

## Erik Erikson (1902 – 1994) ~ Psychologist

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Erik Erikson (15 June 1902 – 12 May 1994) was a developmental psychologist and psychologist most famously known for his concept on the psychosocial development of human beings. Some might say that he is the originator of “identity crisis”.

Erikson was born in Germany. His biological father was not around at the time of his birth, and he was later adopted in 1905 by the Jewish pediatrician (Theodor Homburger) his mother married. His real father was kept a secret from him until much later in his childhood, and many believe that this was one of the reasons Erik was interested in psychology.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany, Erikson and his wife emigrated. They travelled first to Denmark and then to the United States, where he became the first child psychoanalyst in Boston. Erikson held positions at Massachusetts General Hospital, the Judge Baker Guidance Center, and at Harvard Medical School and Psychological Clinic, creating a good name for himself as a clinician.

Erikson's greatest discovery was to propose not five stages of development, (as Sigmund Freud had done with his psychosexual stages) but eight. Erik Erikson believed that every human being must go through a certain amount of stages to attain his or her full development and potential. Erik’s eight stages follow the human being from birth to death. The stages he created elaborate Freud's genital stage into adolescence, and add three stages of adulthood.

### Erik Erikson’s Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development of Human Beings

crisis including adaptive strength	basic virtue & secondary virtue (and related strengths)	life stage / relationships / issues
1. Trust v Mistrust	<b>Hope &amp; Drive</b> (faith, inner calm, grounding, basic feeling that everything will be okay - enabling exposure to risk, a trust in life and self and others, inner resolve and strength in the face of uncertainty and risk)	infant / mother / feeding and being comforted, teething, sleeping
2. Autonomy v Shame & Doubt	<b>Willpower &amp; Self-Control</b> (self-determination, self-belief, self-reliance, confidence in self to decide things, having a voice, being one's own person, persistence, self-discipline, independence of thought, responsibility, judgement)	toddler / parents / bodily functions, toilet training, muscular control, walking

3. Initiative vs Guilt	<b>Purpose &amp; Direction</b> (sense of purpose, decision-making, working with and leading others, initiating projects and ideas, courage to instigate, ability to define personal direction and aims and goals, able to take initiative and appropriate risks)	preschool / family / exploration and discovery, adventure and play
4. Industry vs Inferiority	<b>Competence &amp; Method</b> (making things, producing results, applying skills and processes productively, feeling valued and capable of contributing, ability to apply method and process in pursuit of ideas or objectives, confidence to seek and respond to challenge and learning, active busy productive outlook)	schoolchild / school, teachers, friends, neighbourhood / achievement and accomplishment
5. Identity vs Role Confusion	<b>Fidelity &amp; Devotion</b> (self-confidence and self-esteem necessary to freely associate with people and ideas based on merit, loyalty, social and interpersonal integrity, discretion, personal standards and dignity, pride and personal identity, seeing useful personal role(s) and purpose(s) in life)	adolescent / peers, groups, influences / resolving identity and direction, becoming a grown-up
6. Intimacy vs Isolation	<b>Love &amp; Affiliation</b> (capacity to give and receive love - emotionally and physically, connectivity with others, socially and interpersonally comfortable, ability to form honest reciprocating relationships and friendships, capacity to bond and commit with others for mutual satisfaction - for work and personal life, reciprocity - give and take - towards good)	young adult / lovers, friends, work connections / intimate relationships, work and social life
7. Generativity vs Stagnation	<b>Care &amp; Production</b> (giving unconditionally in support of children and/or for others, community, society and the wider world where possible and applicable, altruism, contributing for the greater good, making a positive difference, building a good legacy, helping others through their own crisis stages)	mid-adult / children, community / 'giving back', helping, contributing
8. Integrity vs Despair	<b>Wisdom &amp; Renunciation</b> (calmness, tolerance, appropriate emotional detachment - non-projection, no regrets, peace of mind, non-judgemental, spiritual or universal reconciliation, acceptance of inevitably departing)	late adult / society, the world, life / meaning and purpose, life achievements, acceptance