (1976, p.38). These ego states are known as the Parent ego state, the Adult ego state, and the Child ego state.

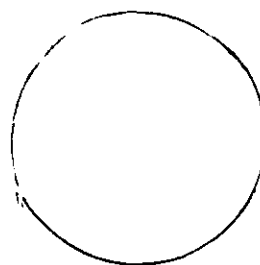
PARENT



ADULT



CHILD

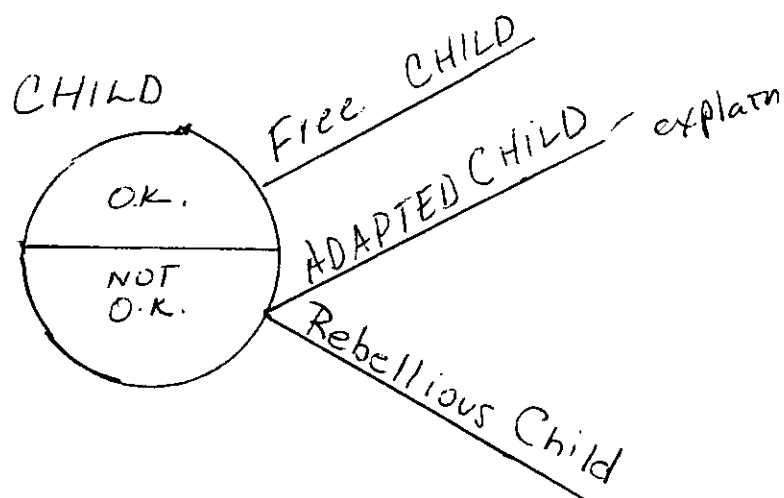


Ken Ernst describes the development of these ego states during childhood. He comments about the Child ego state, "The child part of us has two facets. When no limitations and rules are imposed, the Child [ego state] is free, natural and spontaneous. This Free Child part of us likes to explore its world, taste things, watch things, handle everything. . . (1976, p.32).

Ernst continues, ". . . Then the inevitable limitations of the

world, and the rules, regulations, standards, morales, ethics, customs, and whims of the giants [caregivers and other powerful people] close in. . . the youngster has a choice. . .[to either] adapt to the power or rebel against it. . ."(1976, p.33).

To summarize, the Child ego state may divide into categories of little or no dissonance--the Free Child, and that of dealing with dissonance--the Adapted Child and the Rebellious Child.

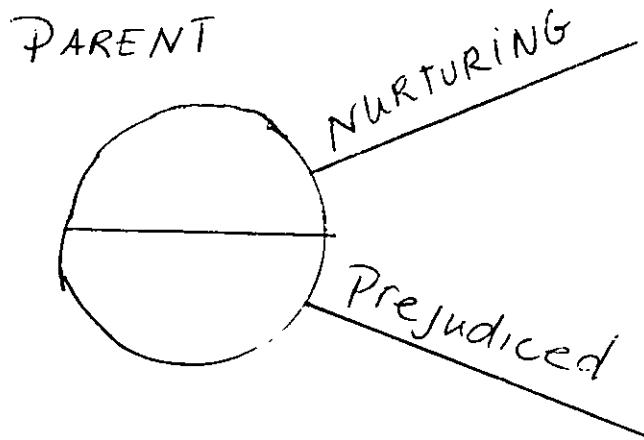


It is interesting to note that Berne in Games People Play considered the [Free] Child ". . . the most valuable part of the personality" and that ". . . it can contribute . . . charm, pleasure and creativity" to one's life (1964, p. 25-26).

Ernst goes on to describe the psychological state involving parental influence. This ego state seems to be formed through, once again, identification with the caregivers. "The Parent ego state [also] has two facets. There is a nurturing part. This contains all the caring, loving, feeding, protecting, and warm handling that a young person experiences. . ."(1976, p.34).

