

# **ERIK ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY**

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## INTRODUCTION

□ Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory is a model of human development that describes how we develop a sense of self throughout our lives. Erikson believed that personality develops in a series of eight stages, from infancy to old age. Each stage is characterized by a psychosocial crisis, a conflict between two opposing forces. How we resolve these crises affects our development and our ability to form healthy relationships.

# ABOUT ERIKSON

- ❑ 1902: Erik Erikson is born in Frankfurt, Germany.
- ❑ 1930: Erikson begins his clinical training at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute.
- ❑ 1933: Erikson flees Nazi Germany for the United States.
- ❑ 1939: Erikson becomes a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley.
- ❑ 1950: Erikson publishes *Childhood and Society*, which introduces his psychosocial development theory.
- ❑ 1963: Erikson publishes *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, which further expands on his theory.
- ❑ 1982: Erikson dies in Harwich, Massachusetts.

# HISTORY OF THE THEORY

- ❑ Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory was first published in his book **Childhood and Society** in 1950. The theory was based on Erikson's own clinical observations and his work with children and adolescents. Erikson was influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud, but he also broke away from Freud's theory in several ways.
- ❑ **First**, Erikson believed that personality development is not fixed in childhood. He argued that we continue to develop throughout our lives, and that each stage of life presents us with new challenges and opportunities.
- ❑ **Second**, Erikson focused on the role of social interaction in personality development. He believed that our relationships with others play a critical role in shaping our sense of self.
- ❑ **Third**, Erikson introduced the concept of the epigenetic principle. This principle states that development occurs in a series of stages, and that each stage builds on the previous stages.

# THE KEY CONCEPTS

- ❑ Here are some of the key concepts of Erikson's psychosocial development theory:
- ❑ **Psychosocial crises:** Erikson believed that each stage of life presents us with a psychosocial crisis, a conflict between two opposing forces. How we resolve these crises affects our development and our ability to form healthy relationships.
- ❑ **Eight stages of development:** Erikson identified eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to old age. Each stage is characterized by a specific psychosocial crisis.
- ❑ **Epigenetic principle:** Erikson's epigenetic principle states that development occurs in a series of stages, and that each stage builds on the previous stages.
- ❑ **The ego:** Erikson believed that the ego is the part of the personality that mediates between the individual and society. The ego helps us to adapt to our environment and to achieve our goals.
- ❑ **Identity:** Erikson defined identity as "a sense of sameness and continuity over time in the psychological and social sense." Identity is formed through our interactions with others and our experiences in the world.

# EIGHT STAGES OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ The eight stages of psychosocial development are:
- ❑ Trust vs. Mistrust (Infancy).
- ❑ Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Early Childhood).
- ❑ Initiative vs. Guilt (Preschool).
- ❑ Industry vs. Inferiority (School Age).
- ❑ Identity vs. Role Confusion (Adolescence).
- ❑ Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young Adulthood).
- ❑ Generativity vs. Stagnation (Middle Adulthood).
- ❑ Integrity vs. Despair (Late Adulthood).

## TRUST VS. MISTRUST (INFANCY)

- ❑ The first stage is trust vs. mistrust. In this stage, infants learn to trust their caregivers to meet their basic needs. If they are consistently met, they develop a sense of trust in the world. If their needs are not met, they develop a sense of mistrust.
- ❑ Occurs from birth to 18 months.
- ❑ Basic needs must be met for trust to develop.
- ❑ **Successful outcome:** Trust in the world and others.
- ❑ **Unsuccessful outcome:** Mistrust, anxiety, and insecurity.

## AUTONOMY VS. SHAME AND DOUBT (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

- ❑ The second stage is autonomy vs. shame and doubt. In this stage, toddlers learn to control their bodies and their environment. If they are encouraged to explore and make choices, they develop a sense of autonomy. If they are shamed or punished for their explorations, they develop a sense of shame and doubt.
- ❑ Occurs from 18 months to 3 years.
- ❑ Developing independence and control over one's actions.
- ❑ **Successful outcome:** Sense of autonomy and self-confidence.
- ❑ **Unsuccessful outcome:** Feelings of shame, doubt, and inadequacy.



## INITIATIVE VS. GUILT (PRESCHOOL)

- ❑ The third stage is initiative vs. guilt. In this stage, preschoolers learn to take initiative and to set goals. If they are encouraged to take risks and to try new things, they develop a sense of initiative. If they are made to feel guilty for their actions, they develop a sense of guilt.
- ❑ Occurs from 3 to 5 years.
- ❑ Exploring and taking initiative in activities.
- ❑ **Successful outcome:** Sense of purpose and ability to initiate tasks.
- ❑ **Unsuccessful outcome:** Feelings of guilt, self-doubt, and inhibition.

