Case Studies

Analyzed By:

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**Case Study 7**

In the case study 7, In Search of my Voice, Devneesh, describes the transitions of his adolescent years to his young adult years as anything but simple. Devneesh, born in Bombay, moves to Malaysia to finish his adolescent years in school, goes back to Bombay as forced by his father’s career, and soon transitions into the United States for college. In these crucial moments of development, Devneesh has difficulty with identifying himself to cultures, and simply himself as an individual. He receives a lot of pressure from his father and peers to be a certain person, which has a strong influence on his thinking. As Devneesh grows older, he realizes the only person he needs to be, is himself, and to live a full and accomplishing life (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 111). In connection to that, according to Erikson, Davneesh is going through the Identity vs. Role Confusion stage (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 9). In this stage, he is attempting to find his identity through social interaction as well as moral issues as he explained when his classmates cornered him and physically hurt him because of his perseverance for a better school (Garrod, et. al., 2008, pp.109-111).

The strongest influence in this case study would have to be Devneesh’s father. Growing up, Devneesh describes his life based on academics and remarkable grades. He felt a sense of acceptance as a person by the reaction of his father as the day came to check the report card. When I read that part of his life, Eric Erikson’s developmental theory came to mind. According to Erikson, Devneesh is in the Industry Versus Inferiority stage of his life. In this age range, 6-12 years old, children develop the sense of self-worth, and acceptance by their knowledge and accomplishments. (Garrod et. al., 2008, pp. 8-9). The pressure from his father was difficult on Davneesh because in Davneesh’s point of view, his father only wanted him to be the best one of the class. As an incentive of the student’s progress, the student in Davneesh’s class receives either gold stars as the top student, or a silver star as the second best in the class. Davneesh dreaded the day he received the silver star (Garrod et. al., 2008, p. 104). All of his childhood and adolescent years, Davneesh searched for acceptance from his father. It always seemed to be a race to be the best. Therefore, when Davneesh moved to the United States, it was hard for him to adjust to different relationships because he did not know how to find acceptance in other means. Ability to form friendships or bonds is learned early through family ties. Children learn as they are born and they adapt to the ways they are taught by their family. (Rice & Dolgin, 2008, p. 270)

Although Davneesh and his father get into arguments at times, Davneesh is only speaking out because of the sense of trying to find his identity. Davneesh and his father argued about where to eat once they had to transition from Malaysia, back to Bombay. Stress amongst family will cause them to argue and bicker over small situations. Valued relationships and bonds such as the one Davneesh and his father has, shows little to no weakness in bond. They may argue, but the hostility will subside, and is not considered to last long term (Garrod, et.al., 2008, p.143).

As Devneesh got older and moved around from Bombay to Malaysia, then settling in the United States, he had the chance to experience many different cultures ranging from, Chinese, Pakistan, Vietnamese, American, and Jewish cultures. As Devneesh tries to blend in with his peers, often by analyzing what they say and do, he had to dig deeper into his roots to try to find himself. Even at one point, he questioned if he was appreciating the Indian culture (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 108). Many adolescents go through this stage in finding themselves. Erikson’s theory on children ages 12-18, will question their roles and identity in society. (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p.9). This case study was about Davneesh’s challenge in growing up, finding acceptance, finding his own identity, and eventually being truly content by fulfilling his life as being himself. Davneesh coped and found his way by taking risk and growing up.

**Case Study 8**

The case study, “The Girl in me,” tells about a girl’s journey in trying to find herself. Emily is a twin and is often compared against her sister, Tina, who is portrayed as a tomboy. In much of the beginning of the case, Emily is consistently trying to do things such as shave her legs, put on nail polish, or wear dresses just to set herself apart from her sister and be feminine. Emily has always liked boys as an adolescent, but as she grew older, she realized she had feelings and emotions for her female friends or peers. She often wanted to fight the feelings but soon enough she began to accept herself for being a lesbian, and was content when she accepted her sexual preferences.

