

Kenu Howard

Unit 6 Essays

Human Growth and Development

April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

1. I find that prioritizing leisure at this point in life is just as essential as submitting assignments. When you don't do those things, you make it harder for yourself in the long run. How I spend my leisure time, though, depends on what obligations I have going on in my life at that time. For example, from January until now, I've been occupied with a six class semester, an internship, and the need to work full time (as well as overtime hours.) As one can imagine, my days are filled with activity. It is also important to note that one of my classes this semester takes place every Saturday via zoom. All things considered, my leisure time in this season has been nothing but going to the gym and resting. I have taken a few weekend trips, bringing my laptop along with me in order to ensure that I am meeting deadlines. But leisure in this busy season has consisted primarily of releasing stress in the gym and resting. As the semester comes to an end, I find myself regaining the excitement to go out and enjoy the warm weather with my loved ones. When I am in between semesters, I like to spend my leisure time traveling to warm parts of the world. I love dressing up and going out to eat. I also enjoy spending time in the city. Going forward, I want to continue alternating priorities. I think understanding when to be social, and when its time to stay to myself and focus is a huge factor in my personal success. Just the same, though, I think that in those moments in which I stay to myself, I can sometimes put unnecessary pressure on myself. It isn't good

to be isolated from the ones I love while also being over critical of myself. That is something I want to stop doing.

2. Growing up, I faithfully attended church with my family. This was due to the fact that they are devout Christians who love Jesus Christ. They valued making sure that us children understood who Jesus is and why we need Him. Although I loved Jesus and loved the church, I still sometimes found it to be boring. In specific, church services that took place on Friday nights were particularly hard to happily attend as a child. This is because on Friday nights, there were not many kids at the service. They were often with their loved ones or friends. Who were there, though, were usually middle aged to older adults. These middle aged adults were usually so happy to be in church, no matter what day of the week it was. I also noticed how much they light up when they speak about the Lord. As a child, I did wonder why they did not want to be having fun at—lets say—the movies. I attributed adults inclination towards religion to the fact that adults as a whole are simply boring. I now understand, though, that religion means so much to middle-aged adults for a few reasons. The first reason why middle aged adults involve themselves in religion is because their spiritual journey has led them there. By middle aged, most adults have had experiences that have shaped their understanding of the world. Some of these experiences were humbling. For many middle aged adults, they understand that if it was not for their Savior (every religion has a different belief about what that means), they would not have been blessed to make it to that age. Another reason for middle aged adults involvement in religion is the fact that they it feeds their desire for connection. Religion offers people the opportunity to congregate with likeminded individuals, while bonding over something so sacred. This sense of community is a safe, happy place for

them to get dressed and be social. By the middle aged stage of development, many are driven by their purpose in life, as opposed to just a good time. Religion helps to guide them and give them the confidence that they need to carry out their purpose. Religious involvement, especially at the middle aged stage of development, is a good motivator. Life at times can be mundane. Life can also be spontaneous and overwhelming. Religion helps people to feel safe and gives them the weekly jump that they need to face their obligations. Religious involvement also encourages healthy social engagement. This is great for mental health. At middle age, many people are watching their families change. Their kids may be getting older and at the point of moving out of the home. There may also be a shift in career expectations and priorities. Religious involvement can help offer people resources and support as they navigate those changes.

3. During the middle-aged stage of development, both men and women start to experience some physiological changes. These changes can impact one's sex life. Men at this stage of development may be experiencing a decrease in their testosterone levels. This decrease in testosterone may result in an overall decline in one's physical strength as well as energy levels. Middle age can mean slowing down for some men. These factors greatly affect male sexuality. They may find that it is more difficult to get or maintain an erection. Men at the middle-aged stage of life may also require more time to recover in between erectile functions. Both men and women may be on prescription medicines at this point in life. These medicines can be for anything ranging from blood pressure to cardiovascular needs. For women at the middle-aged stage of development, they may begin menopause. Women at this stage may also experience a significant amount of hormonal changes. These changes can either lead to an increased urge for sex, or a

decrease in sexual desires. For both men and women, their self confidence and comfortability with their own bodies can affect their desires for sex. Growing older, gaining weight, losing muscle mass, requiring medications, lack of energy are all factors in sexual desire at the middle aged stage of development. Ultimately though, a sex life can still be healthy and fulfilling at middle age if one takes care of themselves, and maintains a healthy relationship with their own bodies. Some stigmas and stereotypes surrounding adults in the middle-aged stage of development are that men lose sexual desire, while women's' sexual desires increase. It is usually said that women's changes in hormones coupled with their assumed confidence increase associated with age makes them more inclined to be sexually active. Men are stigmatized as having had their "fun" in their youth, and as a result, start slowing down sexually, and instead desiring intimacy in other ways like cuddling and watching movies.

