

Life Span Report

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1. Introduction

My life span paper examined my existence from my mother's pregnancy and childbirth. Based on the human development process and theory, I described my experiences during my infancy, childhood, and adolescence as a pastor's child. As an adult, I realized that I did not want to pass down to my children the experiences I had with my family and society. However, acknowledging that life does not always go as planned, I constructed my life span, which is constantly growing, changing, and preparing for my second life.

2. Main Idea

(1) Meeting My Existence Through My Mother's Life

My Life Span regarding my existence begins with my mother's words and Postpartum Depression (PPD). During her husband's theological studies, my mother raised two sons and me, which was a difficult time for her. In particular, my mother even considered aborting me when she couldn't take a sip of water in the morning after a night of severe words. By God's grace, my mother was able to drink a sip of water in the morning, and that is why I am writing my life span now.

The fact that my existence was almost determined by a sip of water still lingers in my conscious and unconscious mind. While reflecting on my self-esteem and existence, it seemed resolved, but it was the beginning of complicated emotions in my relationship with my mother. In fact, my mother suffered from severe PPD as a pastor's wife, and raising me, an overweighted child, was physically demanding compared to my two older brothers. Although my father loved his youngest daughter very much, my mother always treated me strictly and found everything from pregnancy to childbirth very difficult, often saying that she cried a lot because of me and that I sang well. It's a very sad story for me, and it took an incredibly long time to resolve this entirely as precious material from God.

While studying psychotherapy, I realized that my emotions about my mother's pregnancy with me

and her struggles in life were transmitted to me as they were during my prenatal development stage. As a result, my anxiety about my own existence may have been formed even more strongly than my experiences in the intimate relationship between my mother and me. Through my own experience, I gained insight that the emotional roots of my clients' sense of intimacy or meaningless existence may be related to their mother's environment and health status during pregnancy and after childbirth when a close bond with the fetus or baby should be formed, or an insecure and meaningless sense of existence may be formed instead.

(2) I encountered my unbalanced inner issues that I developed growing up in a conservative pastoral family.

Sensation refers to the sensory stimulation that a child experiences physically, while perception refers to the structuring and interpretation of these sensory stimulations. Most of the external stimuli that were related to my brain development were provided in a church environment. My father worked as a pastor in a small church in the countryside and he would always take the opportunity to build another church whenever it arose. As a result, the environment around me was mostly a construction site, a place of worship, and the people I met at home were mostly church members. During worship, there were auditory stimulations such as songs, instruments, and sermons, along with tactile stimulation from the piles of sand that were stacked up to build the church. Additionally, various external stimuli such as greetings from church members of different ages were present. It seems that my brain developed through these various external stimulations.

It's possible that I developed my brain differently from others because I grew up with church-centered stimuli, which may have been less ordinary and every day in nature. 'Intermodal perception' refers to the ability to perceive stimuli when multiple sensory inputs are presented simultaneously. On the other hand, the rejection of sensory information by a specific sense is called 'Amodal information'. For example, I was exposed to a variety of senses such as auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory senses intensively in the church environment. As a result, I may have developed social skills like

friendliness more than fear of meeting new people. In addition, 'Intersensory Redundancy,' which is one of the important concepts in cognitive development, refers to the benefits obtained by providing multiple sensory stimuli that provide the same information when a young child acquires language. When parents provide various sensory stimuli, such as sounds, lip movements, and facial expressions simultaneously, the child's understanding of language is enhanced. If multiple stimuli match each other, the brain can process this information more effectively, which had a positive impact on my cognitive development.

When I was young, I enjoyed singing and would memorize and sing songs I had learned without anyone asking me to. Looking at the sequencing of language development, it starts with crying, cooing, and babbling, with even the form of crying having different features depending on the pitch and contours of the cry. As mentioned earlier, I used to cry a lot when I was alone at home because I was too heavy and big for my mom to carry while doing household chores. This crying to find my mom may have improved my vocal tone and quality, but there are times when my subconscious mind shows me a psychological shadow of myself crying alone in my room.

Feelings of anxiety and dissatisfaction towards my mother may have been formed before birth due to discomfort caused by my movements, and after birth, separation anxiety was expressed through crying and experiencing extreme tension. These environmental limitations on my mother and her lack of interest may have formed misattunement, and I wanted to form a close attachment bond with my mother and seek attunement. However, during this time, it seems that my attachment has remained in negative unconscious memories.

I think my attachment development stages can be explained by John Bowlby's Four Phases of Attachment. During Phase 1: Indiscriminate attachment, where the baby sends signals to adults for comfort and care, my parents were often busy with church activities and I spent a lot of time alone. In Phase 2: Discriminating sociability, where the baby develops stranger anxiety and participates in family interactions, my concept of anxiety was not well-formed as I interacted with church members as if they

were family. During Phase 3: Attachments, where the baby actively seeks out parents and displays separation anxiety, I formed an attachment with my parents by waiting for them to come to me while playing with my older brothers during church services. Finally, during Phase 4: Goal-corrected partnerships, where the baby understands that parents have other responsibilities, I may have unconsciously harbored resentment towards my parents for not being by my side.

My attachment development stages still have an impact on my self-esteem and relationships as an adult, as my parents' absence during this period is still present in my subconscious. I'm curious about how self-awareness develops during infancy when symbolic language cannot be used. When a baby is born, they already have the ability to unconsciously perceive stimuli and process it to understand the world. They can detect their parents' voices, sensory stimuli, and differences as well as express their physical discomfort through crying. This unconscious perception is essential for survival and development.

