ERIKSON’S PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Each stage builds upon the previous one and incorporates it. In each, the individual is confronted with a major crisis that must be successfully resolved if healthy development is to occur.

Ego Integrity vs. Despair
Virtue: WISDOM: fulfillment & satisfaction with one’s life
Power of Regeneration

Generativity vs. Stagnation
Virtue: CARE: Solicitude, guidance & teaching a new generation
Productivity and Service

Intimacy vs. Isolation
Virtue: LOVE: Mutuality, finding & losing self in the other; career commitments
Care for Another Without Losing the Self

Identity vs. Role Confusion
Virtue: FIDELITY & an integrated image of oneself as a unique person
Try Different Roles, Sense of Self, Life Meaning

Industry vs. Inferiority
Virtue: COMPETENCE in intellectual, physical & social skills
Knowing and Learning and Cooperating

Initiative vs. Guilt
Virtue: PURPOSE & direction: Ability to initiate own activities; pursue goals
Motor and Mental Imagining and Feeling

Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
Virtue: WILL Use & exercise freedom and self-restraint
Power of Sensing and Doing

Trust vs Mistrust
Virtue: HOPE & Optimism
Power of Being

2ND ADULTHOOD 55/65 and up
Retirement, Old Age
How can I receive a “gift”?

1ST ADULTHOOD 30 → 55/65
New Family, Work
How can I fashion a “gift”?

INTIMACY From 28 to 30 years → up to 35 + years
Partners in Friendship and Sex
How can I love?

ADOLESCENCE 13 → 28 up to 30 years
Family, Peer Groups, Out-Groups
How can I fit into the adult world? Who am I?

INTERDEPENDENCE (SCHOOL AGE) 6 → 12 years
Family, Neighborhood, School
How can I be good?

INDEPENDENCE (PLAY AGE) 3 → 6 years
Family – Preschool
How can I be powerful?

COUNTERDEPENDENCE (OPPOSITIONAL BONDING)
18 months → 3 years EXPLORATION
9 months → 18 months SEPARATION
How can I be independent?

HEALTHY DEPENDENCE (SYMBIOTIC BONDING)
BIRTH 0 → 9 months
ATTACHMENT STYLES: SECURE OR ANXIOUS OR AVOIDANT
How can I be secure?

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ERIK ERIKSON: *Childhood and Society* was Erikson's first book, first published in 1950 and revised in 1963. It won him wide recognition as a leading ego psychologist. Erikson identified a series of eight crises that, he said, characterized the growth of personality. A crisis is a challenge to the ego, a threat, an opportunity to grow and improve. Erikson described a lifelong series of crises and called them *psychosocial stages*.

PROBLEM OR VIRTUE? The table summarizes Erikson's stage theory, first described by Erik Erikson at a 1950 White House conference on development. For example, at the top we see that infancy is characterized by a struggle between *basic trust and mistrust*. This is very much like Karen Horney's idea that the mother and young child establish a relationship that creates either basic trust or basic anxiety. If the crisis is successfully resolved (if it has a happy outcome) the child is left with *hope* instead of despair. Hope is a willingness to enter into trusting relationships with others. Similarly, each other crisis or conflict could result in a problem or a new "virtue." Progress or development was achieved by resolving each conflict.

ADOLESCENCE: Erikson felt that adolescents were engaged in a struggle between identity and feelings of confusion. *Identity* consists of self-descriptions and self-perceptions and includes one's values and beliefs. If the conflict between identity and confusion is resolved in favor of identity, the result is *fidelity*: the ability to be true to something, to devote oneself wholeheartedly to a good purpose.

Erikson was described in the early 1980s as the fifth most influential psychologist of the century (Gilgen, 1982). Much research has been done on predictions made by Erikson's theory, especially the adolescent crisis of *identity vs. role confusion*. Erikson is one of the few famous personality theorists who said anything interesting about adolescence."

Marcia (1966) proposed four distinct *ego identity statuses* applied to adolescents, derived from Erikson's theory. These can be shown as a 2 x 2 matrix. If a person has experienced a crisis and made a commitment, he or she has "achieved an identity." If the young person accepts what is given by parents or some social institution, and does not feel that this conflicts with his or her own identity, this is called "foreclosure." Sometimes teenagers deliberately postpone making any lasting commitment. This is called a "moratorium" phase, with identity put on hold. Finally, there is the "identity diffuse" person who experiences neither an identity crisis nor a commitment to a definite personal identity. This has been called "a commitment to not making a commitment."

Marcia and co-workers found that "foreclosers" tend to have closer relationships with parents (Marcia, 1980).

"Identity diffuse" students tend to regard parents as indifferent or rejecting and are more likely to respond to peer pressures (Adams and colleagues, 1985).

GENERATIVITY UNLIMITED: Van De Water and McAdams (1989) found that *generativity*, supposedly a product of middle adulthood, is not limited by age.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE: "Midlife crisis" is very famous, but it is not universal. A 1971 study of middle-aged men found a variety of developmental paths, with relatively few men reporting a mid-life crisis. Similarly, a great deal of research shows that adolescence is not always marked by rebellion and questioning of parental values.

### IDENTITY STATUS IN ADOLESCENCE

**HAS A CRISIS BEEN EXPERIENCED?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HAS A COMMITMENT BEEN MADE?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Identity achievement. Experienced crisis; made a commitment.</td>
<td>Foreclosure. Accepts what is given by parents or social institution; no conflict with identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Moratorium. Postpone commitment; put identity on hold.</td>
<td>Identity diffusion. See parents as indifferent or rejecting; respond to peer pressure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Identity diffuse" students tend to regard parents as indifferent or rejecting and are more likely to respond to peer pressures (Adams and colleagues, 1985).