He continues,

The other facet of this ego state is the Prejudiced Parent [or Critical Parent] . . . It is interested in rules, regulations, standards, ethics and morals . . . [and] uses such words as ought, must, should, better, supposed to, right, wrong, good, bad, always, never. The Prejudiced Parent is more interested in rules than people (1976, p.35).

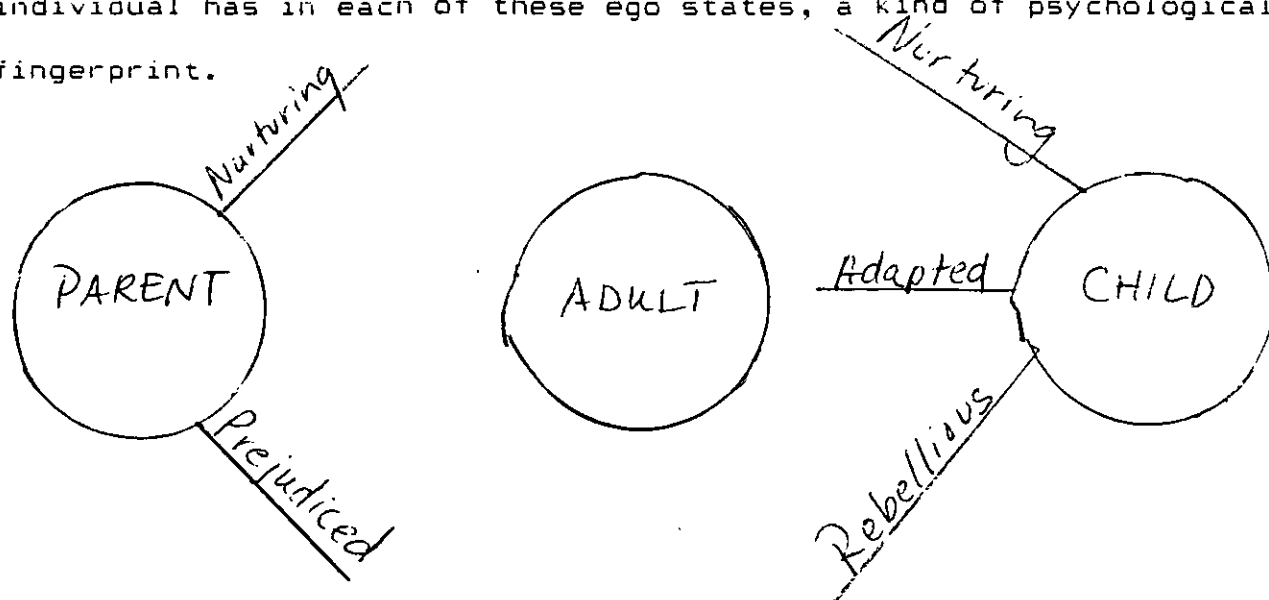


Berne, in Games People Play, indicates that the Parent ego state ". . . enables the individual to act effectively as the parent of actual children, thus promoting the survival of the human race . . . [and] it makes many responses automatic, which conserves a great deal of time and energy" (1964, p.27).

Finally, the Adult ego state does not have the emotional tones that the Child and Parent ego state share. The Adult performs assessments, in logical fashion, very similar to the functions of a computer. Games People Play states, "The Adult is necessary for survival. It processes data and computes the possibilities which are essential for dealing effectively with the outside world . . . to regulate the activities of the Parent and the Child, and to mediate objectively between them" (Berne, 1964, p.27).

Through these various ego states, each person has a unique psychological profile, depending upon the degrees of inclination the

individual has in each of these ego states, a kind of psychological fingerprint.



Problems in personal/interpersonal settings may arise when an imbalance in any of these ego states occurs. For example, the Parent ego state is divided into two categories, the Nurturing and Prejudiced Parent. Earlier in our review of self-esteem, aspects of the Nurturing Parent were very important. The Nurturing Parent helps convey thoughts and feelings of love through action and helps convey a sense of worth about the child, positive stroking. Although, too much love and attention " . . . can also be used manipulatively. I could help my youngsters when they are young to the degree that they remain dependent" (Ernst, 1976, p.94). Dependency may often lead to feelings of inadequacy or a decreased sense of mastery and accomplishment.

