

My life, mind, and goals are influenced by three things: my mother, soccer and Mexico. In school, when I am asked to write about any of these three things, the assignment becomes extremely easy for me. I end up writing a lot more than the requirement. I have obviously noticed that I love things that are highly important to me, but why? Where does all this love and interest arrive from? When was the beginning?

My theory is that absolutely everything that I care about began in my early years. When I lived in Mexico for my childhood, I developed all these emotions and feelings towards soccer, specifically towards my favorite soccer team, Chivas. They were, and still are, like my best friend, my religion, my inspiration, my everything. As I child, I loved watching my mother play soccer, I would sit on a soccer ball next to the field covered with dirt. I remember always yelling at her, giving her advice on what to do when she got the ball. She did not, in any way, need any of my advice. My mother was usually the best player on the team; at the end of every game everyone would congratulate my mom and I would run to her with the soccer ball so that we could play. Those times when we did play, it would be the most amazing thing in the world for me. She never specifically taught me how to play, I would just learn by watching. It was there where I not only grew more love towards my mom, but also towards soccer. The country in which I grew up and learned all these things was Mexico; my entire family is from this beautiful country and I'm not exactly sure if this is the reason why, but I am in love with that place.

Things are not always the way they should or you would want them to be; you cannot always be right. What I mean by this is that not everyone understands this. Some of us want to have things as we wish and we find ourselves struggling through life. Others are well trained and ready to overcome obstacles that are given to them. Not everyone is the same; everyone has different personalities that, we can anticipate, are built from our childhood experiences. But what else can our childhood impact? In what ways does our childhood affect our lives? I want to find out all the different ways in which our early age events shape our futures. Where is the root of everyone's feelings and emotions?

Children are born with something called temperament; this is a natural style of interacting or reacting to people, places and things. Temperament has nine traits: Activity, Rhythmicity, Approach/Withdrawal, Adaptability, Intensity, Mood, Persistence and Attention span, Distractibility, and Sensory Threshold.¹ This might get you confused and make you think that your temperament is the same as your personality; well let me put you back on track. Temperament is already stable from the moment in which you are born; it lets you know the reasons why kids are different from one another, and this is also the reason why two kids from the same parents can have a different way of reacting and acting towards things. However, unlike temperament, personality does not have any traits in the moment in which you are born (<http://ohioline.osu.edu/flm02/FS05.html>).

¹**Activity:** Is the child always moving and doing something, or are they relaxed?

Rhythmicity: Is the child regular in their eating/sleeping habits or somewhat haphazard?

Approach/Withdrawal: Has the child "never met a stranger" or tend to shy away from new people or things?

Adaptability: Can the child adjust to changes in routines or plans easily or does he resist transitions?

Intensity: Does the child react strongly to situations, either positive or negative, or does he react calm and quietly?

Mood: Does the child often express a negative outlook or is he a generally a positive person? Does his mood shift frequently or is he usually even-tempered?

Persistence and Attention span: Does the child give up as soon as a problem arises with a task or does he keep trying? Can he stick with an activity for a long time or does his mind tend to wonder?

Distractibility: Is the child easily distracted from what he is doing or can he shut out external distractions and stay with the current activity?

Sensory Threshold: Is the child bothered by external stimuli such as loud noises, bright lights, or food textures or does he ignore them?¹<http://ohioline.osu.edu/flm02/FS05.html>

A child's personality can be influenced by their surroundings, environment, and basically anything around them. The influence of someone's personality arrives from a mixture of temperament and other important factors in a person's lifestyle, such as early relations attached to them, socialization with parents, identification with them, social class, ethnic groups, experiences with other children, ordinal position in the family, physical attractiveness, and success or failure in their academics (<http://psychology.jrank.org/pages/485/Personality-Development.html>).