4. Intergenerational relationships are the relationships taking place between each generation: grandparents, their adult children, and their grandchildren. When reciprocated, intergenerational relationships have an impact on the wellbeing of those sharing the exchanges. For example, a middle-aged adult may have a ten-year-old child. That child may require someone to babysit them while their parents attend a wedding. The middle aged adults parents—or grandparents—may offer to babysit their ten year old grandchild. They may offer to do this to help the parents, and also bond with their beloved grandchild at the same time. This example reflects how the exchanges between the three generations mutually benefits them all in some way. Time spent with their grandparents may lead to the ten-year-old learning more about their family history. That time spent bonding can lead to them feeling secure and loved. This is a healthy factor in

their development. The grandparents can benefit by having the ten-year-old around for the weekend because he can help them with their understanding of modern technology and current events. Those from previous generations can easily lose touch with our ever-changing world. Just the same, those from the younger generations can lose touch with the history that formed the current world. Blending these generations together can form a strong, well rounded sense of understanding of both the world, and ones own history.

Another example of an intergenerational relationship is a first time mother in America receiving guidance from her parents from Haiti. The first time mother may get support from both her mother as well her grandmother. The two generations of women may pass down to her ancient cultural practices that will benefit both the first-time mother and her new baby. Because these practices may date back to a time before technology came into existence, they may be exclusive in that modern medicine does not inform the modern world about them. These generational traditions can be a blessing for the first time mom. Just the same, though, the two older generations of women may benefit from supporting the first-time mom in that they may learn about modern takes on medicine and childcare. These modern practices could be something that they can consider in their day-to-day lives which can potentially be a blessing to them. The baby will greatly benefit from being connected to his mother and her wisdom, as well as the wisdom and love from the three generations before him. Intergenerational relationships strengthen families and individuals.

5. Adult children making the choice to move back home with their parents is something that happens often. Some may have to go back home to their parents for a brief period of time to establish themselves and regain independence. Others may make this move a

permanent one. Both of those outcomes depend on the circumstances that led to that decision in the first place. There are several reasons that an adult may move back home with their parents. Some reasons are; financial troubles, divorce or separation, mental health issues, physical health issues, or the unexpected loss of a loved one or roommate. Another reason that adult children may have to move back home with their parents can be their parents need for support for them. Their parents may be experiencing changes that come with aging such as memory loss, a decline in health, a sudden accident or even financial trouble. When making this decision, both the parents and adult children need to discuss things like boundaries. For example, despite their child being an adult, the parents may not feel comfortable with them coming in and out of their home at a certain time of the night. Adult parents may also be uncomfortable with things like drinking and drug use, or even sexual activities taking place in their homes. The two have to establish if these boundaries can be respected (on both ends). Another thing that parents and their adult children should discuss prior to living together again is the time frame as well as financial expectations. For example, the parents may only feel comfortable with their adult child living with them for three months, while the adult child may have the expectations of staying with them for three years. In terms of finances, they have to establish if there is an expectation to pay rent. This can be paid in money or maybe help around the house. The parents may allow their adult child to stay without paying rent, as long as they do things like help out with upkeep and maintenance in the home. If these expectations are not discussed, there could be unnecessary confrontation between the two parties. For example, adult children may assume that their parents do not need their money because their parents fully understand their financial burden. Because of this, the

adult child does not offer to help out with bills or groceries because they simply cannot afford too. Just the same, though, they could be actively seeking a well-paying job with the intent to bless their parents as soon as they get their financial situation rectified. The parents, unaware of their child's thought process, may assume that the child does not pay them because they are ungrateful. This could lead to the parents being angry and even hurt about something that they simply misinterpreted. This could have been avoided if the two parties communicated their expectations. If communication between parents and their adult children is effective, the two can have an arrangement that is mutually exclusive.