The Prejudiced Parent can be a negative force, through over-restriction and regulation. Through criticism the child may never have the ability to develop his/her creative, expressive Child ego state. But some sense of structure and limitations ^{is} are needed to provide an arena for safety, necessary for a child to grow. Out of

the balancing or imbalancing of these ego states, caregivers influence the growth of not only the Parent ego state in the child, but also the Adapted and Rebellious Child ego state.

A study conducted by Diana Baumrind of the Institute of Human Development of the University of California at Berkley showed that parents of children who were determined to be "the most mature, competent, and self-reliant . . . were rated high in all four parent-child dimensions; that is, these parents were controlling and demanding, but at the same time they were warm, rational, communicative, and receptive to their children's communications" (Mussen, 1979, p.77).

Likewise, the Adult plays an important role in the caregiver psychological state. The Adult helps monitor the more emotional states, observes reality, helps the individual make sound decisions. But too much of an Adult ego state may be harmful. These people may have a barrier blocking them from feelings, their own and others. An example of an overly influenced Adult ego state, if personified, would be Mr. Spock, from the Star Trek television series (and even he had a struggle with his emotions from time to time!). *- but in his case it was cultural + biological*

The best results in child-rearing seem to stem from a balance of ego states that are receptive to the developmental stages of the child. Aspects of the Free Child are needed for fun and growth, the Adapted Child is needed for effective integration in the world, while the Rebellious Child helps the individual on his/her journey to independence by saying, "I'm not going to depend on others, but will do this my way!" The Adult ego state helps us see reality, not colored by emotions, helping the individual achieve/maintain a sense

of mastery and accomplishment. The Nurturing Parent is needed to affirm love to the child, while the Prejudiced Parent provides a safe growing area and limitations to help the child achieve accomplishable tasks and goals.

On the individual's journey of independence, the early life script might be considered a road map with the course outline. The map may be hidden within the depths of the traveler's unconscious and/or deep within his/her backpack.

An Analysis of Child Development and Self-Esteem Through the Ego
States of Transactional Analysis

Now that we have ^{introduced} [generally investigated] the topic of self-esteem and transactional analysis, we can now use the ego states of Transactional Analysis as a way to understand the development of self-esteem in childhood, from infancy to adolescence and its influences beyond. *Good transition*

For simplicity and convenience, chronological developmental stages will be used. It is noted that this approach may not be the most individually accurate. Glick and Zigler ⁽¹⁹⁶⁵⁾ reflects on the problem of chronological age categories in cognitive analysis. "Although chronological age is the most frequently used indicator of development, there is little question that chronological age is not the most sensitive reflector of those changes in cognitive structuring that are presumed to be defining characteristics of the development sequence" ^{listed in references as 1969} "(1963, p.9)". It would seem, therefore, that to get an accurate appraisal of the development of self-esteem in childhood we would need to find a way to measure not only the cognitive maturity, but affective and conative, also. This would require independent testing. For purposes of this paper, however, we shall continue with child development in terms of chronological age, with the awareness that this approach has its deficiencies. *Good enough*

The development process usually follows Werner's Orthogenetic principle (1957) that "wherever development occurs it proceeds from a state of relative globality and lack of differentiation to a state of

increasing differentiation, articulation, and hierarchic integration" (Glick & Zigler, 1985, p.30). Werner's Orthogenetic principle supports the development of self-esteem in childhood, growing out of total dependency and in an affective orientation in infancy to independence and a complex concept of self-esteem as an adolescent. } *confusing*

Nancy Cotton lists five separate stages of development: (1) Phase I-Infancy; (2) Phase II-Toddler; (3) Phase III-Preschool; (4) Phase IV-Latency and (5) Phase V-Adolescence (1983, p.123-140). As we briefly address each stage, we shall look at some of the issues of self-esteem development in relation to the influence of the caregivers and/or significant others limited to the "family" unit. Although the role of outside influences, other than this "family" unit becomes increasingly more significant as development occurs, the role of caregivers still play ^{an} important part~~s~~, even in the distancing stage of adolescence.

