

Epilogue:

Late Adolescence  
into Adulthood

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# **Epilogue: Late Adolescence into Adulthood**

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## Epilogue: Late Adolescence into Adulthood

The psychotherapy of late latency-early adolescence requires a component of alertness on the part of the therapist to the need of the patient to prepare in advance for the tasks and troubles of the transition period between late adolescence and adulthood. When reflective self-awareness is turned toward the effect of the resolution of early adolescent problems on the future, late adolescence and early adulthood are the periods of the future involved. The tasks and troubles of the latter period involve adult sexuality, resolution of identity, the choice of a career, marriage, and parenthood.

This chapter is devoted to a description of such tasks and troubles from the point of view of a younger person gazing ageward. It is meant to round out the developmental presentation of this book and to give background within the context of the book for the therapist who needs to know what is on the patient's mind, though not necessarily in focus and perhaps rejected as unimportant by the unwary child.

### Developmental Tasks of Late Adolescence and Adulthood

#### Internal

Among these are acceptance and resolution of adult sexual drives and goals in response to maturational progress and social demands. This includes:

Intercourse

Pregnancy

Choice of a mate

Dating

There is a shift from drive-dominated, omnipotent behavior without well-articulated goals to

reality-oriented, goal-directed behavior.

### **External**

There is a need for delay of sexual gratification and marriage in response to social and economic demands. This is expressed in:

Economic dependence on parents of an individual capable of self-support and parenthood

Education for life work

### **Timing of Tasks**

By the age of 18, there are available on a maturational level the capacity for realistic evaluation of others; reality-bound object relations; the capacity for object-bound sexual relations; sufficient judgement for independent functioning, and physical size and strength for self-support and marriage. Psychological factors can have slowed the development of any of these elements. For instance, neurotic inhibition can delay the onset of sexual activity. Experiential factors may have deprived the adolescent of realities against which to hone skills. For instance, military service or a college with an unbalanced ratio of boys to girls may delay dating or integration into the community. Social factors can cause a delay in implementing the possibilities made available by appropriate development at this time. For instance, the individual who is ready for marriage may have a career ambition that requires that marriage be delayed in order to complete necessary education.

By the time this age is reached, we must consider, in addition to maturation and development, delayed implementation of developmental potentials. As throughout adolescence, the exact age of occurrence of events in the unfolding of psychic life from late adolescence to adulthood is difficult to set. For example, parenthood may happen at 14 or at 40. There are usually certain limits upon the earliest possible date, and there are usual ages for certain occurrences. These criteria will be used for setting the ages at which the events to be described occur. In this way we shall draw an approximate description of the timing of a typical picture of psychic life from late adolescence to early adulthood.

The emotional tasks of the final stages of adolescence consist of the resolution of financial and emotional dependence on the parents. Concomitant with escape from dependence there is a minimizing of passivity problems. A lessened influence of rebellion against passivity and the introjective human response to separation enhances the reassertion of parental imagoes and increases mainstream socialization, producing acceptable and mature social behavior.

### Separation Problems

Successful separation increases identification while completing removal. By the time a child is 18, a number of separations have occurred. He may have gone to camp or even to a preparatory school. Whatever the situation, parental supervision and dependence on adults are fostered and continued by individuals who function in loco parentis. At 18 the first true break with parental domination and direct influence occurs. It is at this age that custom dictates the possibility of truly independent function and decision-making. Here the break with home can be made in circumstances that are socially dictated and are considered appropriate. The usual situations that afford the new freedom are going to college, moving to one's own apartment, and joining a military service. In those who stay at home, weekends, summer vacations, and trips provide the situations in which independent function can manifest itself. There is no specific change in the general structure of the ego when this occurs. There is little concomitant resolution of the action- and life situation-informing core fantasies. These, as always, remain the same; they transmit a potential for characterological patterns of behavior and the roots of neurosis or emotional sensitivities. However, within this context of sameness there is often a general ego strengthening (during the age period 18 to 20) in the ability to gather life elements into a context which includes future needs.

