and in his role as a psychotherapist, Jung arrived at what was for him indisputable evidence for the collective unconscious and other constructs in his theory. Rather than rely on data from rigorous investigations, he turned to sources like mythology, cultural symbols, dreams, and the statements of schizophrenics. Jung argued that if the collective unconscious is basically the same for each of us, then primordial images should be found in various forms across all cultures and throughout human history.

Jung pointed to the recurrence of certain symbols in dreams and hallucinations, as well as the images found in art, folklore, and mythology. Why does a symbol like a vulture appear in the dreams of people today in the same basic way it appears in religious writings and ancient mythologies of cultures unknown to the dreamer? Jung described an early discovery of this type when he spoke with a mental patient suffering from schizophrenia:

> One day I came across him there, blinking through the window up at the sun, and moving his head from side to side in a curious manner. He took me by the arm and said he wanted to show me something. He said I must look at the sun with eyes half shut, and then I could see the sun's phallus. If I moved my head from side to side the sun-phallus would move too, and that was the origin of the wind. (1936/1959, p. 51)

A few years later, while reading Greek mythology, Jung came across a description of a tube-like element hanging from the sun. According to the myth, the tube was responsible for the wind. How could such an image appear in both the hallucinations of the patient and the stories of the ancient Greeks? Jung maintained that the image existed in the collective unconscious of the Greek storytellers as well as in those of psychotic patients and, therefore, in the collective unconscious of us all.

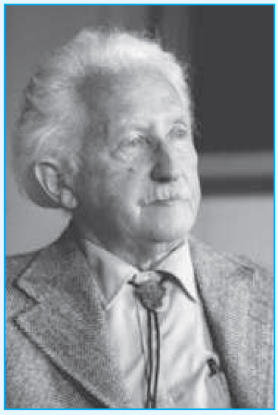
Erik Erikson

In the summer of 1927, a young artist wandering about Europe took a job in a school established for the children of Sigmund Freud's patients and friends. That artist, Erik Homburger, who never received a university degree, became friendly with the psychoanalysts and was later trained by them. After changing his name from Homburger to Erikson, he began to practice psychotherapy and eventually to espouse his own views on the nature of human personality.

Although Erikson retained several Freudian ideas in his theory, his own contributions to the psychoanalytic approach were numerous. Whereas Freud saw the ego as the mediator between id impulses and superego demands, Erikson believed the ego performed many constructive functions. To Erikson, the ego is a relatively powerful, independent part of personality. For this reason, Erikson's approach to personality has been called *ego psychology*.

According to Erikson, the principal function of the ego is to establish and maintain a sense of identity. People with a strong sense of personal identity are aware of their uniqueness—what makes them special—and maintain a strong sense of continuity with their past self and what they imagine is their future self. The often overused and misused term *identity crisis* comes from Erikson's work. He used this phrase to refer to the confusion and despair we feel when we lack a strong sense of who we are.

Erik Homburger Erikson 1902–1994



Ted Streshinsky Photographic Archive/Corbis Historical/Getty Images

It is difficult to imagine a life filled with more identity issues than the one handed to Erik Erikson. Reflecting back on his formative years, Erikson observed that "it seems all too obvious … that such an early life would predispose a person to a severe identity crisis" (1975, p. 31). Indeed, Erikson's struggle with his identity led him to behavior he would later identify as somewhere between neurotic and psychotic. Yet, these struggles also provided him with a keen insight into the problems associated with identity, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

Erik was born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1902. His Danish father abandoned the family before Erik was born. Three years later, his mother married a Jewish physician, Theodor Homburger, and for many years, told her son that Dr. Homburger was his real father. It was not until he was an adolescent that Erikson learned the truth—that his birth was the result of an extramarital affair, a fact Erikson kept secret until he was 68 (Hopkins, 1995). Erikson's identity was further confused by his physical features. Although living in a Jewish family, he retained most of the physical features of his Scandinavian father—tall, blond hair, blue eyes. "Before long, I was referred to as 'goy' in my stepfather's temple," he wrote, "while to my schoolmates I was a 'Jew'" (1975, p. 27). World War I broke out during Erik's early adolescence, leaving the boy with torn feelings of loyalty between Germany and his growing identity as a Dane.

Erik's need to find his own identity erupted upon graduation from public school. His stepfather pushed medical school, but Erik resisted. He decided instead that he was an artist and spent the next few years wandering about Europe. His travels eventually brought him to Vienna and into contact with Anna Freud, Sigmund's daughter and a noted psychoanalyst herself. Except for a Montessori teaching credential, his psychoanalytic training with Anna Freud was the only formal education he received after leaving home. Somewhere during these years, Erik changed his name to Erik Homburger Erikson, obviously reflecting his changing sense of identity.

Erikson fled the rise of the Nazis in 1933 and settled in Boston. He held positions with numerous universities, including Harvard, Yale, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Pennsylvania. His first book, *Childhood and Society*, was not published until 1950, when Erikson was nearly 50 years old. Like the adults he wrote about, Erikson continued his personal and professional development well into the later years of his life.