Let's begin by talking about the home environment. It is said that 50% of a person's personality is influenced by the living conditions at home. In this case of course, the parents play a major role. A kid's personality can also start to shape by unpredictable experiences such as divorce. Like I stated before, parents have a huge impact in shaping a child's personality and when they decide to separate, it obviously impacts their children. Divorce generally creates stress between everyone in the family. After the death of a spouse, divorce is considered the worst cause of stress in a family. Another effect of divorce is that social relationships with friends and family also change; divorced parents also have to make adjustments for raising their children on their own.

The divorce of parents may impact children even more than the parents themselves. It tends to be the hardest thing for children who grow up thinking they are the reason why their parents separated. They also fantasize about their parents one day getting back together, and sometimes even worry about getting abandoned. Teenagers that experience the divorce of their parents can also be highly affected. A study shows that after experiencing the separation of their parents, those teenagers had difficulties committing to a relationship ten years later.

We have covered what temperament and personality were, as well as the effects of parents on a kid's childhood. Now let's switch things up a little and talk about another way in which kids around the world are growing up. These kids are called "Third Culture Kids."

What is a Third Culture Kid? A Third Culture Kid is a person who has spent a big portion of his or her childhood outside of the place in which their parents are originally from. These kids grow up meeting all types of people from a different variety of cultures and they begin to develop relationships of all kinds. The term "third culture" arrives from a study of two social scientists that traveled to India in the 1950s. It was there when they saw all types of different cultures working together in one community. Everyone came from different parts of the world and they all shared different sorts of traditions, however they all created one new environment that suited everyone. This new environment was called "third culture." The first culture was their home country; their host country (India in this case) was named second culture, and their new lifestyle was named third culture. As you can anticipate, the children of these people were named Third Culture Kids.

Like almost everything in the world, being a TCK (Third Culture Kid) has its benefits and challenges. The benefits can turn out to have a negative side, as well as the challenges can also bring a benefit in them; allow me to explain. As I stated in the definition, a TCK can develop different relationships to different kinds of cultures. This is something positive, but because of their high mobility of traveling from one country to another, they end up losing these relationships, creating sad feelings for them. However this same sadness and pain helps them build a greater empathy for others. These kids also experience a lot of different places and they learn to grow up and see the world in a different philosophical and political perspective. They learn that things can be looked at in more than just a single way.

I am personally not necessarily a TCK, but I am very similar to it. I was born in Berkeley, California and my mother was born in Mexico City, and at the age of one, my mom and I moved back to her homeland. It was there where I lived my childhood, and at the age of nine I came

back to the United States. I did not know a single word of English and I had to rapidly blend in with the language, school, kids, environment...everything. It was a completely new experience from me and I've learned how to get used to things in a short period of time. Speaking from my own experience, it is very hard to let go of people that you get so attached to. However, there has to be a time in which you have to lift your head up and get through the challenges that are given to you. When I left my grandmother, aunts, cousins, friends, my childhood place, when I left everything from Mexico for the first time, I was in a depressed and sad stage of my life. Since that moment I have learned to understand people and to not judge a book by its cover.

As the definition stated, TCKs have a home and a host country. This fact creates confusion among them because they have difficulties in deciding whether they should support their home country or their host one. They might really want to follow the rules and traditions of their host country but at the same time they may be going against the beliefs of their home. This confusion in their loyalties can make some of these kids seem unpatriotic and arrogant to their fellow citizens.

I personally feel very confident in supporting the traditions and culture of Mexico. However, I think this is only because I grew up only in Mexico City and I developed a strong feeling towards the country. In fact, I feel so much more Mexican than American.

To close the benefits and challenges up, TCKs have a higher chance of seeing events in general, such as in an article or on television, in a "3D" perspective. They can taste the tastes, smell the smells and also know exactly how the people in the event feel. Due to their high mobility, if any of these kids ever decided to write they may have a lot to talk about, meaning they can be amazing writers.

