STRUCTURED LIFE REVIEW

- Carla Black, BCC

WHAT IS LIFE REVIEW?

- A Natural process in which a person brings segments of his or her life together to make a whole picture that is understood and has meaning for that person.
Why Do We Do Structured Life Review?

- The goal of *actively* and *intentionally* making a review of one’s life is “the acceptance of one’s own and only life cycle and of the people who have become significant to it as something that had to be and that, by necessity permitted of no substitutions.”
  
  Erik Erikson

What are the benefits of Structured Life Review?

- Optimism
- Self acceptance, “just as I am”
- New energy
- Lifting of a lifetime of burdens
- Identifying reasons for having lived
- Shared experience and relationship
- A good death
Who does Structured Life Review

- You and the reviewer
- Family and other loved ones at times contribute also

According to the experts...

- This is a disciplined process that has been developed through building on the knowledge of experts.
Erik Erikson

Psychologist

- Published “Identity and the Life Cycle” in 1959 in which he described eight stages of development.

Developmental Theory

- Erik Erikson described the development of the healthy personality as occurring in stages.
- He wrote that this development was guided by an “epigenetic principle.”
Epigenetic Principle

- 1. Anything that grows has a ground plan.
- 2. Out of that ground plan parts arise.
- 3. Each part has its time of special ascendency...
- 4. Until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole.

Robert Butler

- Wrote an article in for Psychiatry in 1963 titled, “The Life Review: An interpretation of Reminiscence in the Aged. This article provided a name for and description of the process.
- Butler is currently the CEO of the International Longevity Center in NYC.
Barbara Haight

Barbara’s background is in nursing and she has taught at the College of Nursing, Medical University of South Carolina. Along with her husband, Barrett, Barbara wrote “The Handbook of Structured Life Review.” This book was published in 2007 after 8 research projects and 25 years of study.

Back to Erikson and development....

- BASIC TRUST vs BASIC MISTRUST
- Infancy –are needs met?
- If trust crisis is ascended, confidence results. If not, withdrawal.
- A tendency toward hope or its antithesis, hopefulness arise in this stage
Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

- Early childhood
- Standing
- Holding on and letting go
- Making choices
- Strength of self-will and dignity arise during this stage. If the crises is not ascended, compulsions and fears of losing control result.

Initiative vs. Guilt

- Play age
- Increased independence, sense of responsibility, ability for constructive interactions with others.
- Conscience becomes developed
- Ascendency is away from inhibition toward a sense of purpose
Industry vs. Inferiority

- School Age
  - Positive identity with those who know things and how to do things
  - Play is important as a way of mastering experience—mediating, experimenting, planning and sharing
  - Ascendency—a sense of competence, not inertia

Identity vs. Identity Diffusion

- Adolescence
- Puberty, peer groups
- Self esteem in learning what is needed to create a tangible future
- Crisis may be over-identifying with others and losing self-identity
- Fidelity is a basic strength.
- Repudiation is a core pathology
Intimacy vs. Isolation

- Young adulthood
- Partners in friendship, sex, competition, cooperation
- Becomes more intimate with one’s own inner resources—more self-assured
- If crisis not ascended, isolation, aggressiveness, prejudice

Generativity vs. Stagnation

- Adulthood
- Interest in establishing and guiding the next generation
- Parenting as well as altruistic concerns and creativity
- Individuals who do not develop generativity often indulge themselves as if they were their own one and only child.
Integrity vs. Despair

- Later years
- A sense of irrevocable identity appears— one becomes what one has been
- Earlier stages come to fruition
- Strength is hope and wisdom/pathology is disdain or despair—anxiety in the realization there is not time to do it all over.

Integrity vs. Despair

- “The possessor of Integrity is ready to defend the dignity of his own life style against all physical and economic threats.”

*Identity and the Life Cycle*
How is Structured Life Review Done?

- Therapeutic Listening
- The Reviewer controls the content
- Structured questions used as a tool, a means and not an end.
- May be recorded or documented in some way, but does not have to be

Therapeutic Listening

- Confidentiality
- Comfort
- Responsiveness
- Encouraging
- Accepting
- Caring
- Empathic
Structured Life Review Questions

- Don’t have to be sequential, although it is best if they are. If possible, you should include at least one question from each stage of development.

Questions: Early Childhood

- What is the very first thing you can remember in your life?
- Tell me about your parents
- Was worship a part of your life growing up?
- Tell me about your best friend as a child.
Family and Home

- What was your home like?
- Did you have unpleasant experiences as a child?
- How did you celebrate holidays/birthdays?
- Did you have any chores or responsibilities?

Adolescence

- Who were important people to you as a teenager, and why?
- Were you a member of a certain clique or group?
- Who did you want to be like?
- Did you feel good about yourself as a teenager?
Younger Adulthood

- Did you marry? How did you meet your spouse? Did you rear children?
- What type of career did you pursue?
- How were you involved in your community?

Older Adulthood

- In your entire life, what relationship stands out as most important?
- What was your most significant accomplishment?
- What were some of the difficulties you encountered?
- Would you call yourself a spiritual person?
Spiritual life

- Who taught you about the Divine when you were a child?
- Did you feel God’s presence as you grew older?
- How have you experienced God’s mercy in your life?
- What spiritual wisdom would you want to pass on to someone else?

Summary

- On the whole, what kind of life do you think you have had?
- What has been most satisfying about your life?
- What was the proudest moment of your life?
- What else would you like to tell me about your life?
Suggestions for saving Structured Life Review

Establish with whom the record will be shared. This agreement does not dissolve with death!

Flexibility

Consider how to adapt to your ministry

- Hospice—adapts easily if referred in time
- Long term care—excellent setting for Structured Life Review
- Hospital—brief, but can still cover several developmental stages. Often more family involvement.
Questions

What else do we need to know?