PSYCHOLOGY & SOCIOLOGY

STUDY QUESTIONS BY CHAPTER:

NOTE: Words in ***bold italics*** are available at www.summerjoybooks.com resource page.

1. Curiosity

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario begins the chapter with a story of a rivalry in 3rd grade. According to Erikson's stages of ***psychosocial development***, Mario would be in the stage of industry v. inferiority (typically age 6 – puberty). Describe characteristics of this stage that are seen in Mario.

B. How does Mario's experience of playground conflict assist or hinder him in successfully working through this life stage?

C. In the first paragraph of the book, Mario describes how he felt when he was first exposed to the "cripple" ***bias*** from kids at school. How did Mario come to terms with this, as he had not been previously exposed to the ***belief-bias effect*** at home?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. In Mario's experience it seems to be a social ***norm*** for anyone to ask and demand answers to personal questions, even from strangers. Where do the boundaries lay for people caught up in ***marginalization***, and why don't acceptable social ***norms*** (politeness, respect, courtesy, etc.) seem to apply to the physically challenged?

B. At what point do you think simple curiosity and questioning cross the line and become ***discrimination*** and biased behavior?

C. Can you list any examples of blatant or indirect ***discrimination*** Mario experiences in the "Curiosity" chapter?

D. At what stage of life did Mario begin to develop ***class consciousness***?

2. Rolling

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Maslow's ***Hierarchy of Needs*** places the order of needs as the following: ***Physiological, Security, Social Needs, Esteem***, and ***Self-Actualization***. In this chapter, Mario expressed being placed in physical harm due to an airline attendant's behavior. How would experiences like this affect Mario's ability to reach the higher level of needs in Maslow's Hierarchy?

B. Where would you place Mario on Maslow's ***Hierarchy of Needs***, and why?

C. Mario describes a time when he thought he was being kidnapped at a carnival and wheeled away by a stranger who grabbed his handlebars. How do you think this affected his sense of ***security***? Did he overcome this ***fear***; if so, how?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario describes "rolling" initially as an advantage point for him, e.g. moving quickly through crowds. Do you think this ability affects his ***social mobility***?

B. Mario also mentions the ***competition*** between "strollers," as he jokingly admits to competing with them for "rolling" space. Is this an example of a struggle within a ***class system***, or ***competition***? Explain.

C. When Mario was at a carnival, he thought he was being kidnapped, as a stranger grabbed his handlebars and tried to wheel him away. Does the fact that he is physically impaired make him a ***stereotype*** as a victim in society and vulnerable, despite the fact that he is physically muscular? Why do you think that is?

3. Vegetables

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. In terms of ***coping***, how did Mario deal with the ***stereotype*** that he was a "vegetable?"

B. Mario likes to go along with people's initial ***bias*** and add humor to the situation, if possible. Does Mario use humor as his main ***coping mechanism***, or are there others?

C. Mario explains at the glove-shopping incident, that when people don't look him in the eye, it's his "internal" signal that they are uncomfortable with him. He further states that it doesn't bother him, as he has experienced it often enough. How do you think this affects his ***self-awareness*** and ***self-concept***? How could it affect his ability to relate to strangers?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. How does Mario experience the concept of "***Social Distance***" as a disabled customer at the Big N' Tall store with his son? How did he directly observe this sociological

concept at work with the young clerk and how she treated him? What level would this experience measure on the *social distance scale*, in your opinion?

B. What experiences made Mario feel like a member of the *Out Group*, e.g. physically disabled?   Do people display hostile attitudes towards him? Do you think the disabled are considered the *Out Group* still in today's society? At your school or university? Explain why or why not. Why do you think the sales clerk was unable or unwilling to associate equally with Mario in this situation?

C. How was the concept of *Groupthink* at work in this chapter? Explain.

4. Jokesters

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Freud's *Sexual Stages* come into play in this chapter. What stages does Mario describe and explain how you know he was in that particular stage.

B. Mario describes "sick minds" in this chapter: people who enjoy picking on handicapped people. Why do people enjoy picking on others? What made Mario an easy mark for jokesters?   Do you think it's an attempt to relate to Mario in some way?

C. How does Mario deal with being the butt of the joke? What *coping mechanism* does he use on a daily basis?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario overhears his parents discussing how another handicapped man was attacked in a park in New York and then quickly agreed "not to tell Mario so he doesn't worry." How did this affect his *socialization*, and his *cognitive processes*? Do you think this affected his *emotions*?

