

Family Life Cycle- Achante Russell (Andrews)

Single unattached young adult family: I left home for college at the age of 18 where I attended Long Island University and stayed on campus. Before leaving home, I lived with my parents and my two siblings (older brother and younger sister). By this time, my parents had rekindled their marriage and they had finally moved out of my grandmother's house. Going to college and being away from my family was hard. I felt lonely and literally cried for the first few days in school.

Marriage/ The New Couple: I met my now ex-husband in 2013 in the Macy's women shoe department. By this time, I was an Area Director at Five Towns College. I married who I believed was the love of my life in 2016. We started living together in New Jersey and he brought to the table two daughters from a previous marriage.

Procreation Stage: We had our first and only child in December 2017.

I suffered from post-partum depression which had my handicap for several. This is the time I first sought the help of a professional.

Developing Stage of Family

School Age Family: My child has been going to school since he was 3 months because I knew the importance of a 2-parent income which in our case was necessary. My child has been to 3K in NY, Pre-K in NY, and he is currently in Kindergarten in NY. Next school it would be the first year he is attending school in NJ.

During this School age time, I am enrolled in several different schools myself seeking the right master's program to fit what I aspired to be which I didn't know at the time.

During this time, I was married however the relationship started taking a turn for the worst. I was being cheated on and lied to. I went into a dark space all while trying to complete my Master's, work two full time jobs, and take care of a school age child.

My husband and I divorced, and he was asked to move out of the house.

Teenage Family: I am not yet in this stage as my child is 5 years old.

Empty Nest: I am not yet in the empty nest stage as my child is only 5 years old. However, I somewhat equate this stage to my divorce. My home used to be full now it's me and my baby.

What stage was the most challenging?

The most challenging stage was School Age Family which I am currently in. I had wins in this stage but that was also the stage of great sickness and betrayal not to mention the COVID pandemic.

What are some of the adjustments?

I learned how to live on my own, pay my own bills, and be a sole bread winner in this economy which is hard. I am still grieving the idea of family and I believe that will always be an adjustment that I have to make.

Issues faced?

I faced depression, loneliness, hurt, shame, and guilt.

How did you cope with the changes?

I am still learning how to cope but I am leaning on God more and keeping myself distracted with work and school. Not to mention I engage in therapy weekly which as seemed to be working.