In reading this case, Emily’s developmental stage correlated with Pritchett’s observation in an adolescent’s individual development. Emily was often worried about what her peers perceived her as since her sister was always being labeled as a “dyke” or “lesbian.” She feared that she would also be harassed if she didn’t try to be feminine, although Emily was never settled with being herself. Often times, adolescents are aware of how other see them. They try to be a part of society and what is considered the norm and make their choices based on how they want others to see them. Adolescent’s see that there are different lifestyles and they choose the one that is often accepted by their peers (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 8). It is unfortunate that some children will search for their identity by only what is accepted by the norm. As an adolescent, Emily tended to keep to herself in fear that people would eventually think different of her, so she was labeled as “the mute girl”, but oddly she was fine with that because the word “girl” was in it. (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 235)

Emily had to go through many different challenges as she grew up trying to “be straight.” She always had doubts and questions about her sexuality but she would ignore them because she did not know how to accept it. Emily eventually told her parents she was gay, but she did not have a difficult time doing so. Her family always told her to be who she wanted to be and do whatever made her happy (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 117). Children learn from their parent’s. They mimic what they do and believe what they are taught. Children develop and learn at a young age, and as Emily were taught when she was young; to do whatever made her happy, she felt comfort in telling her parent’s about her sexual orientation. It is crucial to have family support (Garrod, et. al. 2008, p. 230).

Another factor that played a big role in Emily’s development was her peer relationships. Emily introduces a few female peers she comes across in her adolescent years as friends; some of which she felt more strongly than the other. In Part II, Relationship, there is a list of major theme stages in peer relationships. In the fifth stage, it is described that changes in peer relationships will happen during development especially in puberty, cognition, and identity. (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 145) As one grows, so will their way of thinking. An adolescent will be interested in one thing, but eventually have a change of heart because they are learning to grow, and they are able to see things in a different perspective.

Emily eventually is open about her sexual orientation, but not until she is older. She is proud and is finally content in her own skin; as a gay individual. Erik Erikson states that in order to be successful in finding oneself, they need to explore and see different directions in life. Some ways of exploring directions is through friendships, intimate relationships, and having values. (Garrold, et. al., 2008, p. 10). Although it was harder for Emily as an adolescent to realize that she may in fact be a lesbian, as she explored her world of different relationships with other males as well as females, she realized what it took for her to be happy as a person. She found her identity after she said to herself, “I might be gay” (Garrold, et. al., 2008, p. 124). Since that day she has been more comfortable with herself.

**Case Study 16**

In case study, “Bad,” is an essay about a girl named Gretchen and her journey as an adolescent coping with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and the pain and suffering she had to endure because no one knew how to understand her. As normal as Gretchen’s parents wanted her life to be, it was anything but that. Gretchen grew up always comparing herself to her sister, Meredith, who did not have any symptoms of ADHD. Being that she was always compared to her sister, she was never doing anything “right.” Gretchen describes much of her childhood as feeling like a bad child because although she knew that she had ADHD, she could not help to “control” it. Not only did her disorder affect her, but the way others perceived her behaviors did as well. Her mother was the least understanding because she had issues of her own. Her mother’s erratic behavior enforced fear in Gretchen. Eventually, as Gretchen grew older, she had to go through rehab, and accepted the fact that she had a disorder and broke free of the fear that was holding her back from being able to live her life (Garrod, et. al., 2008, pp. 238-245).

As much as this case study focused on Gretchen’s ADHD, I felt as if a lot of the emotions that were built up had a lot to do with her mother’s behavior and how she dealt with it. Gretchen explains that her parents were going through a divorce. Her mother did not know how to accept it and most often, she would take it out on Gretchen. (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 244) In many mental health studies, it shows that divorce can lead to negative events, and emotions (Rice & Dolgin, 2008, p. 247). It is hard for anyone to truly understand or see another’s point of view when there are so many other issues occurring at the time. It is difficult to see that there are connecting factors when the person themselves are included in the conflicts. When parents and adolescents approach an issue during a time of conflict (the divorce), both the adolescent and parent will see the issues differently because there is tension, and perspectives are not the same (Rice & Dolgin, 2008, p. 242). As I read Gretchen’s story, I felt as if her childhood years were just like this because she was misunderstood. Her mother was dealing with her own marital issues, so therefore, it was hard to understand why Gretchen was the way that she was (Garrold, et. al., 2008, p. 240)

Gretchen’s delayed diagnosis of her ADHD held her back from being able to understand what it was exactly that was keeping her unorganized and the target of her mother’s rage. Even after an adolescent is diagnosed with ADHD, there are some cases where parents choose not to medicate their children due to the chances of them growing up to use illegal drugs. Untreated cases of ADHD can lead to other severities. (Garrold, et. al., 2008, p. 235) In Gretchen’s case, however, it was the opposite. Gretchen grew to get involved in running away and using illegal drugs as a source of coping with ADHD (Garrold, et. al., 2008, pg. 244). Parents or caregivers should not assume that just because one takes drugs as a treatment that it will have a long term effect on them and will turn into illegal drugs. Gretchen in some instances wishes she had been given a medical treatment.

