



The Life Cycle of a Person Experiencing New Life

<p>INFANT</p> <p>Age Range: Birth – 3</p> <p>(biologically and neurologically possible... based on loving relationships)</p>	<p>The infant stage is designed as the time in our lives when we begin to voluntarily receive to become just like we did involuntarily at our conception and in the womb, through our umbilical cord.</p> <p>We now receive to become with active trust.</p> <p>We learn to receive JOY! Joy, in the narrative of maturity, means “it’s good to be me, here with you.”</p> <p>We learn to live in joy, and we learn that joy is our normal state. We learn to return to joy from every unpleasant emotion.</p> <p>“It’s OK that everything’s not OK. We’re together, and you’re my helper. You’re helping me make sense of my big world.”</p> <p>As an infant, I must have an opportunity to receive joy. Joy builds when others interact with me in great delight. I am a sparkle in their eye. I see their smile, even when I spit up or have a stinky diaper.</p> <p>I learn life is messy, and I learn that messy is safe, with people I can trust.</p> <p>Infants (and toddlers) develop trust as they receive unconditional love from their family and community.</p> <p>Unable to articulate their needs with words, connection is built and strengthened when needs are met without having to ask.</p>
<p>When we don’t trust or receive love to meet our needs</p>	<p>Our relationships, when we are old enough to be an adult, will be weak and toxic.</p> <p>We’ll have difficulty regulating our emotions and avoid our escape or become self-centered. We may be withdrawn and unresponsive, and we may develop a discontented personality.</p>
<p>There is Great Hope</p>	<p>Even when we haven’t experienced the love, we need to build trust when we are young, we still can. Just because we are stuck, doesn’t mean we have to stay stuck. Maturity is in our DNA. We can always start now, to trust—and to receive the love that gets us unstuck.</p>

<p>CHILD</p> <p>Age Range: 4 – 12</p> <p>(biologically and neurologically possible... based on loving relationships)</p>	<p>This child stage is designed as the time in our lives when we learn to take care of our self, including asking for help and articulating our needs... because now we can.</p> <p>As a child, we develop enough perseverance to do hard things and we learn what brings personal satisfaction. We spend time in production (real-life) activities: cleaning, cooking, gardening, building, painting, taking care of animals.</p> <p>We develop personal talents and being to know ourselves and take responsibility. We understand how we fit into the story of our own lives and the lives of our family and the world.</p> <p>Family and community challenge and encourage us to do difficult things that we don't feel like doing, and they help us not get stuck in failure or dependent on comfort.</p> <p>Those that loves us well as a child protect us from becoming obsessed and addicted to things like food, drugs, sex, money, or power because we are learning only relationships provide deep satisfaction.</p> <p>Parents help us process our emotions to identify them and recognize that how we feel is not who we are. We learn this most by watching others live a deeply satisfied life, instead of a distracted and addicted life.</p>
<p>When we don't trust and/or receive love to meet our needs</p>	<p>As an adult, we don't take responsibility for our self.</p> <p>We remain stuck and consumed with comfort and a fantasy life. We're not dependable and our lives are filled with unproductive activities.</p> <p>We don't know our true identity, so we get stuck in our emotions and make decisions based on "how do I get what I want?" instead of knowing ourselves and making decisions based on "how do I act like myself?"</p>
<p>There is Great Hope</p>	<p>Even when we haven't experienced the love, we need to build trust when we are young, we still can. Just because we are stuck, doesn't mean we have to stay stuck. Maturity is in our DNA. We can always start now, to trust—and to receive the love that gets us unstuck.</p>

<p>ADULT</p> <p>Age Range: 13 – birth of first child</p> <p>(biologically and neurologically possible... based on loving relationships)</p>	<p>This adult stage is designed as the time in our lives when we learn to take care of two people simultaneously: we can care for ourselves and we can care for another.</p> <p>As an adult, we can remain stable in difficult situations, and we can return our self and others to joy from every unpleasant emotion.</p> <p>Remember: Joy means “It’s good to be me, here with you.” In trusted relationships, I learn that when tasks or relationships are hard, I can do hard. I ask for wisdom and find strength for life in difficult times.</p> <p>I learn when life is painful to distinguish a harmful kind of pain (trauma), from a pain that comes with growing, loving, and experiencing transformation. In trusted relationships, I learn not to avoid this kind of pain.</p> <p>As an adult, I ask this question with vulnerability and humility: How am I affecting you? How am I increasing or decreasing your capacities?</p> <p>I own my influence and impact, and I know my true heart—the one that loves and desires to impact and influence others for good.</p> <p>Family and community offer affirmation that I will make it through difficult times. They offer commitment and safety and hope, and they remind me God is who He says He is... and I am who He says I am, too. Family and community offer me love and help me remember that love (commitment, servant love, protective love, direction, affirmation, significance) is the only force stronger than sin and shame.</p> <p>Home is a safe place to struggle and even fail, so it is a safe place to live and dream and find fulfillment in life-giving, capacity building relationships.</p>
<p>When we don’t trust and/or receive love to meet our needs</p>	<p>I lack the capacity to live in mutually satisfying relationships</p>
<p>There is Great Hope</p>	<p>Even when we haven’t experienced the love, we need to build trust when we are young, we still can. Just because we are stuck, doesn’t mean we have to stay stuck. Maturity is in our DNA. We can always start now, to trust—and to receive the love that gets us unstuck.</p>

<p>PARENT</p> <p>When my first child is born</p> <p>(biologically and neurologically possible... based on loving relationships)</p>	<p>As a parent, my primary task is to sacrificially love my family.</p> <p>I meet their physical needs, and I learn to meet their spiritual needs, too. I protect, affirm, direct, correct, and serve my family.</p> <p>The community supports and encourages me, and I allow and provide spiritual mentors and friendships for my children.</p> <p>I learn, with the help of others I trust, how to bring my children through difficult times and return to joy from every unpleasant emotion.</p>
<p>When we don't trust and/or receive love to meet our needs</p>	<p>The relationships in my family are distant and stuck in conflict.</p>
<p>There is Great Hope</p>	<p>Even when we haven't experienced the love, we need to build trust when we are young, we still can. Just because we are stuck, doesn't mean we have to stay stuck. Maturity is in our DNA. We can always start now, to trust—and to receive the love that gets us unstuck.</p>

<p>ELDER</p> <p>When my last child leaves home</p> <p>(biologically and neurologically possible... based on loving relationships)</p>	<p>My primary task is to sacrificially love my community.</p> <p>In all the ways I have loved my family, I get to now delight in parenting and maturing my community.</p> <p>I have developed long-term trust, so other receive my wisdom and experience my love.</p>
<p>When we don't trust and/or receive love to meet our needs</p>	<p>The overall maturity of the community declines.</p>
<p>There is Great Hope</p>	<p>Even when we haven't experienced the love, we need to build trust when we are young, we still can. Just because we are stuck, doesn't mean we have to stay stuck. Maturity is in our DNA. We can always start now, to trust—and to receive the love that gets us unstuck.</p>

FOR MORE RESEARCH AND STUDY:

A powerful resource to read more of the wisdom of these five stages is

A Life Model Book: Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You

By The Shepherd's House