B. Mario states he was 8 to 10 years old when he became "fully cognizant of his vulnerability as a handicapped child." Which *stage of socialization* was Mario experiencing at this time? (*Oral, Anal, Oedipal* or **Adolescent**)

C. As the victim or participant with so many pranksters and young jokesters, Mario mentions that often "others included me in the planning, which made me feel socially accepted even more." How did this experience cause Mario to experience more *social cohesion*?

5. Plan B

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Alfred Adler's "Individual Psychology" often emphasizes how individuals have an internal strive for *superiority* and strong motivations to *adapt*, improve, and master the environment. How do you see Mario reflecting this perspective?

B. How does Mario *cope* with his admitted feelings of loneliness and *depression* when he can't participate? Does he use outlets to channel this?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario describes an incident where he feared being attacked in the park near his home, while being left alone. How did Mario use his *socialized knowledge* of his *safety needs* to avoid *conflict* in this situation?

B. Is Mario experiencing *social oppression*? Please explain why or why not. Would you say that Mario is considered a *marginalized* group in society? Are there a lot of crimes reported that are committed against the *physically disabled*? How does this compare statistically to other violent crime victims?

6. Competition

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario describes a situation which he believed his boss was attempting to compete against him by standing on his tip-toes when talking to him.   Combined with other experiences, Mario states that when he interacts with tall Caucasian males, he immediately feels threatened. How has *conditioning* affected him as he relates to tall white males? Reflect upon Mario's experience utilizing Pavlov's concept of *Classical Conditioning* with the *Unconditioned Stimulus*, *Unconditioned Response*, and *Conditioned Response*.

B. Mario always wanted to be a baseball player. Growing up with a very athletic family, this was especially painful for him to watch second hand. How did Mario channel this love and deal with this loss? How did it affect his *drives*?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. From a sociological perspective, does Mario have a fair chance at competing in his workplace or *community*? Consider education, work ethic, business skills, etc. Please explain why or why not.

B. Did Mario's background (where he grew up, social status, etc.) affect his ability to compete in the workplace, or do you think it had more to do with his physical disability? Explain.

7. Mishaps

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Most studies on **bystander intervention** shows reluctance on people's part to help strangers, yet Mario seems to have no trouble asking and receiving assistance? What characteristics of Mario's **personality** make people want to help him?

B. Why do some people seem to get more help from strangers than others? Why is it that you think Mario has overcome the **fear** of asking for help from strangers? What are some other examples of **prosocial behaviors**?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. How do the mishaps that Mario constantly faces as a **physically disabled** person cause him to feel **alienation** from society?

B. According to Karl Marx and Ferdinand Tonnies' theories on the sociological concept of **alienation**, do you think Mario felt a sense of false separation of individual and society due to his experiences? Explain.

8. Naysayers

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario briefly discusses his lengthy stay at a children's hospital. Compare Mario's experience of hospitalization as a young child to John Bowlby's research on **attachment** with young children in hospitals. How do you think this **hospitalization** affected Mario while growing up?

B. Do you think Mario shows any signs of **Post-Traumatic Stress** due to events of his **hospitalization**? If so, what would be the signs and psychological reasoning behind his behavior?

C. How does Mario deal with the concept of **self-handicapping**, and a defeatist attitude?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. What **socio-economic status** did Mario and his family occupy in the early 50's, (born in 1952), in Cleveland Ohio?

B. When did Mario begin to develop his **social identify** and how was this development influenced.

C. When Mario was 8 months old he was diagnosed with *polio*, which he describes as the most dreaded disease of the age. What were the *social stigmas* attached to individuals with polio during the 50's?

D. What sort of *social labeling perspective* did Mario face constantly, and how did he still manage to claim a positive *social identity* and determination?

E. How was Mario's *social psychology* developed by certain experiences, e.g. being left in the church basement, experiences in the hospital.

F. Mario did not regularly use a wheelchair until around age 8. This is his primary means of physical mobility. How did this affect his sense of *social identity*? Did this help or hinder *social cohesion*? (Scouting trip, singing at the hospital, etc.)

9. Numbers

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. How does Mario's ability to quantify data in his mind using numbers help him mentally handle his daily struggles? Is this an ability enhanced by his disability? Describe how Mario may be experiencing *participatory coping*.

B. How does Mario deal psychologically with the *discrimination* he faces at the DMV? Which *coping mechanisms* do you see present?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. How did Mario fight the *stereotypes* and *discrimination* he saw from the DMV toward his aging father?

B. Compare the numbers that Mario talks about with *de jure* vs. *de facto segregation*?" Are any of these numbers supported by law, e.g. such as certain width or height requirements to accommodate disabled people? If so, are you able to cite the specific law?