The approach of high school graduation, with the demand for self-reliance that is implied, seems the social concomitant correlated with this cognitive move at 18. When it occurs at 20, usually between the sophomore and junior years of college, the social concomitants are pairing off with a sexual partner ("living together") and focusing on an area of specialization that will support one's career choice. A certain amount of organization of schedule, neatness, and taking into account the needs of another come into play with living together. It is not unusual to see grades improve at this stage in school, and formerly casual students become interested in medical school or the like.

The move away from the parents is accompanied by a developmental shift in the personality structures related to the superego. Three types of responses are seen on the surface. The unprepared person may be overwhelmed by the new freedom, and seek withdrawal from all new challenges. He becomes less independent and less involved with more mature activities than he was at home. Others maintain their standards and rate of progress, much in the way that they had functioned in the parental home. Still others "let go," and act on core fantasies which would have been manifested in promiscuity, or a drop in work skills, or in political activities foreign to the family attitudes, had they not been stifled by the direct influence of the omnipresent parents. In essence, for these youngsters, parents provide an external superego. Control and ego ideal in these children were still external when they were at home. Parents when present set the precept and example that guided the child's life. Once the child is free, the ego function that has to do with the implementation of superego demands is no longer constrained to respond to the strong control of the parents, and derivatives of the core fantasy which might be odious to the parent begins to appear. Internal and external prohibitions dissolve.

An 18-year-old girl from a strict and controlling family becomes promiscuous while on a trip to Europe.

Some late adolescents respond to separation by repeating the infantile response of seeking closeness. The infant who was hit by the mother turned to the mother. A 12-year-old who is growing up nicely can be slowed in her growing away from her mother if her mother begins to fight with her. Sometimes promiscuity is an attempt on the part of the child to replace the lost closeness with the mother by substituting physical closeness with peers. For some, the reaction to separation upon going to college precipitates disorganizations at this age that are manifested in depressions and anxiety. In the psychotherapy of late latency-early adolescence, those youngsters who have been infantilized and have shown a tendency to adjust through intensifying their relationships with their parents should have the topic of separation introduced so as to avoid decompensations upon separation from the family in late adolescence. Especially pertinent are a need for closeness, a need to have someone support one even when one is wrong, the use of parents as an object to relate to when others reject or withdraw, and unresolved resentment of parental failings (Often there is resentment of parents' inability to provide material things that others in the neighborhood had. Expressing such resentments is forbidden; they live on, if unexpressed, as generalized and disorganizing anger.).

A boy of 18 went away to school in another state. He did well until he was criticized by a teacher. Hurt, the



boy would have turned to his mother for comfort as he had done in the past. Separated from her, he was frustrated in his turning to her and deteriorated in his appearance, neatness, and school capacities. The parents resolved the problem by bringing him to a college that was close enough to home so that he could continue to live with his mother. He promptly recovered his former skills.

Living away from the parents is an important step in the growth of a late adolescent. It permits the development and elaboration of personal patterns and tastes.

### Career Choice

It is during the period from late adolescence to early adulthood that the ultimate choice of a career must be made. Whatever the decision is, it must be implemented in deed.

In childhood years, choice of a career need not have had much to do with reality. At first, the child, admiring the father, wants to follow the parent's chosen field. As the child's world widens in prelatency, he seeks jobs that are highly visible and of which children are in awe. The fantasy and excitement associated with such activities as fireman, policeman, or airplane pilot take center stage. Girls wish to become wives and mothers during prelatency.

