Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development (page 159)

TABLE 4.1   Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development
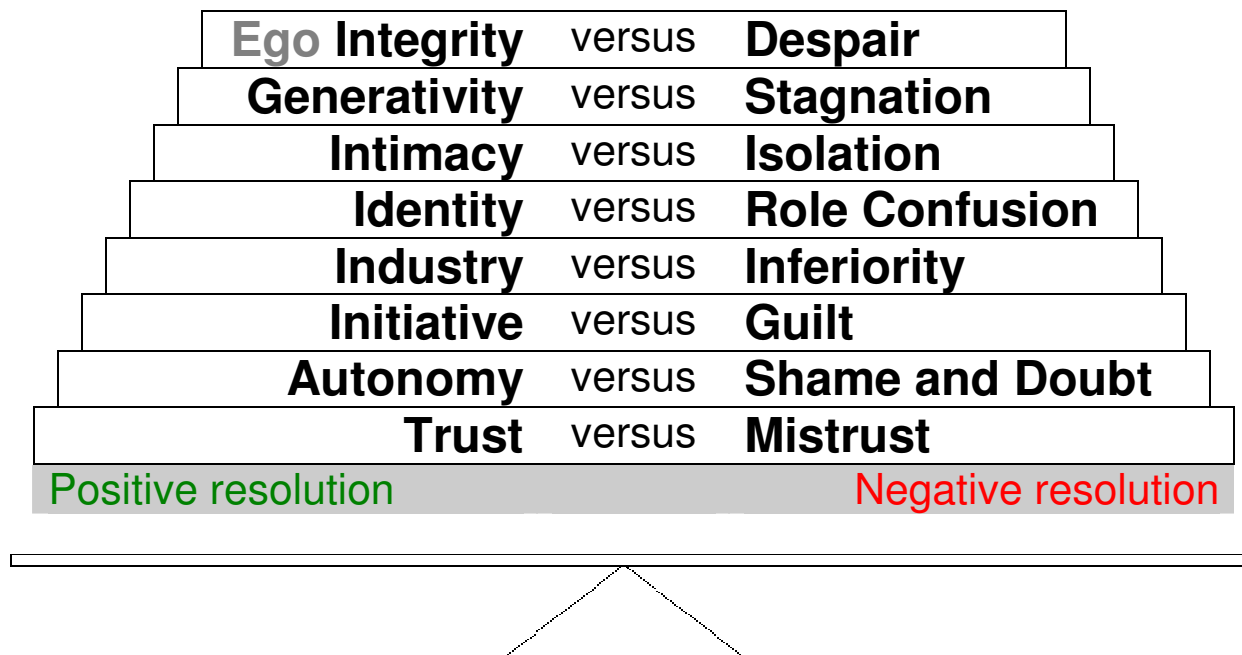
Stage	Age	Major Psychosocial Crisis	Successful Resolution of Crisis
1. Infancy	0–2	Trust versus mistrust	Children learn that the world is safe and that people are loving and reliable.
2. Toddler	2–3	Autonomy versus shame and doubt	Encouraged to explore the environment, children gain feelings of independence and positive self-esteem.
3. Preschool	4–6	Initiative versus guilt	Children develop a sense of purpose by taking on responsibilities, but they also develop the capacity to feel guilty for misdeeds.
4. Childhood	7–12	Industry versus inferiority	By working successfully with others and assessing how others view them, children learn to feel competent.
5. Adolescence	13–19	Identity versus role confusion	By exploring different social roles, adolescents develop a sense of identity.
6. Young adulthood	20s	Intimacy versus isolation	Young adults gain the ability to commit to long-term relationships.
7. Middle adulthood	30s to 50s	Generativity versus stagnation	Adults gain a sense that they are leaving behind a positive legacy and caring for future generations.
8. Old age	60s and beyond	Integrity versus despair	Older adults feel a sense of satisfaction that they have lived a good life and developed wisdom.

Source: Erikson (1959).

Erik Erikson: Stages of Psychosocial Development

Freud believed development ends during adolescence. Erikson believed that development continues throughout the lifespan based on how the individual deals with conflicts or crises. Resolutions of these crises or conflicts are NOT an either/or outcome, but rather they tend to be positive or negative. These conflicts continue to occur throughout the lifespan, but have a greater impact at different ages.

The following are Erik Erikson's eight psychosocial conflicts that we encounter across the lifespan.