Phase I: Infancy

of self-esteem

In reviewing the developmental stages₁ in childhood, infancy is a natural beginning point. The baby, born into a dependent state, is receptive to external influences, especially to the caregivers.

Briggs writes, "Every infant is born without a sense of self" (1970, p.9). She continues,

(But how do we know?)

Some experiments with infants suggest that the degree of warm responsiveness we provide forms the foundations for future positive view of self. This responsiveness is made up of the kind of attention, smiles, close cuddling, songs, and talk we give infants . . . These reflections get babies started toward high self-esteem. Parents [caregivers] who never play with their infants or who care for them [in a cold, unresponsive, efficient manner] fail to give them early impressions of their importance (1970, p.12).

The infant is especially receptive during this time because he/she is motivationally originated in the affective state. The tie with the infant's caregivers becomes a transformation of self through others.

Communication during the infancy stage should reflect the infant's motivational state, an emphasis on feelings. As mentioned earlier, one of the first areas for feelings to occur comes out of the child's experiences with his/her body. Consequently, influential interaction between caregiver and infant may effectively center around the sensation of his/her body such as bathing, feeding, touching, dressing, in addition to other daily activities involving tactile interaction. Caregivers may be more effective if they, at this stage rely more on the Nurturing Parent ego state and aspects of their Free Child.

*Your
ideas
or
Briggs's?*

In the first two years of life there is a need for the limiting aspect of the Prejudiced Parent in addition to the Nurturing Parent. Coopersmith (1967) and Meyersburg, Albon, and Katin (1974) emphasize the affective experience.

It is in the first year of life, the mother [caregiver] confirms and validates the child's feelings, in the second year, she[he] helps the child gain an increased capacity to tolerate his[her] feelings--which leads, in time, to an increased sense of competence and a more adaptive use of affect by setting protective, loving, and consistent limits (Albon, 1983, p. 81).

In the infant's growth journey, although he/she is not literally off to a running start, developmentally, he/she is. The backpack is open wide to receive affirmations and validations of his/her worth.

Phase II: Toddler

After infancy, true to Werner's Orthogenetic principle, the child shows definite signs of cognition awareness and more animated behavioral displays, although the child is still very grounded in the affective state. The toddler phase may show a stage of awareness, a distinction between the self and others. It is an important phase in the journey from dependence to independence. "During this stage of development the child learns to walk, explore, play, talk, put things in things, push, pull, throw, reach, pretend, kiss, hug, reject food, and say no. With each accomplishment, the child looks to the parents [caregivers] for their emotional reaction" (Cotton, 1983, p.127).

For caregivers, the toddler phase should be an extension of the infancy stage, with the emphasis still in the Nurturing Parent since the child is seeking a conscious emotional reaction from the caregivers. The Free Child ego state continues the warm relations that foster positive self-feelings in addition to the safe limitations of the Prejudiced Parent.

This phase may be considered a test for caregivers, with the child testing them to determine how much the caregiver values the child in spite of his/her vocal/behavioral displays of independence. Maybe in the thundering 'no!' of the child, there is a question of, "Will I still be loved and valued if I acknowledge and display my independence?"

With the toddler, he/she may be consciously/unconsciously

developing his/her ego states: the Free Child, Adapted Child, Rebellious Child. By balancing these aspects, the child should make progress on his/her life journey, filling his/her backpack with more life experiences, becoming more aware of his/her own presence.

Phase III: Preschool

The time between toddler and latency shows the development of a more complex self structure, maybe seen in definite awareness of self-esteem and its regulation. " . . . A series of imitations [behaviors], identifications [cognitive and affective], and internalizations [affective] . . . lead to the development of a self-concept . . . and an inner world enriched by object representation of emotionally significant people"(Cotton, 1983, p.132).