With the coming of latency, the child's vistas expand to include people whose professions bring them into contact with children. Doctor, nurse, teacher, coach, lifeguard are added to the professions that the children want to pursue. The jobs favored by the child reflect his or her fantasies. They are played out in make-believes and may be accompanied by breakthroughs of excitement. In high school (midadolescence) the private fantasies of the child that involve fantasies of adult life still retain excitement as a determinant. Publicly proclaimed ambitions are a different matter. A boy with a low average cannot hope to be taken seriously when he announces that he wishes to be an atomic physicist. Personal limitations have to be taken into account. The private fantasies that go underground are not given up. They become the bases for disappointment and depression in adulthood. There is some measure of unreality in the revealed choices of the high school senior. Rarely does one find such skills as refuse collector, chimney cleaner, plumber, or gardener among the occupational choices listed in a high school yearbook.

At the time of high school graduation, some decision has to be made. Whole areas of occupation are

denied by exclusion from college. For those who do not go to college, at age 18, the life career is beaten into shape between the hammer of hope and the anvil of reality. What jobs are available? What are the skills of the individual? Are there ethnic or religious qualifications that make one path easier than the other? At first the sights are set high. Then little by little there is compromise until means of earning a livelihood are assured. The original dream (to be a doctor, to be a baseball player, to be rich) are not forgotten.

Often the youngster puts his dreams away for a while, or he thinks he does. "I'll take this job for now, while I'm looking for something better," or "I'll get a job now and I'll go to night school and get good marks so I can get a better job." "When?" "In a couple of years, after I've finished paying for my new motorcycle."

In dealing with the child in late latency-early adolescence in regard to the topic of life work and career, the therapist represents reality to the child. Academic potentials are explored. The reality of goals is assessed. Omnipotence, narcissism, and grandiosity, manifested in career ambitions that exceed potential or willingness to invest time and work in necessary education, need be analyzed. At times, an evaluation of life career ambitions reveals these pathological states to a degree otherwise unexpected. Ambitions can be confronted with the requirements of the ambition as compared with the attributes of the child. Popular singers who earn millions of dollars singing songs they have written do not spring from among those who have no training in music. One's level of education and the earning power of one's occupation dictate later life style and the nature of entertainments shared with friends.

A man who had worked for 17 years as an assistant to a house painter at times created financial difficulties for himself. He insisted on maintaining friendships with individuals who earned more money than he. He claimed that they formed his appropriate peer group, and that it was a matter of pride that he be with them. At the age of 18 he had been offered a tryout with a major league baseball team. He had not gone for the tryout—he had had to run an errand for a friend that day. He felt that if he had gone, he would have become rich and famous. Actually, he had not gone out of fear of rejection. Had he been turned down, his self-esteem would have been shattered. In this way he bartered uncertainty and the possibility of fame and fortune for the surety of a fantasy that he could keep alive.

So it goes with the fantasies that people turn to when they bow to subjugation under the harsh realities of the world, with its impersonal bosses and placement tests. Such fantasies become a refuge in times of discontent. People withdraw to them and dwell within them. They pursue each facet and enjoy

each gleam of hope, like some potentate withdrawn to his treasure room to meditate upon the cast and color of his jewels.

For people with the necessary skills to attend college, college affords a “breather.” There is more time to explore, ponder, and prepare for the future. The same requirement to face the need to find oneself occurs with college graduation that had beset the recent high school graduate. Education improves the job potential. The jobs they can get are better; however, in spite of the gain, for many the breather is a pitfall. Youngsters reprieved by four years of college from the need to make life decisions must now confront what they were ill prepared to face four years before. Acceptance of sexual maturity and family responsibilities can be avoided by extending schooling. In dealing therapeutically with college-bound youngsters, assessment of active delay of maturity through extending education can reveal fears that need resolving. Often, graduation is delayed by dropping out for a year, or graduate school is selected to delay the need for further mature function. One should especially beware the group who do not know what they wish to do in life and seek therapy in a state of anxiety. People with problems of object-ground differentiation (a thought disorder related to inability to focus on main ideas, which can be detected and treated in early adolescence) can often be protected by the tracks and disciplines of a college, only to decompensate and become nonfunctional upon graduation from college.