Ego Integrity	versus	**Despair**
Generativity	versus	**Stagnation**
Intimacy	versus	**Isolation**
Identity	versus	**Role Confusion**
Industry	versus	**Inferiority**
Initiative	versus	**Guilt**
Autonomy	versus	**Shame and Doubt**
Trust	versus	**Mistrust**

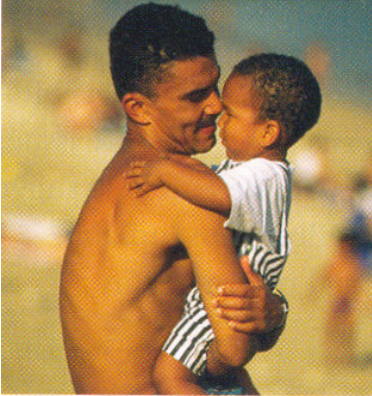Positive resolution   Negative resolution

If there are more positive experiences than negative experiences, one has a positive "leaning" at that stage. Many books use the word resolution, which suggests a fixed outcome.

- A <u>positive "leaning"</u> of each conflict/crisis contribute to a progressive <u>strengthening</u> of the self. A positive "leaning" at early stages increases the chances that an individual will have a <u>positive</u> "leaning" at subsequent stages.

- A <u>negative "leaning"</u> of each conflict/crisis contributes to a progressive <u>weakening</u> of the self. A negative "leaning" at early stages increases the chances that an individual will have a <u>negative</u> "leaning" at subsequent stages.

Trust vs. mistrust (birth to 2 years)

Is the world a stable and predictable place where I can make sense of it OR is it unstable and unpredictable?

Trust	Mistrust
The infant develops the belief that world is an orderly and predictable place. It is orderly. (image source: Carpenter and Huffman)	The infant develops the belief that world is NOT an orderly and predictable place. It is chaotic.

Development of Trust:
- Reliance on consistent and warm caregivers produces a sense of predictability and trust in the environment.
- When the mother leaves the infant's sight, the infant will not become overly anxious. The infant believes that the mother will still be around to meet its needs.

Development of Mistrust:
- When the mother has a poor attitude towards infants, parenting, etc and acts in an unreliable, aloof and rejecting way. This lack of dependability is likely to frustrate, anger and enrage the infant leading the infant to be more demanding and unpredictable.

- Parents that tend to be warm, responsive and sensitive to the infant's needs, have infants that more likely to be <u>securely attached.</u>
    - Preschoolers with a history of secure attachment tend to be more prosocial, empathic and socially competent.
    - Adolescents with a history of secure attachment in infancy have fewer problems, do better in school and have more successful relationships with their peers compared to those who were insecurely attached in infancy.

- Infants that are insecurely attached are when parents tend to be neglectful, inconsistent, or insensitive to the infant's moods or behaviors.

Autonomy versus doubt (2 – 3 years)

Can I do things for myself OR do others need to do it for me?

Autonomy	Doubt
The infant/child believes that he/she can act independently. They control of their actions and their actions influence their environment. Caregivers encourage independence and self-sufficiency, self-confidence, promoting positive self -esteem. • I can feed myself • I can dress myself • I can potty by myself • I can walk by myself	The infant/child has doubts about acting independently, believes that their behavior is not under their control but is determined by other people and external forces. Overly restrictive care giving leads to self-doubt in abilities and low self-esteem, or permissive parenting gives no guidance.

Development of autonomy and self-control:

- When a child starts to explore the world around them, they see if their behavior influences their world, they start to make decisions for themselves and believe they can do things for themselves.
- Parents need to gradually guide their children's behavior when they want to make decisions for themselves to let the child know that they can engage their environment and do things for themselves.

Development of shame and doubt:

- If parents always insist on feeding a child, the child may begin to doubt his or her ability to perform this activity.
- If parents are either too permissive or too harsh and demanding, children experience a sense of defeat and doubt.

Initiative versus guilt (4-6 years)

During this stage, young children explore their surroundings (this is especially true now that the child is more mobile on their own), explore new roles, and explore new activities.

How is the child made to feel about their explorations?

Initiative	Guilt
The child learns to initiate activities; promotes self-confidence. (image source: Carpenter and Huffman)	Parental strict control stifles the child's spontaneity and explorations; promotes guilt and fear of punishment.

The child starts to take the initiative and explore their environment and interact with the environment and others beyond the child's parents. The child engages in more play, experimental activities, and persistently asks questions to understand the world around them. Their imaginations are active and they fantasize about being adults.

