

April Stocks  
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### **April Stocks Final Project**

I am April Elizabeth Stocks. I was born on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1982 in Ogden, Utah at MaKayDee Hospital. I lived a trailer home in Layton, Utah until the age of 6 and then moved to a single family home in Kaysville, Utah where I lived for the rest of my childhood and adolescent years. I was the first child for my parents but I also have a younger brother who is ten years younger than me and is now 20 years old. My brother and I were raised by both our mom and dad and we grew up in a very conventional family setting. My mom and dad were happily married for 25 years until my dad passed away from a massive heart attack five years ago at the age of 47 and I can confidently say that they would still be married if my dad was still alive. My mom re-married almost three years ago to a man who has a son so I also have a step-dad and a younger step-brother as well.

I attended Columbia Elementary, Kaysville Jr. High, and Davis High schools but I dropped out of Davis High in the middle of my junior year of high school. After I left Davis High I decided to try home school. I ended up taking the GED instead and finished my schooling that way. I currently attend Salt Lake Community College and I am in the second semester of my freshman year. I waited until the age of 29 to return to school to get my college degree but I figure its better late than never.

I currently live in Salt Lake City, UT with my wonderful husband and beautiful daughters. I met my husband about seven years ago through some mutual friends. We have been together for five years, and married for a little over three years. We have two beautiful daughters. My oldest daughter Lizzie is 10 years old and is from a previous marriage, but my husband considers her his own daughter. My youngest daughter Aaliyah is 2 years old.

Now that I have described a little bit of my demographics let me start discussing some of the events in my life that I feel led me to where I am in my life today. Like I said before, I grew up in a very conventional family setting being raised by my mom and dad. I was an only child until 10 years old and I have to mention that I was a very “spoiled” child at that. My family gave me everything I wanted no matter what it was and it was something that I had to deal with as an adult. I feel that because my parents and grandparents gave me everything I ever wanted that I expected that later as an adult as well. In my first marriage I thought that I should always get my way and I was very stubborn about it too. After my first marriage failed I came to the realization that I shouldn’t live my life that way and that I need to compromise and meet people half way. I am happy to say now that I have improved on this area of my life that I always try to think about how my husband feels in any situation and in most cases I compromise with him to work out our arguments. There are unfortunately sometimes that my husband and I feel so strongly about something that we both won’t budge but at least we agree to disagree. I feel that if my parents would have set more rules and guidelines for me that I wouldn’t have stayed in the adolescent egocentrism long after adolescence which is when someone focuses on themselves more than others. One thing that this has taught me is that many times I teach my oldest daughter about others feelings so she doesn’t grow up the same way I did.

Growing up in Kaysville, UT our neighborhood was predominately of the LDS faith so I had a lot of friends that were LDS even though my family and I were not. Most of the children in the neighborhood were accepting of me and also invited me to church events with them. Even though I was not LDS and would not be joining because of my parents beliefs I was able to attend church camps and other fun activities with the young women. Now that I look back I had a great influence in the children that I hung out with in the neighborhood because they kept me

out of trouble. I stopped hanging around the LDS group of girls around 10 or 11 years old when another family moved in the neighborhood that was not LDS. Because our families had more in common I became extremely close with them and this is when I actually started getting in more trouble. The girls that moved into the neighborhood didn't have many rules and could be a little bad at times. Unfortunately becoming friends with them was the wrong decision but I would have never known this as a child. The textbook states that around 10 years old a child will likely seek friends who share their interests and values which is what I did when I switched friends from the LDS girls to the other girls with no religious beliefs. Now that I read "Invitation to the Life Span" I realize that nature and nurture affect us morally. In my community I valued the LDS children's views while I was being influenced by them but when I found someone that took on the views that were closer to the views of my family and I felt closer to them instead. I wish I would have stuck with the religious group of children so I wouldn't have done some of the bad things as an early adolescent that I will explain a little later on in the paper. Also I wish I would have had the religious support because as stated in the textbook it notes that "having faith is psychologically protective and can help children reinterpret their negative experiences [sic]." This relates to what I went through at a young age that I feel changed my life direction. I feel that if I would have stayed in the religious community it would have helped me get through the abuse I had to endure.

At 6 years old I started getting sexually abused by my aunt's husband. It was easy for him to get to me because my cousin (his step-daughter) was my best friend as a child and I was always around her. Because we were always together we spent half the time at her house therefore giving him a chance to take advantage of me. This was one of the hardest things I have had to deal with in life because I feel that it made me vulnerable to making some bad choices

later on in my life. I was abused by my aunt's husband until I was around 11 years old. I remember I was so afraid of telling anyone about what he was doing to me because he would threaten me with harming my mom, dad, and even me. One day I was sitting on a friend's trampoline and as we were talking I came out and told her and her sister about what had been happening to me for the last five years. They had me tell their mom who I felt very close with because she treated me as one of her own children. After I talked to their mom she advised me to tell my parents. It was really hard for me to tell my parents but I did. I think this was extremely hard for my father. I had never really seen him cry and to be honest don't remember ever seeing him cry until this day. For a long time I felt like I was the one to blame because I let this happen to myself and I took so long to tell anyone.

My mom took me to a counselor because I had a hard time dealing with the abuse but during my second session she asked me to write my abuser a letter to tell him exactly what he did to me mentally. I remember trying to write the letter but it was too hard for me to do. I remember begging my mom not to make me go back to the counselor. I just don't think that I was ready at that age to deal with what had happened. I used to think that being sexually abused as a child lead me to having sexual encounters at a young age and especially with older guys. Now that I read "Invitation to the Life Span" I realize that it really is a reason that I did so. I am sad to say that when I was 14 years old I was in a relationship with an eighteen year old.