Youngsters who are well organized and goal-directed use college as a means of improving their position in life. Even these, who have adequate personality skills, however, face pitfalls. Many have to accept disappointment, in that they had failed to acquire skills required for a desired job, or are seeking jobs with requirements beyond their level. Somehow it is part of the human spirit to suffer from the “divine discontent” that makes a man pursue ever-higher goals. Few are satisfied for long with what they have. In the hands of the inventive and creative, this is a vital part of the evolution of career and culture. The introduction of new ideas and things, of new viewpoints and art depends on this. To the person who is only capable of handling a workaday high-level activity, but no more, it is a taunt.

A girl at 22 had just graduated from a private college. She obtained a job with a magazine doing editorial work. It was a nine-to-five job. This was according to her plan. She was saving the nights for the writing of a great novel. “The problem is,” she complained, “I’m too tired to do anything much creative by the time I get home.” In her late twenties, marriage and children made further incursions on her time. She never wrote the novel.

It requires much drive and self-discipline to do the workaday things that keep one alive and still

have time to be creative. Some individuals prefer not to work at regular jobs, so that they can pursue their artistic and inventive bent. Others accept a pattern of regular daily work and home chores while keeping their private fantasies in reserve. The healthiest group accepts the reality of their limitations, devoting all their energies to the here and now of enjoying and enriching their lives.

## Sexuality

Living away from the parents presents the adolescent with an arena in which freedom is obtained, among those who are physically mature, to achieve full resolution and adaptation in the area of sexuality. The period of breaking away (late adolescence-early adulthood) is a time of courting. The courting period begins during the later part of high school and continues until the late 20s. Divorces, deaths of spouses, and good psychotherapeutic results introduce later courting periods into the lives of individuals. In European countries, courting is extended to the mid-30s. In some primitive cultures marriages are arranged with selected mates, in the early teens. In American culture today, people are expected to find their own mates.

One divorcee of 28, who was searching for a husband, set the end of courting at 23 for women and 26 for men. Her observations were that "men who are interested in women are married by the time they are 26."

This estimate, which was made at the time of the writing of the first draft of this chapter in 1968, has been altered by social changes, such as the extension of the period of education for women. In 1986, the relative position of a "time to panic" if not married has shifted back about four years, to 27 for women and 30 for men. Age 30 has always been a source of second thoughts in this matter.

A woman who came from the Far East and had experienced a marriage of convenience was amazed at American courting procedures. She felt that a father in America must be a cruel man to force a girl to find a husband instead of providing her with a well-investigated person from a suitable family.

The timing of courting is an example of cultural relativism. Obviously it is a cultural matter determined by the mores of the land. Its interest for us lies in the fact that in our culture it comes at an age by which all normal people have *matured*, to the point that they have the potential for sexual gratification and performance. This does not mean that they have all *developed* to this point. The experiences of adolescence that are heterosexual and are encouraged by the parents need contain no sexual activity. As long as the boy or girl goes out and is popular, the parents are happy. In fact, many parents prefer to deny

that there is any sexual activity in their children. The sexual expectations come from within the child and from within the group.

During the age of courting, the situation is somewhat different. There is pressure from social mores to undertake a course of activity that will lead to marriage, sexual intercourse, and parenthood. From both the standpoint of expectations of the community and the need for the continuation and preservation of the human race, there is no possibility of faking it. "Let's not and say we did" works with "post office," but not with courting and marriage.

Individuals who are maturationally and developmentally ready, marry early. Others delay because of educational requirements. Still others utilize the period of courting and marriage as the time for working through sexual adjustments. Sexuality is encouraged and expected. The time is ripe for marriage, but the psyche may not be. Through dating and courting and the first years of marriage an attempt is made to work out sexuality and neurotic interactions. This occurs, of course, in those who are dissatisfied with themselves. There are individuals who are quite satisfied with their limitations and the underlying gratifications that they derive from them. These people become those with adult character disorders, whereas those who are anxious about their failure to function as others do become neurotics and character neurotics if they are not able to resolve their problems. A possible outcome of the set of adolescent ego structures used as a means of adjusting to sexuality is the preservation of an ego structure that will introduce neurotic character patterns into adult life. Thus, the passing of adolescence is often associated with the precipitation of neurosis.

