

Erickson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

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Introduction

- Erikson was a developmental psychologist who specialized in child psychoanalysis and was best known for his theory of psychosocial development.
- Psychosocial development is just a fancy phrase that refers to how a person's individual needs (psycho) mesh with the needs or demands of society (social).
- Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development is a theory introduced in the 1950s by the psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson.

Introduction

- It built upon Freud's theory of psychosexual development by drawing parallels in childhood stages while expanding it to include the influence of social dynamics as well as the extension of psychosocial development into adulthood.
- It posits eight sequential stages of individual human development influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors throughout the lifespan.
- This bio-psychosocial approach has influenced several fields of study, including gerontology, personality development, identity formation, life cycle development, and more.

Introduction

- According to Erikson, a person passes through eight developmental stages that build on each other.
- At each stage we face a crisis. By resolving the crisis, we develop psychological strengths or character traits that help us become confident and healthy people.
- Erikson's theory of psychosocial development gives us a way to view the development of a person through an entire lifespan.
- But like all theories, it has its limitations: Erikson doesn't describe the exact way that conflicts are resolved. Neither does he detail how you move from one stage to the next.

Eight Stages

Stage 1: Trust vs. Mistrust

Stage 2: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

Stage 3: Initiative vs. Guilt

Stage 4: Industry vs. Inferiority

Stage 5: Identity vs. Confusion -----

Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation

Stage 7: Generativity vs. Stagnation

Stage 8: Integrity vs. Despair-----

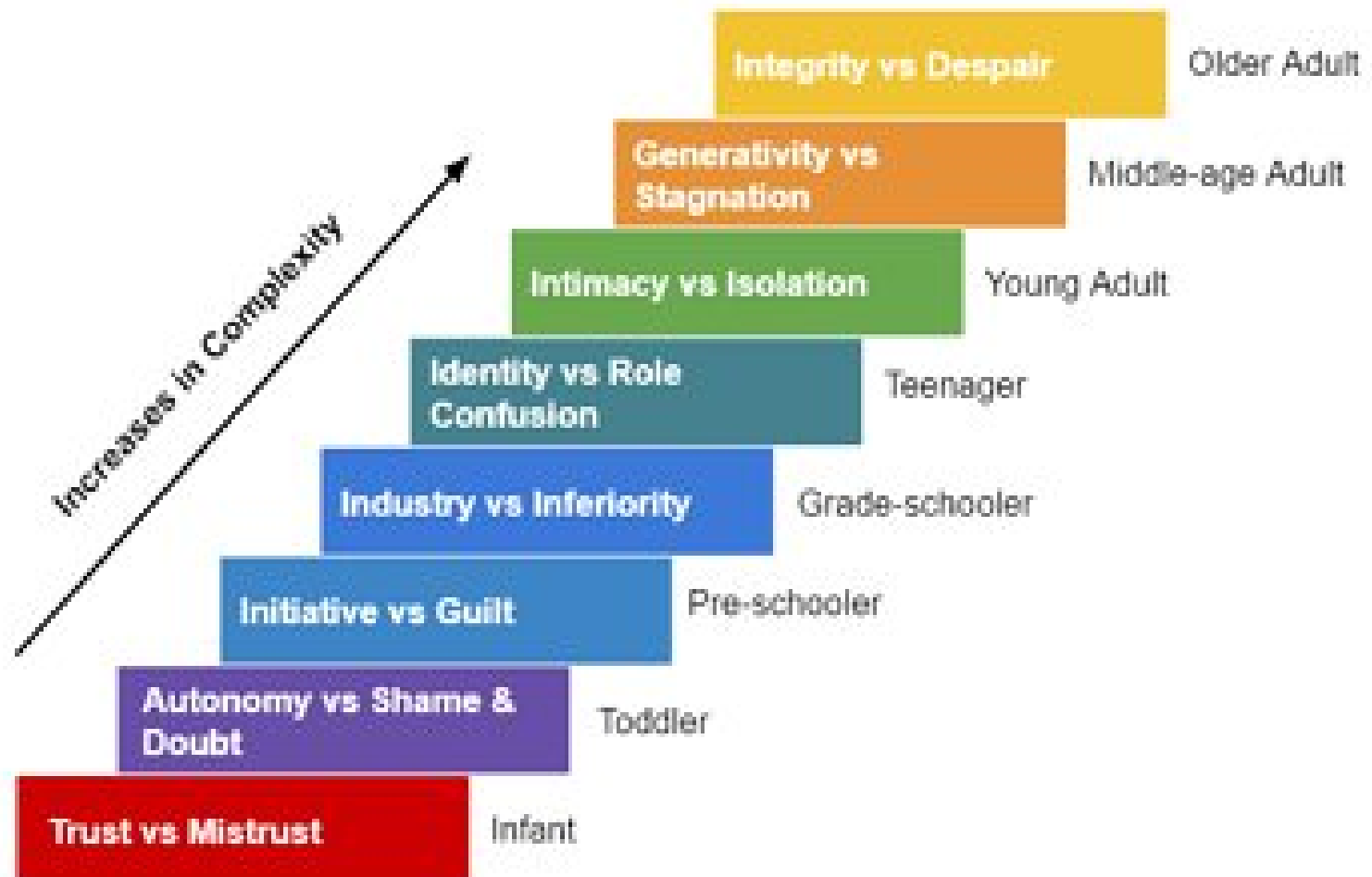
Childhood

Adolescence

Adulthood

Old Age

Stages of Psychosocial Development



Stage 1: Trust vs. Mistrust

Birth to 18 months old

Virtue: Hope, Maldevelopment: Withdrawal

- The first stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development occurs between birth and 1 year of age and is the most fundamental stage in life.
- Because an infant is utterly dependent, developing trust is based on the dependability and quality of the child's caregivers.
- At this point in development, the child is utterly dependent upon adult caregivers for everything they need to survive including food, love, warmth, safety, and nurturing.
- If a caregiver fails to provide adequate care and love, the child will come to feel that they cannot trust or depend upon the adults in their life.

- If a child successfully develops trust, the child will feel safe and secure in the world.
- Caregivers who are inconsistent, emotionally unavailable, or rejecting contribute to feelings of mistrust in the children under their care. Failure to develop trust will result in fear and a belief that the world is inconsistent and unpredictable.
- During the first stage of psychosocial development, children develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care, and affection. A lack of this will lead to mistrust.
- **Trust:** When caregivers respond promptly to an infant's cries, the baby can learn to rely on others. As caregivers fill an infant's needs, the baby can develop a sense of trust and security.
- **Mistrust:** If caregivers neglect an infants' needs, or if care is sporadic, an infant may grow insecure. They may learn they cannot rely on others and thus feel unsafe.

Stage 2: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

2 to 3 years

Virtue: Will, Maldevelopment: Compulsion

- The second stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development takes place during early childhood and is focused on children developing a greater sense of personal control.
- At this point in development, children are just starting to gain a little independence.
- They are starting to perform basic actions on their own and making simple decisions about what they prefer.