A newborn baby lacks conscious perception, so they need to develop it through interaction with the surrounding environment. As this interaction continues, the baby develops more complex perceptual abilities and acquires the ability to understand themselves and the environment around them. 'Self Continuity' is another aspect of self-awareness, which means recognizing their own consistency and continuity beyond time and space. This involves recognizing the consistency and continuity of their inner self and external behavior, experiences, etc., and it is important to understand their existence and the meaning of life based on this.

I have thought about the pastor's family based on Family Systems Theory. All family members are interconnected, and one person affects the entire family. In other words, the definition of family is "Those persons who are biologically and/or psychologically related, whom historical, emotional, or economic bonds connect, and who perceive themselves as part of a household." However, the pastor's family is different from regular families. Our parents prioritized the needs of the congregation over the needs of their children and spared no time or effort in assisting them. Additionally, since our parents

were raised with conservative thinking, they did not tolerate misbehavior or disobedience and used severe and intimidating discipline during this time. Therefore, conservative teachings about religious participation and Christian life began during this period, and these parenting behaviors influenced me with horizontal and vertical stressors.

I think I also acted while always prioritizing church friends or members over the needs of our family. Even when our family got together, I think we grew by doing our own things while our parents wanted to rest. In other words, the entire family was utilized for church operations, and it seems like we spent our childhood and teenage years without our own family. It was not altruistic for others, but I think I grew up without my parents knowing how to keep our family's time and relationships healthy. It is important to maintain healthy relationships and time among family members, even more than the needs of the church or its members. Creating family gatherings or going on family trips is a good way to do this.

Looking at my parents through the lens of Parenting Styles, first, 'Authoritarian Parenting' means parents who use coercion or active demands to control their children's behavior. 'Authoritative Parenting', on the other hand, provides structure and direction to children within the range of allowing children's self-expression, exploration, and freedom. This style of parenting can lead to the best results for children. Additionally, 'Permissive Parenting' is a style in which parents are accommodating, assertive, and patient with their children's behavior through minimal demands and discipline. Finally, 'Uninvolved Parenting' refers to communication with children that is lacking in communication and empathy. In my childhood, my parents used Authoritarian Parenting and Uninvolved Parenting in raising their children.

(3) I dream of my second life as a time of growth, after facing adulthood unprepared.

My childhood, adolescence, and teenage years followed a similar pattern of being a very obedient child raised by conservative parents in a church environment. Through this process, I didn't learn proper self-expression, self-esteem, emotional expression, social interaction, and integration, and instead

became an adult with a worldview limited to Christianity. In other words, as an adult, I got married at the age of 23, which was what my parents wanted, before acquiring a receptive sense of responsibility for myself, independent decision-making skills, and economic independence. Thus, I got married right after graduating from college and ended up living in the United States as a pastor's wife, raising two children in a church environment without the necessary social skills and experiences that come with interacting with society and organizations.

To grow from a youth to an adult, there are five key characteristics: identity exploration, self-focus, instability, feeling in-between, and opportunity. However, I didn't have the chance to experience these characteristics properly in my life and instead lived my life as a wife and mother to two children, doing my best to live as a woman. My life can be explained through Havighurst's Developmental Task Theory, which includes the tasks of selecting a mate, learning to live with a partner, starting a family, raising children, managing a home, starting an occupation, and assuming civic responsibilities for young married women.

While raising my two children, I wanted to raise them differently than how I was raised. Therefore, I gave them as much freedom as possible, stayed by their side, and always encouraged them with positive words. However, life didn't go as I wanted it to. I wanted to be with my children all the time, but due to long-term foreign life, my health deteriorated, and I got divorced after 14 years of marriage due to my husband's infidelity. I spent a really difficult time that's hard to express in words. So, I studied music therapy and healed my wounds with music. Now, with improved mental health and specialized knowledge, I am in an educational program to help those who have experienced similar pain as me.

After going through a divorce and spending 12 years alone, I am currently dating someone new and working towards building a new family through remarriage. This process, as an adult, is not easy compared to the first marriage. Especially with my inner issues from childhood, uncertainty towards the new person and anger towards my ex-husband, complex emotions make me very difficult. It seems to be related to adult attachment style. Through the conflict and recovery process of this adult stage, I

am still growing, changing and cultivating myself, so I am very proud of myself.

3. Conclusion

While writing my life span paper, I realized that the most important thing in human development is experiencing 'attachment' according to developmental stages and environmental conditions. Understanding the three types of 'attachment' - attachment style with parents during childhood, attachment style with my children, and attachment style with my loved ones - is crucial. Therefore, to complete my meaningful life span, I want to objectively learn about "Adult Attachment Style" for my second life.

Adult attachment style was discovered based on the early research of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth and is generally classified into four types. These four types are as follows: 1. 'Secure Attachment Style': People with a secure attachment style have no problem relying on others and forming intimate relationships with others. They recognize their own and others' emotions and consider it important to fulfill emotional needs between each other. 2. 'Avoidant Attachment Style': People with an avoidant attachment style try to avoid forming intimate relationships with others. They hide their emotions and find it difficult to recognize others' emotions. 3. 'Anxious-Avoidant Attachment Style': People with an anxious-avoidant attachment style want to form intimate relationships with others, but are afraid of rejection at the same time. They find it difficult to express their emotions and have distrust in others' emotions. 4. 'Anxious-Preoccupied Attachment Style': People with an anxious-preoccupied attachment style want to form intimate relationships with others but tend to rely too much on or feel anxious. They express their emotions excessively and have a high sensitivity to others' emotions.

Now, let's prepare for a beautiful old age while maintaining both mental and physical health!

Rereferences

Erford, B. T. (2017). *An Advanced Lifespan Odyssey for Counseling Professionals*. Cengage Learning, Inc.