Love in courting and in marriage consists of benevolence toward the partner and pleasure derived from the partner with justice all around. Where this does not exist, there is present the distorting intrusion into the interactions of everyday life of the contents of prelatency core fantasies. Where there are cruelty, selfishness, and withholding, an element of neurotic interaction exists in the relationship. Experience and the working through of problems, either as a couple or with outside help, results in the resolution of the problem through disentangling the marital relationship from the neurotic core fantasy. Failing this, psychiatric treatment can be used to vitiate the strength of the fantasy.

One form of neurotic interaction is the use of intercourse and marriage as a special symptom. The

demands of society put great pressure on young adults. That one is a virgin is considered a fact to be hidden. In response to taunts, and the projection of one's own dissatisfaction, individuals may plunge into intercourse and marriage in order to prove themselves. Often, this results in chaos if the individual is barely at the level of sophistication at which the complexities of the situation can be handled.

Recently, newspapers all over the country told the story of a bride who ran away on her wedding night.

A young man of 24 was taunted by fellow workers for actions which belied his wish to avoid adult sexuality. He dated an experienced female to whom he confessed his wish to share an asexual relationship. In response to the taunts and to prove himself, he found a young woman of 24, who was also a virgin, and involved her in a relationship that led to intercourse. After the establishment of the sexual relationship, he met her family. He found himself involved with a person and a family who were unsuitable for him.

A boy of 17 was driven by the need to prove that he could have intercourse, as his older siblings did. He dated an older woman who worked in a restaurant in which he did odd jobs. She consented to intercourse. He proved himself. The price was high. She cheated him of his entire summer earnings on the basis of a falsely claimed pregnancy.

For these people, intercourse and marriage are not real events and aspects of life. They are concrete pieces on a playing board, which when won are the special symbols of strength and capacity. They are then exhibited like a Heidelberg scar. They are a message to the world, having little to do with the inner life and needs of the individual. This is soon learned by these individuals when they realize that the turmoil from within and the limitations from without have not been cured by a gesture. Intercourse and marriage provide a resolution for only three problems: they help with the need for companionship, the need for sexual outlet, and the need to fulfill social expectations. Inner loneliness, neuroses, psychosis, depression, etc. are not resolved by sexual affairs and marriage. Rather, they become a rich medium for the growth and efflorescence of the acting out and rationalization of these conditions.

A woman of 26 who had never been able to achieve sexual activity with a man and had been hospitalized many times for psychotic episodes married a man who admired her chastity and felt that he could cure her problems. In their relationship, he played the role of a psychiatrist in competition with the psychiatrist of his first wife, who had helped her deal with her problems. Although his second wife tried, she was unable to accept his closeness or to continue to have intercourse. They were divorced within a few months.

A woman of 24 who had had a number of affairs in which her close attachment to her girl friend had forced a breakup, finally married a man who she felt respected her because he did not make sexual advances. After the marriage she learned that the reason for this was the fact that he was impotent. The marriage was annulled. He explained his action on the basis of his belief that if he got married, it would make everything all right.

Courtship and sexual affairs—and, often, living together—are seen psychologically as extensions of

dating by the participants. As such, they are relationships with fairly straightforward effects on their participants. They are what they are. Marriage is something more. Marriage has a mystique. Marriage is for most of our population an introduction to becoming a member of the world of parents and community leaders. Among peoples with complex religious rules governing daily activity, there is a marked difference in the attitude toward a woman who is sexually active and unmarried and one who is sexually active and married. In some groups, the woman who was once married has sexual freedom, while the woman who has been sexually active, though never married, is requested to repent.