Another thing that being sexually abused as a child has done to me is be more cautious with my own children. I don't trust just anyone with my children, but even being cautious you never really know because like stated in the textbook most of the time when sexual abuse happens it will usually come from someone close to the family. Being abused has affected me as

a whole. My body and mind and I would never want either of my children to go through being abused. I just hope that I can prevent them from having to endure this kind of pain.

As I stated above I realize that I made friends with the wrong people and it affected some of the choices that I made along the way in my adolescent years. As a teenager around 13 or so I tried marijuana and also had drunk every once in a while. Because the girls that I hung out with and I had very few rules we never got in trouble for doing marijuana or drinking. In fact around 15 I told my mom that I was going to a party and asked for some alcohol. She actually gave some to me to take to the party because I explained that we would be staying at the house and was not going to go out to drive anywhere. My mother also knew that I smoked marijuana but because at the time she also smoked it so she felt that she couldn't tell me that I couldn't do it. I don't know if it was because she wanted to seem cool to me for letting me do it or if she just didn't care but now that I am an adult with children this is borderline neglect. Now in the textbook it explains that neglect is an uninvolved parent and although this doesn't show un-involvement on my mom's part it does show allowing me as a teenager to do something that I shouldn't have been doing. There were also times that I was high on drugs and my mom would have never noticed or just didn't care. I will not allow this to happen with my children.

Even though my oldest daughter is only 10 years old I have talked to her numerous times about the importance of keeping away from drugs and alcohol and how damaging it could be to her mind and body. Drugs are everywhere in our communities especially available to teenagers and I do not want my children to feel that drugs or alcohol are ok to try. We do not smoke, drink, or do drugs in our home and the textbook states that not doing those things in your home you will encourage your children not to as well. I love my mom dearly and she was a great parent when it came to showing love but some of her parenting practices were not the greatest.

Allowing me to do drugs and alcohol I believe led me to having less motivation in school therefore leading me to do the next thing pivotal moment in my life.

Like I stated in my introduction about myself I mentioned that I dropped out of high school in the middle of my junior year. I regret this with all of my heart and soul. I wish I would have had the motivation in school that I have in life right now. I think that doing drugs, alcohol, and having sex at a young age lead me to having less motivation in school which lead me to drop out of school. Most of the friends that I hung out with in school ditched school often and so did I. At the time I felt that friends and fun were much more important than my education. I now know that I was completely wrong. Around 18 or 19 years old I decided to get my GED to finish my high school education after my grandma urged me to do so. I passed without even studying and scored at the top in a group of over 20 people who took the test with me.

I have never had a problem with being smart enough for school but ever since my adolescent years I just didn't have the motivation for it which was also listed as one of the reasons for dropping out of school in the textbook "Invitation to the Life Span". Also another reason that the textbook lists is to be admired and fit in with their peers, which is what I did. My friends didn't take school seriously and neither did I. I realize now that I am older that school is one of the most important things that people can do in their lives. It helps them achieve a career and provide for themselves and their family. I never realized what dropping out of school would do to my life. I have never had a job that I really loved. College is more important now days than it was many years ago. Most careers and jobs require a college degree and I barely finished high school. After meeting my second husband he helped me realize just how important college is. Also reading in the textbook it also lists how important a higher education is in life. Now I

realize that most people graduate high school and now days pursue a higher education for a better life. Most of my current friends are pursuing a higher education like myself or have a concrete career.

The last pivotal event that I want to list is one of the most important ones that have affected my life. My dad passed away in 2007 at the age of 47 years old from a massive heart attack. His passing came very unexpectedly. My dad seemed like a very healthy man on the outside because he was very active and was very lean. I was only 25 years old when he passed away. I have always been very close to my family. They are the most important thing in my life and always have been, even when I was a horrible adolescent. My family always did fun things together. We always went camping, to dinner, to movies, and just spent a lot of time together. This is something that I have always felt is important and that I make sure to instill in my children.

Losing my dad was the worst thing I have ever been through in my life. I know that people die and it is a fact of life but losing a parent is extremely difficult. After my father passed away I started going through a rough time in my life. I had been going through a lot as a single parent and other stresses that I was going through at the time, then to have to endure the death of my dad made it to where I had an allostatic load. Luckily there is a happy ending to my long story. As I listed earlier in my introduction that I had met my husband seven years ago through mutual friends, we both had a “crush” on each other but never acted on them because most of the time one of us were in a relationship. After my husband heard that my father had passed away he contacted me by phone (which he had never done before this happened) and asked me to come hang out with him and some of our friends. This was ten days after my dad passed away. I hesitated but ultimately decided to go meet up with him. I am so glad I did because from that

day forward we decided to start dating and that is the day that I started the rest of my life. We ended up getting married a couple years after dating and I am so happy that I have had his support the last five years of my life. I really don't know where I would be without my husband and daughters. The textbook lists that that social support is crucial in reducing allostatic load and I completely agree. Their love and support have really helped me through the toughest time in my life. If they weren't around I probably would have gotten into drugs again or something drastic. I am so grateful for their support and also for the rest of my family's support as well.

Although previously I have explained some of the things that my parents may have done wrong I know that they didn't mean to parent in a harmful way. They were young parents and were just doing what they felt that was right to them. I was the first child for them being the "experimental child" in their case. I know that I am definitely not a perfect parent and I don't think there are many perfect parents in today's society. I feel that if I wouldn't have had the kind of love and support that I had from my parents as a child or adolescent I think I would have ended up doing even worse things. I know now that I am a parent that my parents were just doing what they thought was best for me and the family. I am lucky enough to have found such a wonderful man who has helped teach me the right things to do as a parent. I am also lucky to be able to learn things as I take classes such as this human development class to help me along the way to good parenting.