

The 5 Stages of Maturity

Session 3: The Child Stage

1. Review

- Maturity can be defined as: *Reaching my God-given potential in every age and stage.*
- Remember! Maturity does not give us more value.
 - *“Our value is inherent, unchangeable, everlasting, and complete” – Amy Brown*

2. Core Principles

- Maturity is a lot like swiss cheese
- Each stage of maturity has both needs and tasks.
- “Needs” are those things our family and community were meant to provide us.
 - We can ask God to provide the needs we missed.
- “Tasks” are the skills or abilities we were designed to learn at that stage of development.
 - We can grow our maturity by learning the tasks we missed.
- We need to start where we are, not where we wish we were.

3. ‘Trigger’ Warning

- Learning about infant and child level of maturity may stir up some big emotions:
 - **Sadness** – I didn’t get what I needed (for any number of reasons).
 - **Anger** – Why didn’t I get a better start in life? I got a raw deal.
 - **Shame** – I should know how to do _____(certain maturity tasks). We can be tempted to beat ourselves up. However, we need to be tender toward our weaknesses.
 - **Judgment** toward others when we see their maturity holes. We can be tempted to label people (e.g., “she’s an infant level leader”). We may be angry or frustrated with those around us, and tempted to badger them to try to change or fix them.

4. Maturity Model Overview

| STAGE | AGE | PRIMARY TASK |
|--------------|---|--|
| Infant | 0-3 | Receiving |
| Child | 4-12 | Taking care of self (1) |
| Adult | 13 + | Taking care of two people (2) simultaneously |
| Parent | Birth of 1 st child to launching of last | Taking care of children sacrificially |
| Elder | After youngest child is adult | Taking care of community sacrificially |

5. Child Level Needs

- Help doing what I don't feel like doing
- Help sorting out feelings, imaginations, and reality
- Feedback on guesses, attempts, and failures
- Be taught the family history
- Be taught the history of God's family
- Be taught the 'Big Picture' of Life

6. Child Level Tasks

- Take care of self
- Ask for what I need
- Learn self-expression
- Learn to make myself understandable to others
- Develop my resources & talents
- Learn to do hard things
- Learn what satisfies
- Tame my cravings (nucleus accumbens)
- See myself through the 'eyes of heaven'

7. Child Level Holes: Pseudo-Maturity - Too much responsibility too early (parentified children)

- May work hard and serve others sacrificially but have little satisfaction for their efforts.
- May be serving out of fear (afraid of upsetting others, etc.) rather than joy.
- May discount or deny or be unaware of their own needs (can only take care of one at a time).

8. Child Level Holes: Obvious Immaturity

- May be very self-centered (can only take care of one at a time).
- May act like a different person in different situations (don't have a stable identity).
- May constantly be chasing excitement, fun, pleasure, etc., yet never really find satisfaction.
- May be unwilling to persevere in difficulty and do things they don't feel like doing.
- May find it difficult to control cravings, especially when under stress.

9. Child Maturity Stage Assessment¹

| No | Sometimes | Usually | Yes | |
|----|-----------|---------|-----|--|
| | | | | I can take care of myself. |
| | | | | I can do hard things (even if they cause me pain/discomfort or I don't feel like doing them). |
| | | | | I am can persevere toward my goals taking reasonable attempts, risks, and failures. |
| | | | | I know myself & enjoy self-expression. |
| | | | | I can articulate what I think and ask for what I need. |
| | | | | I help other people to understand me better if they don't understand me. |
| | | | | I continue to develop my personal resources and talents. |
| | | | | I know what satisfies me. |
| | | | | I have learned to control my cravings. |
| | | | | I know how my family came to be the way it is (family history) & that going forward my life is not just an individual experience – but that it can impact history. |
| | | | | I delight that I am God's cherished child created for a unique purpose in the world. |

10. What To Do With My Maturity Holes

- Ask God to show me the relationships He has for me to grow in maturity
- Identify 1 or 2 tasks to prayerfully begin to work on (and ask God for opportunities)
- Find others who have that skill or ability and ask them to tell you stories.
- Seek to get GodSight on your maturity, and on those around you.

11. Immanuel Interaction

- Ask God to bring to mind a time you felt joyful, peaceful, and/or connected.
- Write a prayer of thanksgiving: *Dear Lord, I am thankful for*

- Write a response from God's perspective: *Dear child of mine*

¹ Modified from <https://lifemodelworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Maturity-Skills-Assessment.pdf>.

- Sharing my heart with Jesus: “Jesus, what’s going on in my mind and heart right now is ...”

- Write down the thoughts, words, impressions that come to mind without filtering (you can test it later).

- Jesus’ tender response toward me: “My dear child...”