A woman of 24 came from an orthodox religious family. Her father discovered that she had been promiscuous and was currently engaged in a sexual affair. The father counseled her to marry her unsuitable partner, with the thought that divorce could settle the problem if the marriage didn't work out. Once married, he reasoned, and then divorced, she would have a better opportunity of making a good marriage later in her life. The woman declined the suggestion. She realized that there is more to marriage than a tool for assuaging the pain engendered by interpretations of a particular spiritual group.

Never underestimate the psychological impact of marriage.

With increasing intensity during late latency, adolescence, and early adulthood, maturation puts a demand on the individual to resolve the problem of the sexual drives and to find a means for their implementation. During latency and early adolescence, this must be done in an atmosphere of guilt. There is little cultural sanction. Indeed, there is disapproval of sexuality at these stages. In late adolescence and early adulthood, the need for adult sexual techniques hurries the learning and accommodation process for all save those orthodoxly religious ethnic groups that insist that sexuality must await marriage. Some degree of sexual experience is expected of one during late adolescence. The world of ethical men and women gives tacit consent through silence, and suddenly everything is allowed.

The young participants may be accepted as sexual beings, but they may not be quite able to accept themselves in this role. The superego is complex, and may not change with the changing winds of mores. Sexual permissiveness as a rule of society does not guarantee guilt-free sexuality. It is therefore important for the therapist of adolescence to pursue the reactions of the sexually active person to sexual experience. The superego is manifested in many ways. Little that the adolescent says should be taken at face value. A person who claims to have no problem with sex, but avoids it to protect himself or herself from syphilis or AIDS may be covering frigidity and anxiety in regard to sexual function. A man who

avoids dating because he cannot afford it may be displacing concerns from areas that relate to impotence.

With the onset of early latency, there was a massive increase in the strength of superego prohibitions and the extent of their contents in relation to sexuality. Incest feelings, sexual drives, masturbation, and infantile sexuality as well as genitality fill the list of the things proscribed. With growth there is a continuous buildup of nonsexual superego contents until adulthood. These are derived mostly from later identifications.

Concurrently with the buildup of ego-ideal components in the areas of life activities, ethics, and styles of behavior, there is a softening of the superego in the area of sexuality. The first softening occurs at age 8, when masturbatory activity is reinstated. In early adolescence, dating and kissing and caressing are part of an indication of a further softening of the superego as a matter of custom. Up until marriage there is a gradual change in the expectations of society. The demands of the superego, derived from the attitudes of the parents, do not change so quickly. There is always a gulf between what is done and permitted and what the individual feels is right. This gulf is filled with guilt. When society gives permission for sexuality, only those whose development has reached a point at which their superego will permit it can be free from guilt and adverse reactions. In others there is inhibition and difficulty in letting go. It may take months to resolve the problem of accepting the role of sexuality in one's life even in marriage.

There is often a nonspecific dissolution of inhibition accompanying the period of sexual adjustment that follows initial sexual experiences. It may become quite prominent early in marriage. This can take the form of a ribald sense of humor, a tendency to talk about personal matters openly, and, most commonly of all, a release of the inhibition of oral drives. Thus, smoking may increase and, certainly, eating does. It is common to hear someone say to a newly married man, "You've gained weight. Her cooking must agree with you." It's not the cooking, it's not sex either—it's the nature of the man. To explain this merely on the basis of generalized disinhibition would be to set aside our understanding of human behavior on the basis of psychoanalytic insight. As we have described before, the stress of facing sexual responsibilities can lead to a regression away from the stress area. There may be a shift in the object of the drives from the area of sexual interest to a cathexis of fantasies involving anality and orality. Thus, in the early stages of marriage and in situations of "living together," disinhibition can be coupled



with regressive intensification of early infantile sexual activities (e.g., eating for gratification).