- By allowing kids to make choices and gain control, parents and caregivers can help children develop a sense of autonomy.

- The essential theme of this stage is that children need to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence. Potty training plays an important role in helping children develop this sense of autonomy.
- Children who struggle and who are shamed for their accidents may be left without a sense of personal control.
- Success during this stage of psychosocial development leads to feelings of autonomy; failure results in feelings of shame and doubt.
- **Autonomy:** In this stage, caregivers often serve as a safe base from which to explore the world. When caregivers encourage independence, children will feel secure enough to take risks.
- **Shame:** Children whose caregivers discourage them may develop feelings of shame. If caregivers foster excessive dependence, the child may learn to doubt their own abilities.

Stage 3: Initiative vs. Guilt

3 to 5 years old

Virtue: Purpose, Maldevelopment: Inhibition

- The third stage of psychosocial development takes place during the preschool years.
- At this point in psychosocial development, children begin to assert their power and control over the world through directing play and other social interactions.
- Children who are successful at this stage feel capable and able to lead others.
- Those who fail to acquire these skills are left with a sense of guilt, self-doubt, and lack of initiative.

- ***Initiative***: When caregivers nurture these tendencies, children learn how to make decisions and plan for the future. They can grow into adults who are able to follow their ambitions.
- ***Guilt***: If children are criticized for being assertive, they may feel guilt for pursuing their desires. Controlling caregivers may teach children to follow another's lead rather than starting their own plans.

Stage 4: Industry vs. Inferiority

5 to 12 years old

Virtue: Competence, Maldevelopment: Inertia (passivity)

- The fourth psychosocial stage takes place during the early school years from approximately ages 5 to 12. Through social interactions, children begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments and abilities.
- Children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority.
- Children who are encouraged and commended by parents and teachers develop a feeling of competence and belief in their skills.
- Those who receive little or no encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers will doubt their abilities to be successful.

- ***Industry:*** Children who are accomplished compared to their peers can develop self-confidence and pride. Praise for their achievements can boost their self-esteem.
- ***Inferiority:*** Children who do not achieve certain milestones may doubt their abilities or self-worth. When children are constantly criticized, they may develop feelings of inferiority.

Stage 5: Identity vs. Confusion

12 to 18 years old

Virtue: Fidelity, Maldevelopment: Repudiation

- The fifth psychosocial stage takes place during the often turbulent teenage years.
- This stage plays an essential role in developing a sense of personal identity which will continue to influence behavior and development for the rest of a person's life.
- Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity.
- Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself, while failure leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self.

- During adolescence, children explore their independence and develop a sense of self.
- Those who receive proper encouragement and reinforcement through personal exploration will emerge from this stage with a strong sense of self and feelings of independence and control.
- Those who remain unsure of their beliefs and desires will feel insecure and confused about themselves and the future.
- **Identity:** To succeed in this stage, adolescents need to establish a coherent sense of self. They will need to determine their priorities in life (family, academic success, etc.). Then they will need to set goals for their adult selves based on those values.
- **Role confusion:** Some adolescents may have a weak sense of self. They may struggle to break away from the person their parents or peers expect them to be. Without a consistent identity, they may grow confused about what they truly want for the future.

Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation

18 to 40 years old

Virtue: Love, Maldevelopment: Distantiation

- Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people.
- Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.
- This stage covers the period of early adulthood when people are exploring personal relationships.
- Erikson believed it was vital that people develop close, committed relationships with other people. Those who are successful at this step will form relationships that are enduring and secure.

- Successful resolution of this stage results in the virtue known as love. It is marked by the ability to form lasting, meaningful relationships with other people.
- **Intimacy:** Relationships can be a key source of affection and intimacy in adulthood. Many find emotional benefits from having a committed, lifelong bond.
- **Isolation:** According to Erikson, people who do not develop relationships may become socially isolated. They may develop long-term feelings of loneliness.

Stage 7: Generativity vs. Stagnation

40 to 65 years old

Virtue: Care, Maldevelopment: Rejectivity

- Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or creating a positive change that benefits other people.
- Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.
- During adulthood, we continue to build our lives, focusing on our career and family.
- Those who are successful during this phase will feel that they are contributing to the world by being active in their home and community.
- Those who fail to attain this skill will feel unproductive and uninvolved in the world.

- Care is the virtue achieved when this stage is handled successfully.
- Being proud of your accomplishments, watching your children grow into adults, and developing a sense of unity with your life partner are important accomplishments of this stage.
- **Generativity:** People may offer guidance to the next generation through parenting or mentorship. They may also offer lead the way by leaving a legacy. Contributing to society's future can give people a sense of community and purpose.
- **Stagnation:** Some people may feel as if they have no impact on society. If people do not find their work meaningful, they may feel restless or isolated. Some may feel they have "peaked" and that their lives will only get worse in the future.

Stage 8: Integrity vs. Despair

Over 65 years old

Virtue: Wisdom, Maldevelopment: Disdain

- The final psychosocial stage occurs during old age and is focused on reflecting back on life.
- At this point in development, people look back on the events of their lives and determine if they are happy with the life that they lived or if they regret the things they did or didn't do.
- At this stage, people reflect back on the events of their lives and take stock.
- Those who look back on a life they feel was well-lived will feel satisfied and ready to face the end of their lives with a sense of peace.
- Those who look back and only feel regret will instead feel fearful that their lives will end without accomplishing the things they feel they should have.

- Those who are unsuccessful during this stage will feel that their life has been wasted and may experience many regrets. The person will be left with feelings of bitterness and despair.
- Those who feel proud of their accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity. Successfully completing this phase means looking back with few regrets and a general feeling of satisfaction. These individuals will attain wisdom, even when confronting death.
- ***Integrity:*** Those who feel fulfilled by their lives can face death and aging proudly.
- ***Despair:*** People who have disappointments or regrets may fall into despair.



Summary

Age	Conflict	Important Events	Outcome
Infancy (birth to 18 months)	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	Hope
Early Childhood (2 to 3 years)	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Toilet Training	Will
Preschool (3 to 5 years)	Initiative vs. Guilt	Exploration	Purpose
School Age (6 to 11 years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	School	Confidence
Adolescence (12 to 18 years)	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Social Relationships	Fidelity
Young Adulthood (19 to 40 years)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Relationships	Love
Middle Adulthood (40 to 65 years)	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Work and Parenthood	Care
Maturity (65 to death)	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Reflection on Life	Wisdom

Criticism

- One major weakness of psychosocial theory is that the exact mechanisms for resolving conflicts and moving from one stage to the next are not well described or developed.
- The theory fails to detail exactly what type of experiences are necessary at each stage in order to successfully resolve the conflicts and move to the next stage.
- Erikson is rather vague about the causes of development. What kinds of experiences must people have to successfully resolve various psychosocial conflicts and move from one stage to another? The theory does not have a universal mechanism for crisis resolution.

Criticism

- Indeed, Erikson (1964) acknowledges his theory is more a descriptive overview of human social and emotional development that does not adequately explain how or why this development occurs. For example, Erikson does not explicitly explain how the outcome of one psychosocial stage influences personality at a later stage.

Strengths

- One of the strengths of psychosocial theory is that it provides a broad framework from which to view development throughout the entire lifespan.
- It also allows us to emphasize the social nature of human beings and the important influence that social relationships have on development.
- Based on Erikson's ideas, psychology has reconceptualized the way the later periods of life are viewed. Middle and late adulthood are no longer viewed as irrelevant, because of Erikson, they are now considered active and significant times of personal growth.

Strengths

- Erikson's theory has good face validity. Many people find that they can relate to his theories about various stages of the life cycle through their own experiences.
- One of the strengths of Erikson's theory is its ability to tie together important psychosocial development across the entire lifespan.



*thanks
for watching*

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