Perhaps, you have experienced a time when you felt uncertain about your values or the direction your life was headed. Episodes of identity crises are typical in adolescence but are by no means limited to young people. Many middle-aged people experience similar trying periods.

Personality Development Throughout the Life Cycle

To Freud, personality development for the most part ends when the superego appears at about age 6. In contrast, Erikson (1950/1963) maintained that personality development continues throughout a person's lifetime. He outlined eight stages we all progress through, each crucial in the development of personality (Figure 5.1).

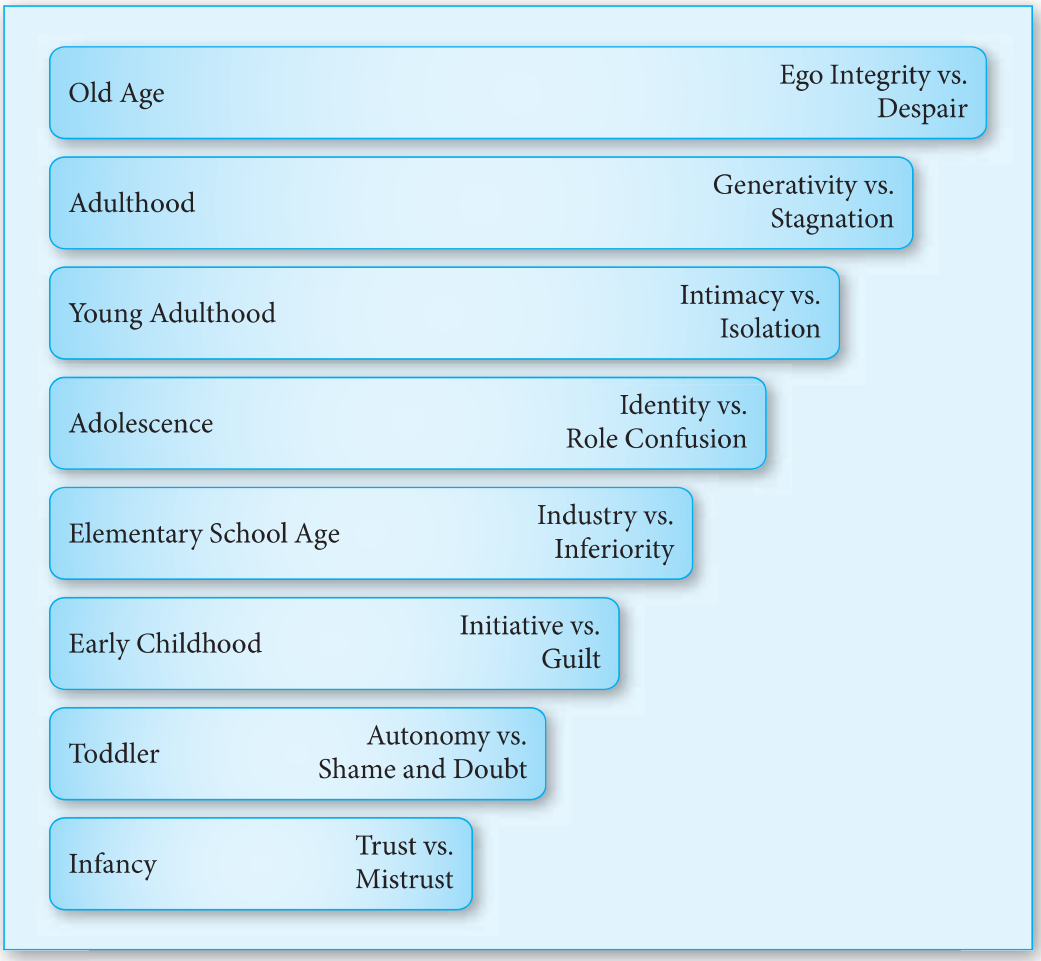


Figure 5.1 Erikson's Eight Stages of Development

Erikson's stages of personality development bring to mind the image of a path. We continue down this path from infancy to old age, but at eight different points along the way we encounter a fork—two directions in which to proceed. In Erikson's model, these forks represent turning points in personality development, what he called *crises*. How we resolve each crisis determines the direction our personality development takes and influences how we resolve later crises. Of the two alternatives for resolving each crisis, one is said to be adaptive, the other not. Individuals who take a wrong turn on this path and fail to adaptively resolve a crisis may need to return to the critical juncture later in life during psychotherapy to set things right (Marcia & Josselson, 2013). For example, a therapist might trace a man's problems with intimacy back to his failure to establish a sense of basic trust before he was even a toddler.

Basic Trust Versus Mistrust

During the first year or so of life, newborns are almost totally at the mercy of those around them. Whether infants are given loving care and have their needs met or whether their cries go unnoticed is the first turning point in the development of

personality. The child whose needs are met develops a sense of *basic trust*. For this child, the world is a good place and people are loving and approachable. Unfortunately, some infants never receive the loving care they need. As a result, they develop a sense of *basic mistrust*. These children begin a lifelong pattern of suspicion about and withdrawal from other people.