C. Was there any evidence that Mario (and perhaps his father) experienced *social oppression*, e.g. DMV incident, treatment at the bank, trips to the grocery store, or simply using the restroom? Was Mario mistreated or exploited at any of these places due to his *socio-economic status*? If so, cite the example and reasons for your conclusion.

10. Fathering

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario alludes to his parenting/discipline style with his two children. How would you describe Mario's **parenting style** and what evidence do you have to support this conclusion (e.g. **authoritarian**, **authoritative**, and **permissive**)? Reflect upon how Mario's medical condition may have affected his parenting style.

B. How did Mario overcome his **fear** of being a good father?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario describes an accident that occurs with his newborn son that leads him to the hospital, only to be questioned for child abuse. How do Mario's physical limitations cause extra suspicion and possible legal consequences in this situation? Does this further **marginalize** the disabled fathers?

11. Awkwardness

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. How does Mario make **accommodations** according to Piaget with the constant awkwardness he faces? How does humor help with Mario's **cognitive dissonance** in his case?

B. In a few cases Mario is greeted with blatant **discrimination** and obvious lack of care for his wellbeing and comfort (restaurant incident). What are his natural responses in this situation? How does he reduce his **anxiety**? How does he plan for such occasions?

C. How would Mario's awareness (or **fear**) that an awkward situation could arise at any moment impact his level of professional confidence? How does this affect his **self-efficacy**?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. What **social norms** did Mario seem to violate when trying to eat dinner at a restaurant?

B. In thinking about **conformity** as behavior that is consistent with **norms**, did Mario experience **ascribed status**? How?

B. Do you see any evidence of **achieved status** in Mario? Why or why not?

C. The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** was passed in 1990, yet so many public places, e.g. such as restaurants, do not feel they have to comply with the act. Do you

think this is due to blatant *social conflict, social deviance,* or simply ignorance of the law? Explain.

12. Pretenders

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. According to Sigmund Freud, individuals utilize *ego defense mechanisms* in order to navigate difficult aspects of life. Do you see any evidence of *fight-or-flight response*, or *fixation*?

B. How would a "pretender," as Mario describes, be defined psychologically speaking?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario mentions how disappointed he was when he was replaced as the Crippled Children's Society's poster child by a boy who broke his leg sledding. What social term does this incident describe?

B. How are these "pretenders" automatically given a higher status than a "real" disabled person, in societal standards? What benefits and advantages are they given over someone like Mario?

13. Boxes

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Alfred Adler described "*compensation*" as an individual's attempt to overcome imagined or real *inferiorities* or weaknesses by developing one's abilities, and "**overcompensation**" as an individual's attempt to deny rather than acknowledge a real situation, or the exaggerated effort to conceal a weakness (*inferiority, superiority*). Identify possible incidents of *compensation* and *overcompensation* that Mario exhibits.

B. Mario states, "The more one is able to identify when 'boxes' are being used, and stereotypical thinking is running wild, the easier it becomes to design a plan to dispel it." What are some ways to identify when someone is giving way to *stereotypes* or *prejudice*?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. Mario describes the *stereotype* he faces daily; *"a disabled person is mentally limited, or worse, mentally incapacitated."* How does this *stereotype* affect his *anticipatory socialization* `daily? Give examples.

B. Regarding *social perception*, where do you think the mentally and physically challenged individuals fit in society? What is their *social role*? Would you categorize them as more or less *marginalized* members of society in comparison to racial/ethnic minorities, women or children?

C. How did the marginalized position of Mario growing up as a *physically disabled* person form his view of *conflict* vs. *community*?

D. Which view do you think Mario has? Is it one of *community* or a society of *conflict*? Explain how the *three processes of socialization* formed his view?

14. Heroes

PSYCHOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. In terms of *psychology* and *physical development*, how has Mario's list of heroes affected him as a child and as an adult? How would you describe Mario's *social support*?

B. Do you think if he didn't have these people in his life, the outcome would have been different for him? What impact did *reciprocal altruism* play?

C. Do you think the *motivation* for others to help Mario is due to *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* factors?

SOCIOLOGY QUESTIONS:

A. What does the *socio-economic* status of most of Mario's heroes appear to be? Is this a factor when considering benevolence? Do these heroes represent *agents of socialization* in Mario's life? Please explain.

B. Do you think Mario's heroes showed a deviation from the *norm* in society, by going above and beyond to help Mario's quality of life? What societal factors led to these heroes in Mario's life?