

Psychosocial Identity Development

Ruthellen Josselson's Research

Where did this theory come from?

Erik Erikson's 8 Stages of Identity Development Theory:

- 1. Basic Trust vs Mistrust (infancy)*
- 2. Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt (toddlerhood)*
- 3. Initiative vs Guilt (preschool age)*
- 4. Industry vs Inferiority (school age)*
- 5. Identity vs Identity Diffusion (Confusion)(adolescence/college age)***
- 6. Intimacy vs Isolation (1st stage of adulthood)*
- 7. Generativity vs Stagnation (2nd stage of adulthood – mid-life)*
- 8. Integrity vs Despair (3rd stage of adulthood – late-adulthood)*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s59JvdL-IBA&feature=related>

Identity vs Identity Diffusion (Confusion) (adolescence/college age)

What happens during stage 5?

For Starters.....

THE TEENAGE YEARS....

THEY BEGIN TO ASK:

“WHO AM I?”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SR8j_P1Ooos&feature=related

James Marcia - Ego Identity 4 Statuses

1. *Foreclosure – no crisis/commitment*
2. *Moratorium – crisis/no commitment*
3. *Identity Achievement – crisis/commitment*
4. *Diffusion – no crisis/no commitment*

Foreclosure – no crisis/commitment

“...the foreclosed position is one from which all adolescents begin the quest for identity.” (Josselson, 1978/1989, p. 64)

Parents influence the person’s beliefs and values

Are more likely to bend to authority

Not very adaptable to change

Moratorium – crisis/no commitment

A person begins to question parents' values and beliefs

Starts to form his/her own opinions, ideas

May be a time of flux, unsure which direction, can cause anxiety

Identity Achievement – crisis/commitment

Establishes a more concrete foundation

Begin to choose his/her own path

more likely to take risks

Diffusion – no crisis/no commitment

don't commit to anything

have not experienced any significant crisis

easily manipulated

Ruthellen Josselson

Expanded on Marcia's 4 identity statuses in her study of women

Early 1970s

60 female college seniors between 20 and 22 years old

4 different colleges and institutions

Chose 15 of each status to study

*initial study spanned 3 years - continued with 30 of these women for
22 years when in their 30s then 40s*

What were these women like?

Average – randomly chosen

Ranged from farm backgrounds to affluent communities

1/2 fathers graduated college - 17% mothers attended college

Many were 1st generation women to graduate college

Some married/engaged but most were not interested in that yet

Diverse college majors

(Josselson, 1978/1989)

Foreclosures: Purveyors for the Heritage (Guardians)

James Marcia's 1st status - Foreclosure – no crisis/commitment

Live lives based on Parental beliefs/values

Make decisions without hesitation

Do not want to disappoint parents

Chose careers around helping others

Happiest in their private lives – main focus was to be mother and wife

Foreclosures as a Group

End of College - 8 identified in this status were followed up on

lives were dominated wanting to feel loved and cared for

Stressed the importance of being close to their families and feeling of security from them

12 years later all 8 women still foreclosed – little personal growth

The majority worked in helping or legal professions – working in the field for which they studied in college

(Josselson, 1978/1989. 59)

In their 40s - explored new opportunities, may not have experienced any crisis until this age

Developed inner strength (Evans et al, 2010)

Identity Achievements: Pavers of the Way (Pathmakers)

James Marcia's 3rd Status – Identity Achievement – crisis/commitment

They begin to rework their internal self – individuation

They choose lives by exploring various options

Unite aspects of who they were with whom they choose to be)

How they felt about themselves as opposed to seeking approval from others

Chosen line of work – extension of who they are

Identity Achievers as a Group

End of College - 8 women were identified to be in this status

Independent – renounced the values/beliefs they were raised by as they took risks trying new things

What mattered - not making others proud of them but feeling proud of themselves

In their 30s, 7 of the 8 women changed occupations different from their chosen course of study in college

“Though not dissatisfied with their lives, they remained focused toward the future, anticipating the new experiences they will have....” (Josselson, 1978/1989 p. 105)

Moratoriums: Daughters of Crisis (Searchers)

James Marcia's 2nd Status – Moratorium – crisis/no commitment

Unstable time of experimentation, searching for a new identity

Begin to question internalized family beliefs/values while being exposed to other views

Could become paralyzed with indecision – could go:

Back to the comfort of foreclosure

or

forge ahead to Identity Achievement

Mona Lisa Smile

One who falls back into foreclosure

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hlBeZkxR6U&NR=1>

*One who tries to forge ahead to Identity
Achievement*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2dkOKBsWpU&feature=related>

Moratoriums as a Group

10 women identified to fall into this status participated in the follow-up study

By 2nd interview:

6 of the 10 women caught between Foreclosure and Achievement, returning to family held values/beliefs but also made commitments

3 of the 10 resolved crisis/developed solid identities moving into Identity Achievers

1 remained in Moratorium

By 3rd interview – Many lowered expectations so as not to feel a failure, but were mostly satisfied with the person they had become (Evans et al, 2010)

Identity Diffusions: Lost and Sometimes Found (Drifters)

James Marcia's 4th Status – Diffusion – no crisis/no commitment

Very complex group – hardest to understand

Adrift and lost, but lost for different reasons

Common pattern –tended to withdraw from situations

"...a prevalence of basic mistrust is expressed in a particular form of severe estrangement which characterizes individuals who withdraw into themselves when at odds with themselves and with others." (Erikson, 1968 p. 97)

"Jenny" Forrest Gump



This status – 4 different subgroup patterns:

Severe Psychopathology

Previous Developmental Deficits

Moratorium Diffusion

Foreclosed Diffusion

Severe Psychopathology & Previous Developmental Deficits

would be classified as borderline personality disorders

*Suffered severe psychological trauma earlier in life - caused
instability*

No sense of an identity commitment

Moratorium Diffusion

In crisis about choices they make in life – wondering about the meaning of life

Experiment with sex, drugs, religious groups, but tend not to commit

Caught between Moratorium and Diffusion – searching and drifting

Foreclosed Diffusion

Neither in crisis nor committed to anything

Little control over their lives

Wait and see attitude

Received little guidance from parents re: decisions

Identity Diffusions as a Group

????????????

Natalie Bloom.....



Moratorium: Daughter of Crisis (Searcher)

Unstable time of experimentation, searching for a new identity

Trying to remake herself, cutting her hair, engaging in an unhealthy relationship, trying to understand her social status, smoking

Consequences were her studies and worsening self esteem

Natalie found her feet again and forged ahead towards Identity Achievement

Limitations.....

The sample seems too small

The study consisted of 60 women, and only 50 % were available for follow up.

Three colleges appear to be in close proximity to each other, while the fourth was located in a different part of the country.

The information gathered may be dated

The population was studied initially in the early 70's.

How do these statuses translate with our contemporary female college students?

How are today's women's life experiences differ from those women interviewed 40 years ago?

References

Josselson, R. (1978/1989). *Finding Herself, Pathways to Identity Development in Women*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bath Inc.

Evans, N. et al. (2010). *Student Development in College, Theory Research and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bath Inc.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity, Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company

GROUP ACTIVITY

Foreclosures: Purveyors for the Heritage (Guardians)

Identity Achievements: Pavers of the Way (Pathmakers)

Moratoriums: Daughters of Crisis (Searchers)

Identity Diffusions: Lost and Sometimes Found (Drifters)

QUESTIONS?

Thank you