Autonomy Versus Shame and Doubt

By the second year of life, children want to know who they are relative to the rest of the world. Is the world something they control or something that controls them? When allowed to manipulate and influence much of what they encounter, children come through this stage with a sense of *autonomy*. They feel powerful and independent. They have a strong sense of personal mastery. People with a sense of autonomy are confident that they can navigate their way through the sea of obstacles and challenges life has in store. However, just as Adler warned against pampering, Erikson observed that overly protective parents can hinder development at this age. If not allowed to explore and exercise influence over the objects and events in their world, children develop feelings of *shame and doubt*. They are unsure of themselves and become dependent on others.

Initiative Versus Guilt

As children begin to interact with other boys and girls, they face the challenges that come with living in a social world. They must learn how to play and work with others and how to resolve inevitable conflicts. Children who seek out playmates and who learn how to organize games and other social activities develop a sense of *initiative*. They learn how to set goals and tackle challenges with conviction. They develop a sense of ambition and purpose. Children who fail to develop a sense of initiative come through this stage with feelings of *guilt* and resignation. They may lack a sense of purpose and show few signs of initiative in social or other situations.

Industry Versus Inferiority

Most children enter elementary school thinking there is little they can't do. But soon they find themselves in competition with other children—for grades, popularity, teachers' attention, victories in sports and games, and so on. Inevitably, they compare their talents and abilities with other children of their age. If they experience success, feelings of competence grow that set them well on their way to becoming active and achieving members of society. But experiences with failure can lead to feelings of inadequacy and to a poor prognosis for productivity and happiness. It is during this time, before the turmoil of puberty and the teenage years, that we develop either a sense of *industry* and a belief in our strengths and abilities or a sense of *inferiority* and a lack of appreciation for our talents and skills.

Identity Versus Role Confusion

At last—or perhaps too soon—we reach the teenage years, a time of rapid changes and relatively short preparation for adulthood. Adolescence may be the most difficult time of life. The turmoil of transcending from playground concerns and simple solutions to facing some of life's important questions can be unsettling. Erikson was well aware of the significance of these years. Young men and women begin to ask the all-important question, "Who am I?" If the question is answered successfully, they develop a sense

of *identity*. They make decisions about personal values and religious questions. They understand who they are and accept and appreciate themselves. Unfortunately, many teens fail to develop this strong sense of identity and instead fall into *role confusion*.

In their search for identity, adolescents may join cliques, commit to causes, or drop out of school and drift from one situation to another. A friend of mine from high school bounced from devout Christianity to alcohol and drugs, to Eastern religions, to social causes, and to conservative politics—all during his high school years—in an effort to "find" himself. Ten years later, at our class reunion, I learned that he had spent the decade drifting to different parts of the country, different jobs, several colleges, and was currently thinking of becoming a rock star. His failure to develop a strong sense of identity clearly impeded subsequent personality development.

Intimacy Versus Isolation

The teen years dissolve swiftly into young adulthood and the next challenge in Erikson's model—developing intimate relationships. Young men and women search for that special relationship within which to develop *intimacy* and grow emotionally. Although these relationships typically result in marriage or a romantic commitment to one person, this is not always the case. One can share intimacy without marriage and, unfortunately, marriage without intimacy. People who fail to develop intimacy during this stage face *emotional isolation*. They may pass through many superficial encounters without finding the satisfaction of closeness promised by genuine relationships. Indeed, they may avoid emotional commitment. The single-person's lifestyle has its advantages and may be pleasant for a while, but failure to move beyond this lifestyle can seriously inhibit emotional growth and happiness.

Generativity Versus Stagnation

As men and women approach the middle years of life, they develop a concern for guiding the next generation. Parents find their lives enriched by the influence they have on their children. Adults without their own children find this enrichment by working with youth groups or playing an active role in raising nieces and nephews. Adults who fail to develop this sense of *generativity* may suffer from a sense of stagnation—a feeling of emptiness and questioning one's purpose in life. We've all seen parents whose lives are filled with continued meaning and interests through raising their children. Unfortunately, we've also seen parents who obtain little pleasure from this process. As a result, they become bored and generally dissatisfied with their lives. Failure to see the potential for personal growth in the development of their children is tragic for parent and child alike.

Ego Integrity Versus Despair

Inevitably, most of us keep our appointment with old age. But, according to Erikson, we still have one more crisis to resolve. Reflections on past experiences and the inevitability of life's end cause us to develop either a sense of *integrity* or feelings of *despair*. Men and women who look back on their lives with satisfaction will pass through this final developmental stage with a sense of integrity. "It is the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle … as something that had to be and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitution," Erikson wrote (1968, p. 139). People who fail to develop this sense of integrity fall into despair. They realize that time is now all too short, that the options and opportunities available to younger people are no longer there. A life has passed,