Gretchen relationship with her father is not talked about much throughout the story until the end where they had an intervention with her drug and alcohol abuse. Her father forced her to take a drug test and was soon sent off to rehab (Garrold, et. al., 2008, pg. 244). It brings a sense of relief as I read this because it showed that Gretchen’s life had a positive turning point. Although it is unfortunate that people grow apart and have divorces, having a parent be the support that an adolescent needs can be a positive factor in resiliency in an individual’s life (Garrold, et. al., 2008, pg. 144). Gretchen’s father’s involvement in her turning point helped her be more positive because he suggested her to more than just rehab. She later attended an Outward Bound program that helped her realize having ADHD was not as negative as she once knew it to be. Gretchen embraced her ADHD because she learned that it was not a learning disability, and that it was a learning difference (Garrold, et. al., 2008, pg. 245). Having support and positive reinforcement shows that the parent is caring and truly wants a bond with their child. In this case of Gretchen and her father, it showed that her father was willing to be there for her when she was at her lowest point (Rice & Dolgin, 2008, pg. 224)

**Case Study 18**

The case study, “Forever an Awkward Adolescent,” is about a young boy named David who had severe scoliosis that also affected his lung functions. Before I read the case study, the title of it had me anticipating a sad and depressing story, yet, that is the exact opposite of what the emotions were captured from this reading. The emotions I felt as I read this case was positive because David was open minded and emotionally strong. Although David is legally disabled, even as a child, he did not let the term “disabled” rule his life. As a matter of fact, David was disappointed in some ways when people especially his family members expected very little of him due to his disabilities when he can exceed their standards (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p 264). There is no doubt that David’s upbringing as a child with a disability, can affect him negatively because he never felt as if he was a part of a group. He was always the one who stayed out of social gatherings due to his disability (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 263).

A big factor in David’s upbringing was the relationships he had with his family. Although David does not have many clear memories of his parents, he does however, remember them to have a consistent, and predictable. Although his parent’s fought a lot, they always tried to keep it together (Garrod, et. al., 2008, p. 263). David’s father always showed interest in helping David put his clothes on, how to use utensils and other daily task that an individual should learn. His mother on the other had little patience in this and would sometimes scold David’s father for catering him too much. David knew his mother only meant good because she wanted him to learn on his own (Garrod, et. al., 2008, pg. 266). When parents show interest in their child’s lives, it helps build self-esteem as they grow up to become more confident in what they do. Close relationships with child and parent helps development which leads to more positive outcomes such as academics, peer relationship’s, and emotional support. (Rice, & Dolgin, 2008, pg. 224). David’s self-esteem was high throughout his adolescent because the relationships he had with his family helped him cope with his disability and did not see himself as a victim. He used his self-esteem and earned good grades which helped him become recognized at school as being a good student (Garrod, et. al. 2008, p. 264). From this reading, it seemed as though David’s parents were authoritative to permissive parents. Authoritative parents were never too harsh on their children. They respected their children’s wishes but still had control at home (Rice & Dolgin, 2008, pg. 231). David reflects on how his parent’s never expected too much from him academically although they wanted him to do well in school. David also had a good balance as to how his mom and dad controlled the house; his mom who was stricter, and his dad who was more lenient (Garrod, et. al., 2008, pg. 265).

In the follow up section of the case, David writes about the events that have changed in his life in the past thirteen years. Although David is now in his thirty’s, he is still quite emotionally dependent on his parents. David’s mom expected autonomy from David, although his dad did not. That is a good balance because it taught David how to be independent, while still keeping a healthy attachment with his parent’s as well (Garrod, et.al., 2008, pg. 272). In learning an extent of autonomy as a child, it can help smooth the transition of childhood to adulthood. Being dependent on parents will not allow a child to explore the options of peer relationships while being independent can give an individual courage to explore (Rice & Dolgin, 2008, pg. 228).

David writes that the most significant life change was joining a non-profit organization, which worked with other people who had disabilities. In his reflection, he writes about how he was never sure on where he stood in the eyes of other people because of his disability (Garrod, et.al., 2008, pg. 275). Therefore, I can only assume that he labeled this case study, “Forever an Awkward Adolescent,” because he has never really known how people perceived him. Were people truthful in their praises, or were they doing it because he was disabled? It was difficult for David to find validation and true acceptance from adolescent to even adulthood due to the fact that he was disabled.