- If the parent acts in a way that guide the child's explorations in a socially acceptable manner, the child develops a sense of purpose when <u>initiating</u> explorations.
- If a child is punished for these initiating these explorations (which can violate social norms), they will develop a sense of <u>guilt</u>.

<u>Example:</u>
A four-year old who plays with Daddy's expensive VCR system is firmly but gently forbidden to play with the VCR. The child learns the activity is wrong without being made to feel guilty for having initiated the behavior. One has to be careful to admonish the behavior and not the person, and make this distinction clear.

<u>Initiative vs. guilt</u>

Courage is knowing it might hurt, and doing it anyway.

Stupidity is the same.

And that's why life is hard.

- Jeremy Goldberg

When we have to decide and act on it, are we made to feel courageous and take the initiative or stupid and feel guilty for what we have done?
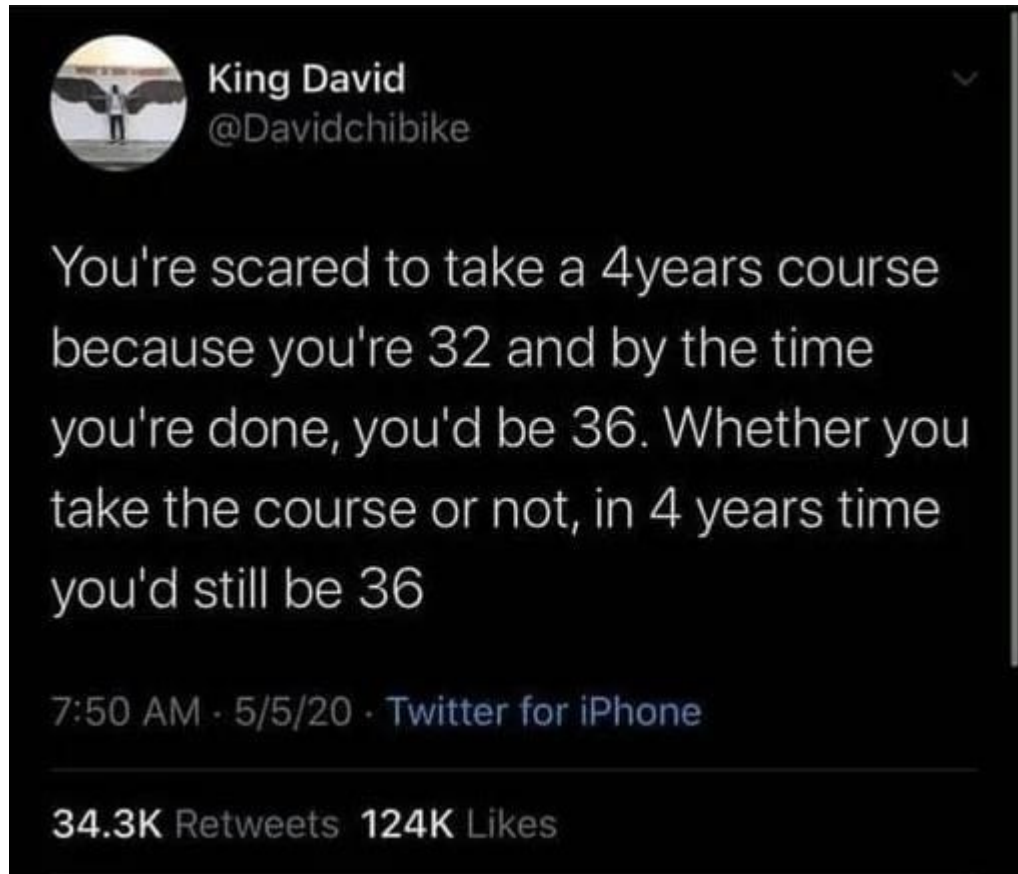
Initiative vs. guilt

If you feel comfortable at trying new things, regardless of how it turns out, you are tipping toward initiative.

If you feel uncomfortable at trying new thing because you will be punished or "look bad", you are tipping toward guilt.

How can we make feel people feel comfortable trying new things out?

Initiative vs. guilt

King David
@Davidchibike

You're scared to take a 4years course because you're 32 and by the time you're done, you'd be 36. Whether you take the course or not, in 4 years time you'd still be 36

7:50 AM · 5/5/20 · Twitter for iPhone

34.3K Retweets **124K** Likes

Initiative vs. guilt

Industry versus inferiority (7-12 years)

Teachers (as defined by that particular culture) become important in a child's life during this time by preparing children for the future in helping them understand the world around them and how to succeed and reach their goals. Failing to teach the child, leads to frustration and perhaps <u>learned helplessness</u> (chapter 5).

