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Lake: Mutual Caring

Frank Lake could not stress enough about the dangerous harms of maternal distress for the developing embryo and fetus along with the importance of maternal tranquility. He clarifies the erroneous assumptions that the fetus is free from significant occurrences or as Lake describes a presumed blissful state. The purpose of the author's third book was to recapitulate the investigations on healthy and pathological psychodynamics in the first trimester and the interplay between the needs of the fetus and the mother's emotional state. Frank Lake dedicated thirty years to educating that the foundation of serious personality disorders rests in infancy following childhood. The fetus desperately needs its mother to acknowledge and welcome the pregnancy without rejection. Because the fetus is aware of its consciousness, it receives and feels the emotional reactions from its mother through the placenta and umbilical cord. The transmission of distress by the mother is felt by the fetus and causes emotional pain in the womb.

Abraham Maslow, the father of humanistic psychology, believed for a child to have a full establishment of abilities and potential, it was imperative for the child be loved, wanted, accepted along with the fulfillment needs meet by the parents during the first two years of life. If children feel continuously safe and assured in early years of life, they will continue to carry the parental love given in childhood into their adult lives. The author stated, "Without adequate parental love, security, and esteem in childhood, it will be difficult for the adult to attain self-actualization." (Shultz 345).

Lake addresses in his book that prenatal afflictions infiltrate into adulthood. In my personal experience, I have to agree with Lake's theory.

My first pregnancy with my daughter was not the ideal pregnancy. I was twenty-four years old. I was not emotionally, physically, mentally, or financially ready to welcome a baby. I lived in a one-bedroom basement apartment in the Bronx. My spouse was two years younger than I and we were recently married for the wrong reasons. When I discovered I was pregnant, I panicked because I could not imagine my daughter being raised in a toxic environment. I became depressed with the excessive weight gain, twenty-four-hour morning sickness and the constant disputes with my newly spouse, because of his family. In addition, there were episodes of domestic violence including an incident of being slammed against the wall at twenty weeks gestation. I worked hard during my pregnancy to make sufficient income and fought back against domestic violence. The depression had escalated as I wanted to terminate my pregnancy and even myself. At that point in my life, I did not wish to live. My womb was probably the most painful, oppressed, and downhearted environment for my poor daughter. She barely moved inside my womb. She was born breeched with footling presentation. She sustained a broken collar as she was found stuck in one my ribs. My daughter felt the hard-core emotions of being unloved because she felt my feelings of hurt, rejection, and humiliation, that I received from my spouse. Between the age of fourteen and fifteen years old, my daughter expressed her anguished state of mind. She began cutting herself, vaping, and drinking alcoholic beverages. She was seeking the “father daughter relationship” but did not obtain one. Although I was the mother and became the father role for my daughter, it was not enough for her. After seven years, her father apologized and made humble and positive efforts to amend his errors. My daughter suffers from extreme anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and depression. My daughter is under the care of a Mental Health Counselor to cope with mental illnesses.

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Frank Lake explains the four levels of fetal responses. Level one is the ideal response from the fetus. This response is warm, loving, and tender. Level two is the coping response. In this scenario, there is a neglect to satisfy the fetus's needs for acceptance and caring attention. The fetus flinches into a flood of maternal distress and loses hope of the ideal response. The fetus can feel anger, fear and even anxiety as it tries to survive with the small supply that is provided and manages with the affliction. The author stated, "Through repressed at the time, these re-emerge with the sharpest clarity subsequently, later in womb life, during the stress of birth, in babyhood, infancy and in adult life. This need to develop a coping response, we are certain from all kinds of focusing evidence, begins well within the first trimester." (Lake 48). Level three is the total opposition response from the fetus. The fetus is unsatisfied with the negative emotions that transmit from its mother. Lake describes this as the negative umbilical affect. The fetus represses pain and has the ability to split itself as it has lost hope, trust, and is overwhelmed with severe affliction. Level four is called the Transmarginal stress. The level response from the fetus is the most crucial as it longs for death and not life. The pain is beyond bearable and will seek to self-destruct. Fighting to live has become excruciating that the only solution left is to terminate existence. The author stated, "If there has been a transmarginal reversal into the death wish in the first trimester, when repression fails and it joins the actual distress of the pre-birth weeks, this greatly increases the likelihood that this too will become transmarginal, with the onset of a wish to die rather than to live." (Lake 54). All levels of response are different types of stress and emotions that the fetus receives from the mother.

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Frank Lake's experimental investigations led to supplying counseling and therapy to individuals who were psychologically wounded in their mother's womb. The evidence is displayed as a group of individuals or subjects, are taken back to relive their moments in their mother's womb called the Fantasy Journey. Twelve hundred people are yielded to the same experiment and similar controlled conditions of a residential workshop. It was asserted by the subjects that the journey unlocked the memory doors and were able to relive how it was to be conceived, while others relived what it felt like to float free in the womb. Frank Lake includes the writings of embryologist, Richard Dryden from his 1978 published book called Before Birth. Dryden declared, "It is possible that the zygote contains information in addition to that stored in the nucleus. There is indeed evidence that the cytoplasm of the fertilized egg contains information that is essential to at least the early stages of development…. There are several sites where cytoplasmic information may be stored. The abundant free ribosomes may carry development information. The mechanism of protein synthesis lends itself to analysis by information theory, with…the ribosomes helping to convert the coded message into protein molecule." (Lake 28). As subjects responded, one subject gave the details of its mother being cold in intimacy that as soon as the subject relived the experience of returning to the womb, the womb was described as an unwelcoming, cold place. The author stated, "Says one, my mother kept sex on ice. She was totally frigid. It has been a mystery that she got round to letting my father impregnant her with me. All her genital and reproductive functions were totally without warmth. She certainly kept a cold womb, and I knew it as soon as I got there." (Lake 57).

Another subject expressed that its mother was always anger as she was in constant battle with her environment. The subject described the womb as a burning fiery furnace. Another subject reveals the bitter state of its mother. The mother was suffering constant attacks that stemmed from her the sister in laws' jealousy acts. The subject continues to report the emotions of its mother, a despairing and hopeless victim that blazed with resentment. The subjects' hope was to land in a joyful and peaceful womb. The womb was described by the subject as a fetus who was immersed in its mother's bitter miseries. Lake explains that the placenta is not a filter, and neither is the womb from immunity of the women's circulating emotions.

Lake provides us a beautiful example of when Mary was pregnant with our beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Although the Bible does not describe her emotions, but Mary encountered different complicated scenarios. For starters, Joseph was going to break off the engagement privately as he learned that she was pregnant, and the baby was not his. Mary was in danger of being stoned to death as demanded by the law for a sin. Thank God for His faithfulness! God revealed to Joseph in a dream to take Mary as his wife. Mary decided to visit Elizabeth, her relative, who was six months pregnant and remained with her relative for three months. The trip was most probably to get away from the experience she had endured. Perhaps it was the necessity of a peaceful and tranquil environment that Mary so desperately needed as well as for her baby.

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Frank Lake's book on Mutual caring is to open the eyes of viewers to understand the significance of how a fetus can feel stress, feel pain, feel emotions that can damage psychologically and unfortunately persist in childhood and in adulthood. Mothers will learn the importance of how her baby needs peace and love, especially in the first trimester. For the mothers who have made the mistake of having stressed the fetus or passed on her negative emotions in past pregnancies, will learn not to make the same mistakes. The future generation of new fetuses should not suffer psychologically or develop mental disorders, but should be welcomed, acknowledged, secured, and most importantly loved.

Reference

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