

social + emotion learning  
supporting children's ideas  
community in classroom  
inclusion of families  
feeling of belonging  
freedom than play

## ERIK ERIKSON'S EIGHT STAGES OF MAN

In his book, *Childhood and Society* (published in 1950) Erikson put forth his psychosocial stages of development which emphasized that:

- personality development continues throughout the whole life cycle.
- each stage of development has a positive and a negative component.
- in each of the 8 stages a new dimension of social interaction becomes possible.
- an individual's development involves establishing orientations to interaction with himself, as well as with the social environment.
- stages are not resolved once and for all during the time period in which they emerge, but can be negotiated again at each stage of development.
- what is learned in one stage, positive or negative, will carry through to other stages of development.

### 1. TRUST VS. MISTRUST

*extends through the first year of life*

The degree to which the child comes to trust the world, other people, and himself depends upon the quality of the care a child receives. The infant whose needs are quickly met, whose discomforts are removed, who is cuddled, played with, talked to, develops a sense of the world as a safe place to be and of people as helpful and dependable.

When care is inconsistent, inadequate, and rejecting, it fosters basic mistrust, an attitude of fear and suspicion on the part of the infant toward the world and people. These feelings are carried through other stages of development.

### 2. AUTONOMY VS SHAME & DOUBT

*spans 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of life*

The emergence of autonomy coincides with the child's new motor and mental skills. The child can walk and climb, open and close, push and pull, drop and pick up, hold and let go. The child takes pride in these accomplishments and wants to do everything themselves from using a fork to pushing a chair over and climbing up to see what is going on. When parents and caregivers recognize the child's need to do what he is capable of, at his own pace and in his own time, the child develops a sense that he is able to control his muscles, impulses, and his environment, a sense of autonomy emerges.

When caretakers are consistently impatient, do for the child what he can do for himself, they reinforce a sense of shame and doubt. When adults consistently rush in and critically overprotect, the child develops a sense of shame with respect to how other people see him and doubts his own abilities to control the world and himself.

\*Too much autonomy is as harmful as too little. A child who rules the roost can become endowed with too much power which is frightening to a child but which they cannot control once it becomes habitual.

### 3. INITIATIVE VS. GUILT

*emerges during 4 and 5 years of age*

The child is pretty much a master of his own body and can initiate motor, language, and fantasy play activities on his own and no longer simply responds to or imitates the actions of others. How caregivers respond to these self-initiated activities influences how children will feel about their abilities at the end of this stage. Children who are given the freedom and opportunity to initiate motor play (running, bike riding, sliding, even wrestling) have their sense of initiative reinforced. It is also reinforced when parents answer questions (the child's display of intellectual initiative) and do not inhibit fantasy or play activity.

If children are made to feel that his motor activity is bad, that his questions are a nuisance, that his play is silly, they will develop a sense of guilt over these activities that will persist over time.

### 4. INDUSTRY VS. INFERIORITY

*ages 6 to 11*

The elementary school years are a time the child becomes capable of deductive reasoning, and playing and learning by the rules, taking turns. Children at this stage are concerned with how things are made, how they work, and how the child's actions fit in to this scheme of things. They are enthusiastic about the details of activities – this appeals to the child's sense of industry. When adults encourage children's efforts to make, do build – giving them a chance to complete projects and praise and reward the results, children develop a sense of industry.

Adults who see children's efforts at making and doing as mischief or mess-making encourage a sense of inferiority. A child who experiences constant failures in social, emotional, and academic endeavors will have his sense of inferiority reinforced.

### 5. IDENTITY VS. ROLE CONFUSION

*adolescence, ages 12-18:*

This is often a time of reawakening and ego identity for a child. The adolescent matures mentally, physiologically and develops new ways of looking and thinking about the world. The adolescent can now consistently think about other people's thinking and wonder about what others think of them. They conceive of ideal families, religions, societies and compare them to their own situations. They construct theories about the world. The adolescent is an impatient idealist who believes that is as easy to achieve a goal as to imagine it. Given the child's newfound interpersonal and integrative skills, they attempt to bring together all the things they learned about themselves and integrate these different images into a whole that makes sense. If the young person reaches this stage with a vital sense of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry, then the chances of arriving at a meaningful sense of ego identity are enhanced.

The person who enters adolescence with considerable mistrust, shame, doubt, guilt, inferiority may be confused as to his role in the world, how he fits in, what he has to offer. When the young person cannot attain a sense of personal identity they show a certain amount of role confusion. They may seek a negative identity, take on roles opposite to the one prescribe by family and friends.

\*Erikson emphasized that life is in constant change and that confronting problems at one stage in life is not guarantee against the reappearance of these problems in later stages, or against the finding of new solutions to them.

## 6. INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION

*young adulthood to early middle age*

For Erikson, previous attainment of personal identity and engagement in productive work give rise to a new interpersonal dimension. By intimacy, Erikson means the ability to share with and care about another person (in the context of friendship as well as romantic love) without fear of losing oneself in the process. Success in this area is indirectly dependent upon one's parents in terms of what they contributed to successes and failures at earlier stages, as well as upon the social conditions in which a person moves and lives.

When a sense of intimacy is not or cannot be established then a sense of isolation – of being alone without anyone to share with or care for, is the result.

## 7. GENERATIVITY VS. DESPAIR

*middle age*

For Erikson, generativity is when a person begins to be concerned with others beyond his immediate family, with future generations and the nature of the society and world in which those generations will live. This state can be found in any individual (not simply parents) who actively concerns himself with the welfare of young people and with making the world a better place for them to live and work.

Failing to establish a sense of generativity can lead to a state of self-absorption in which their personal needs and comforts are of primary concern.

## 8. INTEGRITY VS. DESPAIR

*period where major efforts are nearing completion and there is time for reflection*

The sense of integrity arises from the individual's ability to look back on his life with satisfaction. This is a time of reflection, for the enjoyment of grandchildren, if any.

At the other extreme is the individual who looks back upon his life as a series of missed opportunities and missed directions and now in the twilight years realizes that is too late to start again. The result for such a person is a sense of despair of what might have been.

# ERIK ERIKSON'S EIGHT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

VIII Maturity								Ego integrity vs. Despair
VII Adulthood							Generativity vs. Stagnation	
VI Young adulthood						Intimacy vs. Isolation		
V Puberty and adolescence				Identity vs. Role confusion				
IV Latency			Industry vs. Inferiority					
III Locomotor-genital			Initiative vs. Guilt					
II Muscular-anal		Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt						
I Oral, sensory	Basic trust vs. Mistrust							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8