

constitution, experience, how I see myself and how others appear to see me.

The formation of my image of self is perhaps THE most important single process in this development. Much of this would be conditioned by the general norms and values of my family, my neighbours, my peers, as well as reference groups, 'significant others' and by society in general. I am both what I make myself and what others make me. Maturity in these terms would seem to be that ability to discern who I am, and to have some positive and constructive control over the extent to which I give into myself or bow to the pressure of others to make me someone in their image and likeness. It means recognising my needs, my talents, my fears, my abilities in such a way that I develop my independence and my interdependence with others, that both my life and theirs are enhanced, my worth and dignity and theirs, are mutually respected, and as a result both I and they grow, become richer in psycho-emotional terms.

As Eliot has said "the human race cannot stand too much reality".⁽¹³⁾ I am frightened by all this, because often I am afraid to be in charge. I fear the consequences of taking my life into my own hands, of directing it, exploring, discovering and risking. I fear the ordinary aggression and assertiveness that is required in growth and involvement. Otto Rank referred to this when he said more people have a 'fear of life' than a 'fear of death'. The Existentialists call it a 'fear of being'.

But there is another fear. "Deep within every man there lies the dread of being alone in the world, forgotten by God, overlooked by the tremendous household of millions. The fear is kept away by looking at all those about one who are bound to one as friends and family, but the dread is nevertheless there and one hardly dares think of what would happen to one of us if all the rest were taken away". Kirkegaard.