Can I complete tasks with relative success or do I have serious difficulties completing tasks?

Industry	Inferiority
Through successful accomplishments, the child develops a sense of pride and competence in schoolwork, home and social activities. (<u>image source</u>: Carpenter and Huffman)	Through a lack of successful accomplishments and failure 'to "keep up" with peers, pervasive feelings of inferiority and inadequacy develop.

- This is a period of learning new skills and how to complete tasks (<u>industry</u>).
- When a child fails to learn and do new things, they come to feelings of <u>inferiority</u>.

- If mistakes are seen as a learning experience, you are more likely to tip towards industry.
- If you view it as a failure, then it is more likely to tip towards inferiority.

<u>Example:</u>
A ten-year-old is encouraged to make a science project and exhibit it at the science fair. Following through on this initiated activity produces a sense of industry. Failure to follow through and complete this project leads to feelings of inferiority.

Identity versus role confusion (13 - 19 years: adolescence)

The adolescent begins to explore and form of an identity that fits them. Identities can be made through our peers, religion, job, possessions, relationships, etc. During this stage, the person discovers who they are and feels that the community will accept them for who they are.

Identity	Identity confusion
Through experimentation with different roles, the adolescent develops an integrated and stable self-definition that they are comfortable with. (image source: unknown)	An apathetic adolescent or one who experiences pressures and demands from others may feel confusion about his or her identity and role in society. This confusion may arise from the discrepancy between who they want to be, and what society says they should be. This confusion can lead to a feeling of alienation from your community.

- People who successfully resolve conflicts of identity develop a sense of community and works well with others and contribute to society.

Role Confusion

Erikson maintains that identity confused youths try to establish their identities by over-identifying with an assortment of heroes, cliques or crowds. Their identity is derived from these heroes, not of their own accomplishments. The successes of these heroes boost their sense of self, but their failings can be a psychological threat to the person who derives their identity from others.

- Adolescents who are unclear about their identity, Erikson argues is not their fault, but can be traced to a generation of adults, some of who are unclear about their own values and cannot provide guidance.
- People who unsuccessfully resolve their conflicts act in a scornful and hostile way towards the community and form associations with others who act in this way.
- The implicit thinking is "Why should I respect society when society doesn't respect me?"

Based on Erikson's approach, what are the possible implications for dealing with juvenile delinquents?

Intimacy versus isolation (20's - young adulthood)

Can I form lasting relationships with others or will I have difficulty sharing with others?

Intimacy	Isolation
By establishing lasting and meaningful relationships, the young adult develops a sense of connectedness and intimacy with others. (image source: Carpenter and Huffman)	Because of fear of rejection or excessive self-preoccupation, the young adult is unable to form close, meaningful relationships and becomes psychologically isolated.

For Erikson, intimacy involves the ability to relate one's deepest hopes and fears to another person and to accept another's need for intimacy in turn—which goes beyond sexual intimacy.

Intimacy versus isolation (20's - young adulthood)

i'm so glad we don't have to hide our weirdness from each other

your ecards
someecards.com

We all of some "weirdness" about ourselves. If you feel comfortable, and can accept another person's weirdness, you are on the pathway to having intimate relationships with others.

Healthy adults have established a stable self-identity, which makes it possible for them to form <u>intimate</u> relationships with others, and they are eager and ready to strengthen their identity—can you identify a person that you can trust and feel safe with? Do you feel safe disclosing information about yourself?

- An effort is made to commit themselves to partnerships and abide by these commitments even though they call for significant compromises and sacrifices.
- Erikson thought that true intimate relationships was possible only between partners who have clearly established identities and loyalties. Since adolescents are still struggling to establish their identities, it follows that they cannot love in the truest sense. What adolescents, he claims, experience is infatuation.
    - Young adults who cannot develop a capacity for intimacy and productive work experience isolation—an inability to take chances with one's identity by sharing true intimacy. These individuals are self-absorbed and engage in interpersonal relationships on a superficial level.

Example:

A twenty-two-year-old man ponders whether to commit to his female companion. He weighs the risk of being hurt, or having to merge and give up parts of his newly established identity, against the rewards of true intimacy. If he chooses to maintain his individual identity against the rewards of true intimacy, he will experience isolation.

