

Final Personal Reflection Paper- Including Change

I decided to identify my behavior of holding in my emotions and stressors and then exploding after a long period of time. I chose this problem because I think this could benefit me the most to resolve by the end of 2016.

Describe

I am taking 18 credit hours and I am a Herron Ambassador, so I must maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher each semester. I get stressed out from time to time with all of my art projects that feel like they just keep piling up, even though I dedicate time to working on them. I try not to let the work get to me but after a few weeks, it all bunches up and I get flooded with emotions. I could be in a critique and someone could say something to help me in the future, but with all of my compacted stress from the previous weeks, I may just shut down and not be responsive.

This also occurs with my apartment life. My roommate and I agreed that if we ever have anything that we need to discuss, that we would do this in person, not over text. Well, she is very busy with school, work, and her sorority, but she complains to me about things over text that I do wrong. She doesn't like when I am gone or when I don't weekly deep clean, so she will text me over my weekend and let me know of these things and it hurts my feelings, so I stress and worry and then sometimes I cry when we finally talk about these things in person.

My final example is how this issues is involved in my personal life. I let my friends and family have my full attention, even when I don't have time to focus on me. I put them first because I love them, and in return I hope to get the same. Most of the time I do, but it is hard to help others when your cup is dry. So I let them vent to me or whatever they may need at the time and help them, but then I become heavy with their problems and let that effect me and my life.

Explain

P variables: *Personality & Traits*

E variables: *Experiences that have shaped me & People around me*

My **personality** (Ch. 7/ P variable), or my reliable pattern of thinking, feeling and doing, has shaped how I react to and developed this behavioral problem. I am the type of person who does not really express feelings or talks about stress too much in fear of sounding negative or bothering the people I am talking to. I really care about what people think of me, whether it is a stranger or my family and friends. I also really care about those around me. I am always there to listen to them, so I kind of make their problems mine and I try to find a solution with them. So while I listen to others, which is a positive **trait** (P variable) of mine, I feel like it takes a special person in my life for me to feel comfortable to vent my feelings to.

I often talk to my parents, and they offer great advice, but sometimes it triggers my behavioral problem. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior or knowledge that is due to **experience** (Ch. 4/E variable). Last month, I started my new part time job which I work on the weekends after a week full of classes. I did not want to tell my parents how stressed and tired I was so that I seemed like I could handle all of it, but after talking to them, they said something and I took it the wrong way and began to cry. Since my parents are the people who are (E variable) most commonly surrounding me, they understand me and my personality. They did not understand what they had said would cause me to cry. Finally, they realized that I was indeed stressed and tired from how I reacted to the comment, so they just talked to me and told me that they believe in me and know that I can do it. I have acquired **observant learning** (Ch. 4) and I think that it stems from my father owning his own business. He has breakdowns and employee

problems all of the time, but he never takes that stress out on my mom or I. I try to imitate him and stay strong and not let it cloud other people or areas in my life, but it is hard. I am learning to find the right people to talk to and learning how to handle my stress by expressing my feelings, because it is okay to have emotions.

Predict

I think that my biggest problem is sorting out my **stressors** (Ch.9) as **controllable** (Ch. 9) and **uncontrollable** (Ch.9). I let those small things get to me. I have found that with this extra bottled up stress, I have found that I easily get sick. I find that this may be from my body producing an excess of **cortisol** (Ch. 9) which leads to a decreased immune system. With illness comes missing school and work, and that overtime can have a negative projection to people like your professors or even your boss. This could make it harder for me to maintain my grades or to even get a promotion at my job in the near future.

As far as my prediction for five years, if I do not change this behavior, I can see where I will be struggling to maintain my grades to graduate with my Master's Degree in Art Therapy from Herron. I can also see that there may be some strains in my relationship because I will still have those uncontrollable moments caused by piled up emotions. I hope to be engaged five years down the road, but with constant stress, this could be pushed back or may not even happen.

Change

To change this problem behavior, I think that I would benefit from being open to others. I want to practice knowing that my family, friends, boyfriend and even professors are here to help me and be my support system. If I let those around me vent to me, then a good relationship should have that conversation doorway open both ways. I need to become more open and

practice talking about my problems while they are still little instead of holding on to them until they grow into large proportions. If I learn to be up front with my boss about working too much while it's finals, I learned that she is much more understanding than I realized and she has given me the weekend off to study. This alone has reduced so much stress and I feel like I can now study my materials in piece. This goes with my parents, roommate and boyfriend. If I have a problem, instead of brewing over this, I will take action to talk in person and clear the air. I have implemented this more and more with my roommate, and I have noticed that we are cohabitating more effectively. This reduces stress and lets us have a calm environment to work and laugh in. I also noticed that we shared the chores more since we have resolved so many issues. With all of this stress relief, I have noticed the benefits the most in my new relationship. We have both been very open and understanding with one another over these past three months, and I can honestly say that my anxiety and worries have dropped so much. With that being said, I can tell that I am not pushing him away and that he really is here to stay. We have confidence in one another and I am playing this out in the other areas on my life. We all have to start somewhere, and I think with this detailed plan, I really can be the strong person that I know I can be. All it takes is a change in one person to make a change in others, and I really feel like I am becoming that change.