FIRSTS

Learning Years

Critical question: who am I?

CHARACTERISTICS
High activity
Broad learning
Hopeful/anxious
Searching/verifying
Accomplishing
Gathering
Self oriented
Survival

DANGERS
Bad life decisions
No mentors
Weak inner life
Over busyness

KEY INGREDIENTS
Exposure/experience
Understanding self
Faithfulness
Feedback/adjustment
Inner life growth
Ministry participation

KEY ELEMENT
Mentors

Building Years

Critical question: where is my place?

CHARACTERISTICS
Intense schedule
Narrow learning
Tyranny of the urgent
Dealing with baggage
Achieving/making it
Improving
Work oriented
Success

DANGERS
No anchors, life structures
No mentors/peers
Doing overrides being
No intimacy

KEY INGREDIENTS
Developing life structures
Applying self
Stewardship
Feedback adjustment
Inner life growth
Identifying ministry

KEY ELEMENT
Mentors and peers

SAMES

Focusing Years

Critical question: why am I here?

CHARACTERISTICS
Changing schedule
Targeted learning
Uncertain/weary
Questioning/adjusting
Contributing >influencing
Mastering
Purpose oriented
Significance

DANGERS
Mid-life melt down
No mentors/peers
Dabbling
Plateauing

KEY INGREDIENTS
Clarifying purpose
Focusing self
Stewardship
Feedback adjustment
Inner life growth
Intentional ministry

KEY ELEMENT
Mentors and peers

LASTS

Investing Years

Critical question: how do I finish well and leave an enduring legacy?

CHARACTERISTICS
Focused/looser schedule
Selected learning
Anxious
Accepting
Influencing >contributing
Converging
Others oriented
Significance

DANGERS
Stop learning/growing
Security driven
Lack of purpose
Not finishing well
No meaningful connections

KEY INGREDIENTS
Making final years count
Investing self
Generosity
Feedback adjustment
Inner life growth
Identifying your legacy

KEY ELEMENT
Peers and mentees

18 — 30 — 40 — 55 — 70 →

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK IN THEIR 20S

- Who am I as a man or a woman and how am I different from my family of origin?
- What do I want to do with my life, what directions am I going to walk in and where do I want to make my life investments?
- Am I capable of really loving in a sustainable way and is there anything about me that someone else will find to be loveable?
- What parts of me and my life need correcting?
- Around what person or idea will I organise my life? (What's going to be the field theory of life for me?)

Questions based on G. MacDonald's, Resilient Life

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK IN THEIR 30S

- How do I prioritise all the demands being made on my life? How do I balance job/family/church and all the other things?
- How far will I go and be able to fulfil my ambitions?
- Who's a part of my primary community?
- What does my spiritual life look like? Do I even have one?
- Why am I not a better person?

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK IN THEIR 40S

- Who was I as a child with my mother and father, and what influences formed me? How did I become the way I am?
- Why do some people seem to be doing better in life than me? Why am I not keeping up with some of the people I used to know so well?
- Why am I so often disappointed in myself and in others?
- Why are limitations in life beginning to outnumber options?
- Why is life beginning to accumulate so many uncertainties?

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK IN THEIR 50S

- Why is time going so fast?
- How do I cope with my body becoming unreliable?
- How do I deal with both my successes and my failures? What are they doing to me psychologically/spiritually/emotionally, even socially?
- How do my spouse and I deal with the changes in our marriage? How do I come to terms with the fact that I may never marry?
- Who are these young people who want to replace me who have newer, fresher ideas and think I ought to get out of the way and make space for them?
- What do I do in with the growing number of doubts,anxieties and fears?

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK IN THEIR 60S

- When do I stop doing the things that have defined me?
- Who will I die with and how will I die?
- Who are your friends when you don't have a role?
- Why do I feel so ignored by a large section of the population?
- What is my spiritual legacy? Is there anything about the depth of my soul that is impacting anybody else?
- What is yet to be accomplished in life?
- What does old age look like and am I ready for it?

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK IN THEIR 70/80S

- Does anyone know who I once was?
- How much of my life can I still control?
- What can I contribute?
- Is there anything people find valuable or am I just taking up space and cost?
- Why do I often feel anger or irritability about things?
- Is God really there for me?
- Am I ready to face my death?
- When I die will anyone miss me?

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