I was tired of my lady, we'd been together too long
Like a worn out recording of a favorite song
So while she lay there sleepin' I read the paper in bed
And in the personal columns, there was this letter I read

If you like piña coladas and getting caught in the rain
If you're not into yoga, if you have half a brain
If you like making love at midnight in the dunes of the cape
Then I'm the love that you've looked for, write to me and escape

I didn't think about my lady, I know that sounds kind of mean
But me and my old lady had fallen into the same old dull routine
So I wrote to the paper, took out a personal ad
And though I'm nobody's poet, I thought it wasn't half bad

Yes, I like piña coladas and getting caught in the rain
I'm not much into health food, I am into champagne
I've got to meet you by tomorrow noon and cut through all this red tape
At a bar called O'Malley's where we'll plan our escape

So I waited with high hopes and she walked in the place
I knew her smile in an instant, I knew the curve of her face
It was my own lovely lady and she said, "oh, it's you"
Then we laughed for a moment and I said, "I never knew"

That you like piña coladas and gettin' caught in the rain
And the feel of the ocean and the taste of champagne
If you like making love at midnight in the dunes on the cape
You're the lady I've looked for, come with me and escape

If you like piña coladas and getting caught in the rain
If you're not into yoga, if you have half a brain
If you like making love at midnight in the dunes on the cape
Then I'm the love that you've looked for, write to me and escape

Yes I like piña coladas and getting caught in the rain
I'm not much into health food, I am into champagne
I've got to meet you by tomorrow noon and cut through all this red tape
At a bar called O'Malley's where we'll plan our escape

Intimacy versus isolation (young adulthood)

We all have emotional baggage in our life. Do we feel comfortable sharing with others and feel we will still be accepted for who we are.

Intimacy versus isolation (young adulthood)

Courage is knowing it might hurt, and doing it anyway.

Stupidity is the same.

And that's why life is hard.

- Jeremy Goldberg

When we take risks in life and made to feel stupid about them, do we feel comfortable sharing with others that we trust?

Generativity versus stagnation (30's to 50's - mid-adulthood)

The crisis revolves around whether or not the individual will <u>contribute to society</u> or <u>stagnate</u>.

Where will I go with my life? Will I focus others or focus on me? What gives life meaning?

Generativity	Stagnation
Through child rearing, caring for others, productive work, and community involvement, the adult expresses unselfish concern for the welfare of the next generation. (<u>image source</u>: Carpenter and Huffman)	Self-indulgence, self-absorption, and a preoccupation with one's own needs lead to a sense of stagnation, boredom, and a lack of meaningful accomplishments.
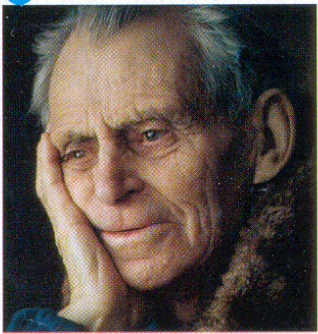
- Healthy adults have established a career and mature relationships with others. In Erikson's view, the primary responsibility is the guidance of the next generation. This can occur by raising children, guiding younger generations, creation of ideas, art, products, etc.
- <u>Stagnation</u> involves the lack of productivity, boredom, and interpersonal impoverishment.

<u>Example:</u>
A thirty-one-year-old woman mulls the option of spending her free time teaching adolescents or spending more time at her job to get a promotion or raise. Choosing to be involved with future generations will provide her with generativity. Choosing her own personal gain will lead to stagnation.

(Ego) Integrity versus Despair (60's and beyond - late adulthood)

Was my life meaningful?

Ego integrity	Despair
In reviewing his or her life, the older adult experiences a strong sense of self acceptance and meaningfulness in his or her accomplishments.	In looking back on his or her life, the older adult experiences regret, dissatisfaction, and disappointment about his or her life and accomplishments. (image source: Carpenter and Huffman)

- Healthy people are those who have adapted and accepted to the triumphs **and** disappointments in their lives. They are able to look back at their lives and conclude that they were special and had meaning. They also accept the inevitability of death as a necessary part of the life cycle and do not fear it.

- Individuals who have not been able to accept some of the inevitable failures in their life and who have led selfish, uncaring lives experience despair because they realize life is short and no time to start a new life or try to out new paths to integrity.