## Parenthood

Marriage is the culmination of the series of social events and influences that produce the modifications of the ego ideal required to make sexual relations comfortable. The natural issue of this series of events is parenthood. Let us concentrate briefly on the aspects of psychological development and maturation that are served by parenthood. Parenthood is the fulfillment of all human maturation and development.

If there were still flightiness and uncertainty in the career plans of a man, they are put firmly on course by the appearance of a pregnancy. Sometimes, even uncertain affairs become marriages when the catalyst of gestation is added to them. Pregnancy also stirs into action the prelatency fantasies of the expectant parents. A new object appears on the horizon. The man who was threatened by rivalry with his father is threatened by the appearance of a son. The Oedipus complex can be reversed in more than one way. It can be that the father has hostility toward the son out of fear of replacement in the mother's affections. Often men will verbalize this consciously. Greek mythology, which gave the Oedipus complex its name, was not itself aloof to this insight.

Chronus devoured his sons so as to prevent their replacing him. Eventually Zeus (a son who had escaped) castrated him and replaced him.

The capacity of women to bear children stirs up in men an envy (parturition envy). This finds its manifestations in creativity, in *couvade*, and works of genius. *Couvade* refers to sickness and even labor pains experienced by a man when his wife is in labor. In the Guarani Indian group of Paraguay *couvade* is a culturally sanctioned activity.

In women, the effect of pregnancy and parenthood is more intense than in men. When children come, home becomes the major activity of a woman. This is a most important prospective topic for the therapy of a thoughtful early-adolescent girl who has a career in mind. Career plans must be modified and the traditional female role developed more fully. The interaction with a new object is intense. At first this new being is clearly definable as a part of the mother's biology. In keeping with this, the child is viewed as fulfillment of the desire to add to the sexual parts of the body. Dynamically speaking, the fetus

may become a symbolic penis. When the child is born, there is a repetition of earlier experiences of loss. In those who feel this strongly, postpartum depressions and psychotic episodes may occur. The suckling child, with its completely carefree manner and lack of inhibition, serves to stimulate by sympathy the mother into less inhibited sexual behavior in her marriage. This serves as a key to an understanding of the role of the birth of a child in the development of sexual capacity. Some women are able to give up inhibitions and have orgasms only after childbirth.

## **Fulfillment and Disenchantment**

### **Completion of the Superego through Identification**

Maturation after the age of 25 is primarily related to an improvement in reality testing, intensification of obsessional defenses, and a strengthening of the superego.

No matter how skillfully an individual has tried to soften the disparity between aspiration and possibility with the use of secret dreams, fantasies, and rationalizations, by the time one reaches 30, a note of hopelessness intrudes should one have fallen short of the goal. There is a strong awareness that the dreams are only dreams and there is not hope, time, or energy for fulfilling them. Time and energy must go into support of the family. Spouses demand attention. Children demand the companionship of the parents. Jobs are not available. And last, but not least, there may not be talent enough within the individual to succeed if all other factors were favoring him or her. Actors and artists who had surrendered security for a chance at immortality, and failed, turn their tired steps toward commerce, production, and areas of the arts that require tenacity, skill, and devotion but not great talent. With the realization that the cherished fantasies of late adolescence will never come true, hopes are put aside.

In this regard, 30 is a particularly difficult age for women. The woman who had had thoughts of a career, which was set aside for childbearing and motherhood, finds that children require more attention at 5, or 15, years than they did at one year. In fact, there is little time to pursue one's own interests. Sometimes time can be bought through the hiring of a surrogate mother, a child caretaker.

Two lawyers in their 40s, married to each other, pondered their impossible schedules. With two children, their lives consisted of professional activities admixed with PTA, shopping, lessons, and transporting and picking up the children. They sat down to list the tasks involved in the day's work. They carefully assigned each activity to

lists containing activities near home and near work. Eventually, the needs of the couple came into focus. All at once they defined what was required. "What we need," they said, "is a wife."

