



Elder Maturity Stage

Maturity Workshop Series

Review

Maturity stages build on each other. They have a compounding effect. You cannot fully complete any stage without having completed the one before it, so it's important to go back and check for gaps and work on getting those closed up, so you can more fully be who God created you to be in your current stage of life.

Mature Infants:

- Know how to receive
- Can rest/quiet
- Regulate emotions (self calm), return to joy from every emotion
- Can synchronize (attune) to others

Mature Children:

- Take care of themselves
- Can say what they think and feel and appropriately ask for what they need
- Can do hard things
- Take responsibility for their choices

Mature Adults:

- Take care of themselves and someone else at the same time
- Remain relational even in difficulty
- Can bring self and others back to joy
- Can protect others from their power
- Can/have bestowed manhood/womanhood on others

Mature Parents:

- Protects, serves, and enjoys one's family
- Is devoted to taking care of children without expecting to be taken care of by the children in return.
- Learns how to bring children through difficult times and return to joy from the big 6 emotions.
- Can discipline children in Love
- Take responsibility for their own emotions



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Elder (*beginning when youngest child becomes an adult 13*)

Most in our culture never make it to this level of maturity. This is unfortunate because the success of any country, community, school or church body will have a direct correlation to the presence of true elders who are guiding and advising.

Primary Goals:

- To sacrificially taking care of the community with joy

Elders Grow Their Community

- An elder has raised their children and is now ready to raise a community
- Elders carry the most weight in the community because they have the most life experience and capacity.
- When we lack maturity and training, yet attempt elder tasks and roles, we will find ourselves frustrated and disillusioned. Hidden addiction may surface.

Elder Stage Needs

- A community to call their own
- Recognition by their community
 - There are a ton of people in this stage of life that are just waiting to be recognized so they can step into their role and bring joy to their community
- A proper place in community structure
- Have others place trust in him/her

Elder Stage Tasks

- Establish an accurate community identity by finding out what their community has been designed by God to be, rather than imposing what they would like it to be
- Value all community members and see them as God sees them - looking past their flaws and facades to see the persons they have been designed to be
- Can act like themselves in the midst of difficulty
 - Learned in Adult stage
- Realize and seek out those without sufficient biological families because they need real, live, loving spiritual families to heal, to grow and to thrive
 - Give spiritual children the same unselfish care they gave their biological children.
- Parents at large to their community and its identity
 - This is who we are
 - This is how we live
 - This is what's important to us
 - This is the kind of infant, child, adult and parent we are
- Build the trust of others through their own transparency and spontaneity
- Pull people up into their next stage of maturity



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True Elders

- Can handle criticism and rejection
- Speak the truth in love even when it is not easy or popular
- Serve without being appreciated
- Encourage needed growth and change
- Delight in younger people's skill and power
- Create Identity not standards
- Place what is best for the community over personal fairness or preference
- True elders are not necessarily leading the community but they are in the background shouldering the weight of the community.
- True elder live and act out of joy
 - Elders are free agents of joy
 - Free to enjoy everyone in the community
 - Free to tell anyone how beautiful, smart, wonderful they are. Even if you've never met them.
 - Joy wild card
 - This makes a joyful community

Elder Too Soon:

This happens when you are promoted into a position that requires you to operate past your Parent maturity skills

- Damage to his/her marriage and children by neglect
 - Parents need to focus on their family unit
 - The scope of an elders tasks is too large to effective care for a single family unit
- Damage to his/her church /community
- Damage to his/her family by introducing dangerous people into the home
 - Elders could and should invite
- Damage to wounded and lonely people who need help
- Damage to the potential elder's development
- Damage to 'the big picture' for all involved
- Damage to the trust-building task true elders with earned maturity face.
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Primary Task to be completed:

Sacrificially taking care of the community with joy

Primary Resulting Problem (as adult, if not complete):

The overall maturity of the community declines



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Practical Personal Tasks:

- Identify 1-2 tasks to prayerfully begin to work on
- Seek healing for unresolved wounds
- Ensure all other maturities stage tasks are completed and continually practiced
- Go find and help mature and heal
- Find a place in your community to establish, call out and raise up its identity
- Be a free agent of joy

Practical Community Tasks:

- Recognize elders
- Seek them out and value their role in the community
 - We don't have elders because we disgrad them
 - Previous generation disregards them;no one wants to be what they disregard
- The community provides opportunities for elders to be involved with those in all of the other maturity stages.

The Life Model: Adult Maturity Indicators¹

Personal Tasks	Community & Family Tasks	When the Tasks Fail
Establishes an accurate community identity and acts like self in the midst of difficulty.	The community recognizes elders in the community.	There is meaninglessness, disorder, loss of direction, and disintegration of all social structures from government to family.
Prizes each community member and enjoys the true self in each individual looking past their flaws and facades to see the persons they have been designed to be.	The community provides opportunities for elders to be involved with those in all of the other maturity stages.	Life-giving interactions diminish along with life giving interdependence stunting the community's growth. Fragile, at-risk people fail to heal or survive.
Parents and matures the community.	The community creates a structure to help the elders do their job which allows people at every stage of maturity to interact properly with those in other stages and to listen to the wisdom of maturity.	When elders do not lead, unqualified people do, resulting in immature interactions at every level of the community.
Gives life to those without a family through spiritual adoption.	Places a high value on being a spiritual family to those with no family.	When the "familyless" are not individually taken care of, poverty, violence, crisis, crime, and mental disorders increase.

¹ Chart adapted from Shepherd's House, Inc. © 2000



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Elder Maturity Stage Assessment²

No	At Times	Usually	Always	
				I have a community of people to call my own
				I am recognized by my community
				I have a proper place in the community structure
				I am valued and defended by the community
				I demonstrate hospitality
				I give life to the “familyless”
				I help my community mature
				I build and maintain the community identity
				I don’t abandon when I disengage
				I share others’ feelings but still know who I am and who they are
				I continue to be the same person when provoked or tempted
				I bear up well under: Misunderstandings
				I bear up well under: Accusation
				I bear up well under: Rage
				I bear up well under: Contradiction
				I see some of what God sees in every situation
				I enjoy what God put in each and everyone
				I live transparently and spontaneously
				I build and rebuild trust

² Modified from <https://lifemodelworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/Maturity-Skills-Assessment.pdf>. This can also be found in *RARE Leadership*, by Marcus Warner & Jim Wilder and *The Complete Guide to Living with Men*, by E. James Wilder