6. During middle adulthood, love and marriage may begin to change. Things like wild spontaneous sex and date nights may decrease. This is because at the middle phase of adulthood, couples usually have responsibilities that take precedence over passion. By middle adulthood, couple usually have children. Children require a lot of attention and energy. Expending the energy to meet the needs of their children during the day may take away their energy to be passionate together at night. Middle adulthood may come with burdens as well. Some of these burdens may be financial, while others may be medical. Just the same though, this shift in focus does not have to mean that the partnership cannot still be successful. Couples at this phase have usually matured together. Because of this, they may have adapted to working together as a team instead of a couple. During this phase there may be a clear understanding as to what each partner expects from each other based off of their established strengths and weaknesses. This can lead to there being a flow that allows schedules, chores at home and responsibilities to be balanced. Despite the slowing down of sex, couples at this phase develop a deeper understanding of each

other. They may form intimate connections in things like laughing and accomplishing their goals together. They may also bond over their children (if they have any). During this phase, couples may find that their bond is deeper due to the presence of commitment. Having spent years overcoming trials and tribulations, as well as overcoming milestones together can bring the two into a deeper, solid connection.

7. The empty nest syndrome can be defined as the emotional pain that parents or caregivers may experience once their children have grown up and moved out of the home. Things like college, relationships, careers or simply the desire to be independent and experience the world are all factors that may lead children out of the home. Though parents may have spent years preparing themselves and their children for the day that they “leave the nest”, it does not take away from heavy this new reality is. Some of the things that a caregiver experiencing empty nest syndrome may experience include (but are not limited to); loneliness, a sense of mourning, anxiety, depression, fear, and the sense that they no longer have a purpose to serve. For some parents and caregivers, a huge sense of their self-worth is found in their ability to be a parent and provide for their children. They may be happy to see their children thriving but pained to no longer have direct access to that process. As it pertains to marriage, empty nest syndrome directly affects it. Many couples may have neglected the intimate element of their relationship in an effort to effectively raise their children. Being able to attend parent teacher conferences, sports games, recitals, help with homework all the while juggling working may have consumed the parents’ focus. Once the children leave, the parents are left with only themselves and the marriage to focus on. This can be challenging. While caring for the children, many couples may have lost sight of how much their partner has changed from the time in

which they first got together until the present moment. They may not be happy with how much their partner has changed, and decide that they do not want to experience this new version of the person they chose to marry. This could lead to divorce. Just the same, though, the time spent solely focusing on the marriage as opposed to the needs of the kids may strengthen their marriage. The couple could take that time to prioritize getting reacquainted through date nights, communicating, traveling together and focusing on new hobbies.

8. Middle aged adulthood can be defined as the stage in development in which adults are ages 40-60+. This phase of life comes with significant physical and physiological changes. Some of the physical changes that middle aged adults may begin experiencing are gray hair, hair loss, the presence of wrinkles, weight gain or weight loss, and a decrease in muscle mass. During this phase, the skin may appear dry. Age spots may also occur. During this stage in development, adults begin to experience a significant decrease in metabolism, leading to weight gain. If on daily, regulatory medications, middle aged adults may be living with some of the side effects of the medications. Middle aged adults may begin to slow down, and reflexes may not be as quick as they once were. Just the same, though, this is a time of life often marked by wisdom and maturity. Having had lived and learned some hard lessons, middle aged adults may be calmer. They may not experience that same rush of anxiety nor the sense of urgency that comes with being 20-late thirties. Those in the middle phase of adulthood may also experience a shift in how they choose to spend their leisure time. Instead of attending lively events like parties, club and festivals, they may instead prefer the quiet of their garden, or a weekend spent with their grandchildren. Sex life and sexual desires can either decrease or increase

depending on the person. That would also depend on their health status. Those in middle age may also feel less insecure. They often have established a sense of self awareness and acceptance at this phase of life. To optimize this time of development, though, it is ideal for those in middle age to take care of themselves. Its best to eat foods that nourish the body. It is also beneficial to take vitamins that include calcium (which is good for the muscles) and exercise regularly to avoid things like cardiovascular distress.