Those who are masochistic and tend to be depressed, and furthermore live within a marriage in which every difference of opinion is utilized as an excuse for outbursts of temper and aggression, cry the loudest at the state of affairs that ties a woman down and does not permit her to fulfill her potential. The more mature make use of what time they have to entertain and advance themselves.

To have everything—home, children, and career—is the goal of many. Few people, either men or women, can achieve this. Industry, careers, progress up the executive ladder demand devotion. Professionalism demands the full attention of the professional to the client.

A lawyer in her late twenties awakened quite early in order to catch a plane to Chicago, where she had to make a deposition at 10 a.m. She represented a large law firm. As she kissed her sleeping infant child good-bye she realized the child had a high fever and required immediate medical attention.

Caught between family obligations and the demands of executive advancement, a woman in her early thirties discovered that those who had made it to the top in her concern had sacrificed family for career, and that no special rules had been created to advance her in the cut-throat competition for power.

Here reality testing must take the form of acceptance of one's life in place of the hopes and strivings of adolescence. Psychotherapy in early adolescence aimed at bringing future planning into line with potential lessens the strength of future negative reactions. When one turns a life corner and says "Is that all there is?" when life falls short of one's dreaming and the years have slipped away, a sense of humiliation and hopelessness descends on one. This is the age of disenchantment. The pragmatic imperative (reality) has made itself felt. As a result of disenchantment in hopes and dreams, more time and energy become available for simple pursuits and hobbies. Fulfillment is sought along realistic lines in areas where pleasure as the goal replaces fame. Community activity, courses, bowling, or reading become the sublimations of this age. In effect, the ego ideal shifts to a position that is less removed from the capabilities of the individual.

There is an intensification of the sense of responsibility. This is a developmental step associated with a maturational shift in the structure of the ego. Obsessive-compulsive defenses become more in evidence. Ego energies are devoted more and more to these defenses. Future planning, saving, job security, less physical risk taking, and collecting become the focus of one's planning. There is an increase

in the use of mechanisms of defense, whereas acting out formerly was in evidence.

A woman of 30 presented herself to a university clinic. She complained of a severe fear of open places that incapacitated her. She was unmarried. She described herself as having been a "man's woman." That is, she had made herself available to a number of men of her acquaintance in the jazz music field for sexual intercourse under conditions of "equality." She was now living with a girl friend. She had obtained a job. She had stopped her promiscuous sexual activities. She had said it was "time to settle down." She then developed the phobia.

This case illustrates, in exaggerated form, the commonly manifested intensification of the effect of the cultural ego ideal on the life of the individual that begins at 26 and is completed in the early 30s. This does not reflect a change in the ego ideal. These people always knew what was expected of them. That part of the ego that implements superego demands had had insufficient strength to override the demands of the id in its relations to the world. Now, with a reorganization and intensification of the use of obsessional mechanisms it is strong enough to divert these drives into symptoms.

In the case of individuals whose revolt in adolescence was related to a flight from passivity, the shouldering of adult responsibilities removes them from the position of passivity and the need for flight. Passive fantasies may be manifested elsewhere. The characterological structure needed to deal with them in adolescence and early adulthood no longer contributes to the form of adult character. These people, too, start to settle down. The old ego ideals of adolescence now have little to recommend them. As years passed, there was a gradual accretion of bits of culturally conservative, ethical, moral, behavioral, and cultural attitudes and techniques. These were acquired at the very time they were rejected—in early adolescence. Now they are recalled from memory and mobilized as a part of the ego ideal of adulthood. The individual settles down into a conservative style of living. What seems to have been a recent identification with the parental figures is actually an intensification and organization of patterns to live by that were always available, and were acquired from the parents over the years.

The children we have followed in this book have traveled far down the long road that ends with comfort in identification with the parents, maturity, and the threshold of middle age. They can make their own way as we leave them. Maturation has ceased and development has become an individual matter. They are now aligned with their forebears. Their battles are through. The turmoil of uncertainty is behind them. They now join the shuffling multitude in the long march to eternity.