Where the toddler stage may be categorized by an awareness of self, distinct from others, this phase becomes truly a diverse developmental time for the child. Caregiver interaction and regulation becomes more dynamic. "Parent mediation of the preschool child s initially intense reactions to failure and rejection help shape more emotionally tolerable reactions" (Cotton, 1983, p.134). This phase may need in caregivers the Adult ego state to see objectively and help direct the balance between the Nurturing Parent and Prejudiced Parent. Through a combination of love, respect, acceptance and mediation through rules and regulations, the child may grow with a sense of mastery and self-satisfaction.

Phase IV: Latency

The development of the self in the latency phase may be characterized as an increased awareness of self, the external importance of action with people and their own skills. It may be the time when self-esteem gels. Earlier we mentioned that self-esteem may integrate between age five and nine.

During latency, the external utility belt becomes more important. Rosenberg (1979) supported the notion that during latency the focus tended to draw on outside sources. Cotton writes, "The latency-age child continues to believe that the ultimate truth about the self is to be found in some external source" (Cotton, 1983, p. 136). The caregiver role continues to be significant, however.

Parents continue to influence self-esteem in major ways. Emotional relationships with parents [caregivers] are the effective context in which approval is most meaningful to the child. The absence of approval and praise from parents is often the cause of low self-esteem even in the presence of competence, acceptance among peers, and teacher approval" (Cotton, 1983, p.136).

This may be a fruitful time for caregiver/child relationships, distinct from the earlier dependency relationship. There does exist in latency, the identification patterns of early childhood in "gender identity," but this identity does not have the total emerging quality like early childhood identification" (Cotton, 1983, p.137).

For caregivers, the ability to have elements of the Nurturing Parent balanced with the Prejudiced Parent and Adult ego state may create a supporting, affirming environment, yet provide

acknowledgment of the growing developmentally older child, providing a smoother transition into the final childhood developmental stage.

Phase V: Adolescence

As the final stage of childhood development, adolescence provides a challenging time for the individual. In latency, the child focused on external objects, skills, and relationships. Adolescence is a polar stage, focusing on the internal process. Adolescence may be best symbolized as the alchemical process of the person. It is where self-esteem solidifies within the individual through internalization. It is a purifying or destruction by fire, fire of the emotions. This is verified in the writing of Rosenberg, "Adolescence is probably the stage of life when uncertainty about the self-concept is at its peak . . . ,but out of this total reevaluation of self, [out of this] struggle from external to internal processes], a new self is forged"(1985, p.223). Rosenberg continues, " . . . between the ages of 13-23, there is a regular and consistent improvement in global self-esteem (1985, p.213).

Adolescence, a metamorphic stage, a change in body and mind, which affects the concept of self.

incomplete sentence

Caregivers should lean on their Adult ego state at this point in development, in order to allow this independence process to complete. The caregiver needs to be subtly supportive, with lessening aspects of the Prejudiced Parent, which would be harmful in this self-conscious stage. "Parents whose own self-esteem, or sense of personal competence, depends heavily on the presence of the child in the home, may resist and even attack their children verbally or physically as the child tries . . . to establish greater emotional

distance[»]_^(Mack, 1985, p. 16). Small doses of the Nurturing Parent, balanced with the Adult ego state may help the maturing child to rely on caregiver support while pursuing his/her last phase to independence.

Conciusion

From the dependency of birth, through a growing independence and awareness within safe boundaries, into a maturation of independence through reconciliation of the outer and inner aspects of self, the individual continues his/her life journey.

The traveler s journey is never complete, there are always opportunities ~~or~~ for growth, new lessons and perspectives. Life s road may provide many obstacles and pitfalls. These may be turned into opportunities to understand oneself better, to give us travelers the chance to appraise our situation through the Adult ego state.

Overcoming the limitations of inherited road maps may seem a difficult task, it is what one perceives life to be. But life has a way of always being in motion. We can either grow and change with it or let life pass us by. The only solid road sign that can change our life path is the one that reads, "know Thyself."

Happy Trails!

From a Fellow Traveler

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