Third Culture Kids normally develop a way of adapting to different cultures. Using this as a primary tool for getting through their life of high cultural mobility. To define the way in which TCKs can easily adapt from one culture to another, they themselves, use the term "chameleon," which means that they need just a little amount of time to observe their surroundings before rapidly switching their language, style of relating to things, appearance, and of course their cultural characteristics. They build this characteristic simply so that they can fit better in the event in which they are located. However, even though this is a great characteristic about TCKs, it also brings big challenges to the table for these kids. Being a cultural chameleon can be very difficult because they never develop a true cultural knowledge anywhere.

I can highly relate to this because I always find myself changing the language I speak and the things I talk about in a way that feels very natural. I am always in situations when I am speaking Spanish and literally two or three seconds after I find myself speaking English, sometimes without even noticing it. However, when I spend time with friends that have spent all their lives in the United States, I am frequently unfamiliar with the topics they talk about, such as television shows, actors, and other popular icons in the American culture.

TCKs develop skills that help them survive through their lives. One example of these skills is observing. They learn how to pay close attention to what is going on around them so that they try to understand why the things around them are happening. Another skill they develop is socializing. TCKs build up some degree of confidence in which they have the good mentality of knowing that one day or another they will make friends wherever they are by socializing.

Finally, the most important one is probably their linguistic skills; the more fluent they are in more than one language the better their journey will be. Learning a variety of languages is potentially one of the most important skills to have when you are a TCK. Children who learn two languages at an early age develop a greater facility in speaking it, rather than those who begin to speak a different language in their teenage years.

I completely agree with this last one because when I first arrived to the U.S. my daily life was a huge challenge. I was completely lost in school and even though I tried my best to socialize, other students would take me as a joke. It wasn't until the day I started speaking English that I began to settle in school.

Third Culture Kids have trouble developing their mindset and life as a cause of all the traveling and experiences. The first issue in their development is when they have to discover their personal identity. They have been too busy learning about cultures and languages that they do not have sense of their own personal identity. TCKs also experience early maturity. They are not only seen as more mature by others, but they also feel more comfortable speaking to older kids rather than those that have the same age. However this does not goes the same way for everyone, even though there are kids that seem very advanced maturity-wise, there are also those that have stayed behind. Some TCKs can go up to the age of twenty-two to twenty-four in order to reach their maturity. This can also lead to pain on wondering why they can not be like others, not only for those TCKs but for their families as well.

Many people have told me that I act and think more mature than my age, others have also told me the opposite. I think that I have a little bit of both. Sometimes I can think and act in a very mature way, while other times I might be very childish. However, I think that whenever the situation gets to a serious point, I can easily be able to change the way I am acting into a much more serious one. I do not have ay difficulties on changing my reactions to things if I have to sometimes.

As I was in the process of researching, the fact that my mother, soccer, and Mexico are the most important things in my life was always stuck in my head. However, I began to realize that as I grow up and discover new things, my attractions and inspirations are beginning to grow. I learned from this research that it is very important to let things flow on their own. What I mean by this is that there were times in which I was stuck in the idea of only researching about my mom, soccer and Mexico. When I was doing this, my paper was becoming really frustrating, but when I decided to let my research guide me to the finish line, I began to not only enjoy it a lot more, but also to learn many interesting things.

Now you might be asking yourself, why should I care? Why did I just spend twenty minutes of my life reading this paper? Well I have an answer for you; I think that what you gain from this is not only knowledge about the way personalities shape and the way some kids are living these days, but also you were exposed to a reality that many don't see today, I have met some people that live in a paradise and they believe that everything is the same for everyone; they do not even have an idea of how hard the living situations are for some. When challenges are given to them, they spend more time crying and whining about the problem than actually getting through it, while others do everything they can to get through them, I believe that this is one of the biggest facts that makes TCKs special. They learn to easily view reality and know that things are extremely difficult, but most importantly they are not impossible. Now every time you have a challenge or a problem, spend the least time, none if possible, complaining about it and actually do something to reach your goal. Remember that nothing is impossible, you can always choose to achieve anything.

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