

Chapter
4**SOCIALIZATION****Reading Test***Sociology and You*, pp. 113–114

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

CASE STUDIES ON ISOLATED CHILDREN

To understand more about how socialization affects development, we will look at the case histories of three children—Anna, Isabelle, and Genie—who were socially and emotionally abused. Although these three children were born many years ago, unfortunately similar situations still occur.

Who was Anna? Anna was the second child born to her unmarried mother. At first, Anna's strict grandfather had forced her mother to take Anna and leave home, but desperation drove them back again. Anna's mother so feared that the sight of the child would anger her father that she kept Anna contained to a small room on the second floor of the farmhouse. For five years, Anna received only milk to eat or drink. When finally found, she was barely alive. Her legs were skeleton-like and her stomach bloated from malnutrition. Apparently, Anna had seldom been moved from one position to another, and her clothes and bedding were filthy. She did not know what it was like to be held or comforted. At the time of her discovery, Anna could not walk or talk and showed no signs of intelligence.

During the first year and a half after being found, Anna lived in a county home for children. Here, she learned to walk, to understand simple commands, and to feed herself. She could recall people she had seen. But her speech was that of a one-year-old. Anna was then transferred to a school for retarded children, where she made some

further progress. Still, at the age of seven, her mental age was only nineteen months, and her social maturity was that of a two-year-old. A year later, she could bounce and catch a ball, participate as a follower in group activities, eat normally (although with a spoon only), attend to her toilet needs, and dress herself (except for handling buttons and snaps). At this point, she had acquired the speech level of a two-year-old. By the time of her death at age ten, she had made some additional progress. She could carry out instructions, identify a few colors, build with blocks, wash her hands, brush her teeth, and try to help other children. Her developing capacity for emotional attachment was reflected in the love she had developed for a doll.

Who was Isabelle? Nine months after Anna was found, Isabelle was discovered. She, too, had been kept in isolation because her mother was unmarried. Isabelle's mother had been deaf since the age of two and did not speak. She stayed with her child in a dark room, secluded from the rest of the family. When found at the age of six and a half, Isabelle was physically ill from an inadequate diet and lack of sunshine. Her legs were so bowed that when she stood the soles of her shoes rested against each other, and her walk was a skittering movement. Some of her actions were like those of a six-month-old infant. Unable to talk except for a strange croaking sound, Isabelle communicated with her mother by means of gestures. Like an animal in the wild, she reacted with fear and hostility to strangers, especially men.

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

At first, Isabelle was thought to be feeble-minded (her initial IQ score was near the zero point). Nevertheless, an intensive program of rehabilitation was begun. After a slow start, Isabelle progressed through the usual stages of learning and development at a faster pace than normal. It took her only two years to acquire the skills mastered by a normal six-year-old. By the time she was eight and a half, Isabelle was on an educational par with children her age. By outward appearances, she was an intelligent, happy, energetic child. At age fourteen, she participated in all the school activities normal for other children in her grade.

To Isabelle's good fortune, she, unlike Anna, benefited from intensive training at the hands of trained professionals. Her ability to progress may also have been due to the fact that she was confined with her mother for company.

A more recent case did not end as well as Isabelle's. Genie had been kept isolated in a locked room by her father from the time she was nearly two. When she was found at the age of thirteen, much of her behavior was subhuman. Because Genie's father severely

punished her for making any sounds whatever, she was completely silent. She never sobbed when she cried or spoke when angry. Never having been given solid food, she could not chew. Because she had spent her entire life strapped in a potty chair, Genie could not stand erect, straighten her arms or legs, or run. Her social behavior was primitive. She blew her nose on whatever was handy or into the air when nothing was available. Without asking, she would take from people things that attracted her attention.

Attempts to socialize Genie spanned four years. The efforts were not successful. At the end of the four-year period, Genie could not read, could speak only in short phrases, and had just begun to control some of her feelings and behavior. Genie paid a high price—her full development as a human being—for the isolation, abuse, and lack of human warmth she experienced.

What can we learn from these case studies? The implication of the cases of Anna, Isabelle, and Genie is unmistakable. The personal and social development associated with being human is acquired through intensive and prolonged social contact with others.

1. Why was Anna kept in isolation?
 - A. She was grossly overweight.
 - B. Her mother had died.
 - C. Her mother was unmarried.
 - D. Her father had died.

2. Why was Isabelle's speech development stunted?
 - A. Isabelle's mother was deaf and did not speak.
 - B. Isabelle's father spoke French and her mother spoke English.
 - C. Isabelle did not have a fully formed tongue.
 - D. Isabelle was feeble-minded.

3. What did Genie lose as a result of her isolation and abuse?
 - A. her father's affection for her
 - B. her independence
 - C. her ability to see and hear
 - D. her full development as a human being

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4. Which girl eventually reached the educational, emotional, and social skills normal for a child her age?
- A. Anna
 - B. Isabelle
 - C. Genie
 - D. None of the girls

5. How did Isabelle react to strangers, especially men? Suggest possible reasons.

6. Summarize Anna's life after she was found; describe the results of Anna's rehabilitation, listing some of the skills she eventually learned.