## INDUSTRY VS. INFERIORITY (SCHOOL AGE)

- ❑ The fourth stage is industry vs. inferiority. In this stage, school-aged children learn to master new skills and to be productive. If they are encouraged to learn and to achieve, they develop a sense of industry. If they are made to feel inferior or incompetent, they develop a sense of inferiority.
- ❑ Occurs from 6 to 11 years.
- ❑ Developing competence in academic and social tasks.
- ❑ **Successful outcome:** Sense of industry and accomplishment.
- ❑ **Unsuccessful outcome:** Feelings of inferiority, incompetence, and inadequacy.

## IDENTITY VS. ROLE CONFUSION (ADOLESCENCE)

- ❑ The fifth stage is identity vs. role confusion. In this stage, adolescents explore different roles and identities in an attempt to find their place in the world. If they are able to successfully integrate their different identities, they develop a sense of identity. If they are unable to find their place in the world, they develop a sense of role confusion.
- ❑ Occurs from 12 to 18 years.
- ❑ Establishing a sense of identity and role in society.
- ❑ **Successful outcome:** Sense of identity and self-definition.
- ❑ **Unsuccessful outcome:** Role confusion, identity crisis, and rebellion.

## INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION (YOUNG ADULTHOOD)

- ❑ The sixth stage is intimacy vs. isolation. In this stage, young adults form close relationships with others. If they are able to form healthy and intimate relationships, they develop a sense of intimacy. If they are unable to form close relationships, they develop a sense of isolation.
- ❑ Occurs from 18 to 40 years.
- ❑ Developing close relationships and forming intimate connections.
- ❑ **Successful outcome:** Intimacy and the ability to form lasting relationships.
- ❑ **Unsuccessful outcome:** Feelings of isolation, loneliness, and fear of commitment.

## GENERATIVITY VS. STAGNATION (MIDDLE ADULTHOOD)

- ❑ The seventh stage is generativity vs. stagnation. In this stage, middle-aged adults focus on giving back to others and making a difference in the world. If they are able to find meaning and purpose in their lives, they develop a sense of generativity. If they are unable to find meaning and purpose, they develop a sense of stagnation.
- ❑ Occurs from 40 to 65 years.
- ❑ Contributing to society and the next generation.
- ❑ **Successful outcome:** Sense of generativity, productivity, and care for others.
- ❑ **Unsuccessful outcome:** Feelings of stagnation, unproductiveness, and self-centeredness.

# INTEGRITY VS. DESPAIR (LATE ADULTHOOD)

- ❑ The eighth and final stage is integrity vs. despair. In this stage, older adults reflect on their lives and come to terms with their mortality. If they are able to look back on their lives with satisfaction and meaning, they develop a sense of integrity. If they are unable to find satisfaction in their lives, they develop a sense of despair.
- Occurs from 65 years and beyond.
- Reflecting on life and evaluating its meaning and accomplishments.
- **Successful outcome:** Sense of integrity, wisdom, and fulfillment.
- **Unsuccessful outcome:** Feelings of despair, regret, and fear of death.

# MASTERY LEADS TO EGO STRENGTH

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

# ERIKSON VS MASLOW

Maslow	Erikson
Maslow proposed a series of motivational stages, each building on the previous one (i.e., cannot progress without satisfying the previous stage).	Erikson proposed a series of predetermined stages related to personality development. The stages are time related.
Progression through the stages is based on life circumstances and achievement (i.e., it is flexible).	Progression through the stages is based a person's age (i.e., rigid). During each stage an individual attains personality traits, either beneficial or pathological.
There is only one goal of achievement, although not everyone achieves it.	The goal of achievement vary from stage to stage and involve overcoming a psychosocial crisis.
Individuals move up the motivational stages / pyramid in order to reach self-actualisation. The first four stages are like stepping stones.	Successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and the acquisition of basic virtues. Basic virtues are characteristic strengths used to resolve subsequent crises.



# CRITIQUES OF ERIKSON'S THEORY

- ❑ Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory is a widely-respected model of human development, but it has also been criticized by some scholars. Here are some of the most common criticisms of Erikson's theory:
- ❑ Cultural and gender biases in stage descriptions.
- ❑ Lack of empirical evidence for all stages.
- ❑ Overemphasis on the role of childhood experiences.

# IMPACT AND LEGACY OF ERIKSON'S THEORY

- ❑ Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory has had a significant impact on the field of psychology. It has been used to understand a wide range of human behaviors, from personality development to mental health. The theory has also been used to inform educational and therapeutic interventions.
- ❑ Erikson's psychosocial development theory is a complex and nuanced model of human development. It is important to note that not everyone will resolve each crisis in a healthy way. However, the theory provides a framework for understanding how our experiences throughout our lives shape our personality and our sense of self.
- ❑ The legacy of Erikson's theory is likely to continue for many years to come. The theory has been translated into over 30 languages and has been used by scholars and practitioners around the world. Erikson's theory has helped us to understand the complex process of human development, and it continues to inform our understanding of ourselves and others.

# CONCLUSION

- ❑ Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory explains human growth and development through eight stages
- ❑ Each stage presents a unique crisis and potential resolution
- ❑ Erikson's theory emphasizes the interaction between social experiences and psychological development

# THANK YOU

