

Erikson's Psycho-social Development Theory

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Introduction

- What is psychosocial development?
- Why study Erikson's theory?
- Connection between **psychological growth** and **social relationships**

About Erik Erikson

- German-American developmental psychologist (1902–1994)
- Trained under Sigmund Freud but expanded Freud's theories
- Focused on **identity, social interaction**, and development across the **entire lifespan**
- Introduced the term "**identity crisis**"

- What is Psychosocial Development?
- Theory explains **8 stages of human development**
- Each stage = a **crisis or conflict** that must be resolved
- Resolution of conflicts leads to **healthy personality**
- Unresolved crises can lead to **psychological challenges**

Structure of Each Stage

- Each stage includes:
- **Age Range**
- **Psychosocial Conflict**
- **Positive Outcome (Virtue)**
- **Negative Outcome**

- **Stage 1: Trust vs. Mistrust**

- **Age:** Birth – 1.5 years (Infancy)
- **Key Question:** "Can I trust the people around me?"
- **Task:** Develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care, and affection.
- **Positive Outcome:** Trust in the world and confidence in caregivers.
- **Negative Outcome:** Fear, suspicion, anxiety, insecurity.
- **Virtue:** Hope
- **Example:** A baby cries and is comforted by the parent → learns the world is safe.

- **Stage 2: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt**
- **Age:** 1.5 – 3 years (Toddlerhood)
- **Key Question:** "Can I do things by myself?"
- **Task:** Develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence.
- **Positive Outcome:** Autonomy, confidence, self-control.
- **Negative Outcome:** Shame, doubt, dependence.
- **Virtue:** Will
- **Example:** Toilet training, choosing clothes, feeding self → encouraged = confident; scolded = ashamed.

- **Stage 3: Initiative vs. Guilt**
- **Age:** 3 – 5 years (Preschool)
- **Key Question:** "Is it okay for me to do things, make decisions, and explore?"
- **Task:** Begin asserting control and power over the environment through planning and initiating activities.
- **Positive Outcome:** Initiative, leadership, decision-making.
- **Negative Outcome:** Guilt, over-dependence on adults.
- **Virtue: Purpose**
- **Example:** A child starts a game or makes up a story; support encourages creativity; restriction leads to guilt.

- **Stage 4: Industry vs. Inferiority**
- **Age:** 5 – 12 years (School Age)
- **Key Question:** "Can I make it in the world of people and things?"
- **Task:** Learn to work with others and gain a sense of achievement.
- **Positive Outcome:** Competence, achievement, pride in accomplishments.
- **Negative Outcome:** Inferiority, failure, lack of motivation.
- **Virtue: Competence**
- **Example:** Success at school or sports builds confidence; constant criticism leads to self-doubt.

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

- **Age:** 12 – 18 years (Adolescence)
- **Key Question:** "Who am I and where am I going?"
- **Task:** Develop a sense of self and personal identity.
- **Positive Outcome:** Strong identity, direction, and purpose.
- **Negative Outcome:** Identity confusion, instability, social withdrawal.
- **Virtue: Fidelity**
- **Example:** Trying out different roles, ideologies, and friendships; successful exploration leads to stable identity.

- **Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation**

- **Age:** 18 – 40 years (Young Adulthood)
- **Key Question:** "Can I love and be loved?"
- **Task:** Form intimate, loving relationships with other people.
- **Positive Outcome:** Deep relationships, commitment.
- **Negative Outcome:** Loneliness, isolation, fear of commitment.
- **Virtue:** Love
- **Example:** Healthy friendships, romantic relationships, and partnerships based on trust and shared identity.

- **Stage 7: Generativity vs. Stagnation**
- **Age:** 40 – 65 years (Middle Adulthood)
- **Key Question:** "Can I make a difference in the world?"
- **Task:** Create or nurture things that will outlast oneself (e.g., children, work, community service).
- **Positive Outcome:** Productivity, care for others, societal contribution.
- **Negative Outcome:** Stagnation, self-absorption, disconnection.
- **Virtue: Care**
- **Example:** Raising children, mentoring, volunteering; failing to contribute may cause feelings of emptiness.

- **Stage 8: Integrity vs. Despair**
- **Age:** 65+ years (Late Adulthood)
- **Key Question:** "Was my life meaningful?"
- **Task:** Reflect on life and feel a sense of fulfillment or regret.
- **Positive Outcome:** Wisdom, satisfaction, acceptance of life.
- **Negative Outcome:** Despair, bitterness, fear of death.
- **Virtue: Wisdom**
- **Example:** Elderly person reflects on a life of purpose = contentment; regrets = despair.

Educational/Practical Applications

- Useful for:
 - **Teachers:** understanding age-appropriate needs
 - **Parents:** supporting emotional development
 - **Counselors:** resolving identity issues
 - **Healthcare workers:** supporting elderly mental health
- **Helps in empathy and intervention**

Criticisms of the Theory

- Too focused on Western/individualistic culture
- Age ranges are not fixed for all individuals
- Some stages may repeat or overlap
- Lacks discussion of diversity, gender, and cultural variation

Thank You