Example:
An eighty-year-old man reflects on his life. He considers an opportunity he had forty years ago to change careers and move across the country. He refused the job opportunity and now thinks that was a good decision and that he has experienced a satisfying life. If he viewed his past choice as a lost opportunity, a bad decision, he would most likely be consigned to despair.
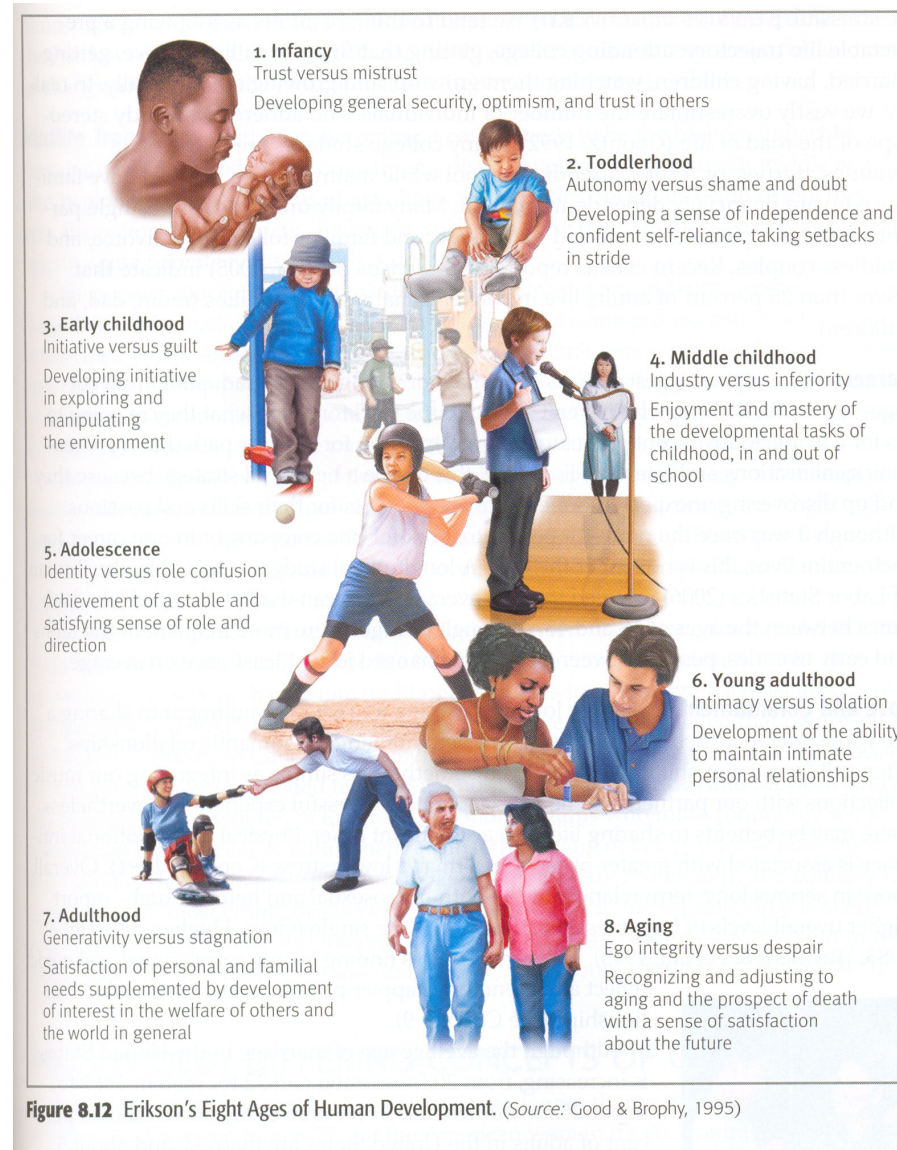
Erikson's Psychosocial Conflicts

1. Infancy
Trust versus mistrust
Developing general security, optimism, and trust in others

2. Toddlerhood
Autonomy versus shame and doubt
Developing a sense of independence and confident self-reliance, taking setbacks in stride

3. Early childhood
Initiative versus guilt
Developing initiative in exploring and manipulating the environment

4. Middle childhood
Industry versus inferiority
Enjoyment and mastery of the developmental tasks of childhood, in and out of school

5. Adolescence
Identity versus role confusion
Achievement of a stable and satisfying sense of role and direction

6. Young adulthood
Intimacy versus isolation
Development of the ability to maintain intimate personal relationships

7. Adulthood
Generativity versus stagnation
Satisfaction of personal and familial needs supplemented by development of interest in the welfare of others and the world in general

8. Aging
Ego integrity versus despair
Recognizing and adjusting to aging and the prospect of death with a sense of satisfaction about the future

Figure 8.12 Erikson's Eight Ages of Human Development. (*Source:* Good & Brophy, 1995)