

**Table 6.2: Erikson's Psychosocial Stages**

<b>Life Stage</b>	<b>Primary Task</b>
Infancy (birth to 1 year)	Basic trust versus mistrust
Toddlerhood (1 to 2 years)	Autonomy versus shame and doubt
<b>Early childhood (3 to 6 years)</b>	<b>Initiative versus guilt</b>
<b>Middle childhood (7 to 12 years)</b>	<b>Industry versus inferiority</b>
Adolescence to emerging adulthood (teens into twenties)	Identity versus role confusion
Early adulthood (twenties to early forties)	Intimacy versus isolation
Middle adulthood (forties to sixties)	Generativity versus stagnation
Late adulthood (late sixties and beyond)	Integrity versus despair

Table 9.4

**Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Development**

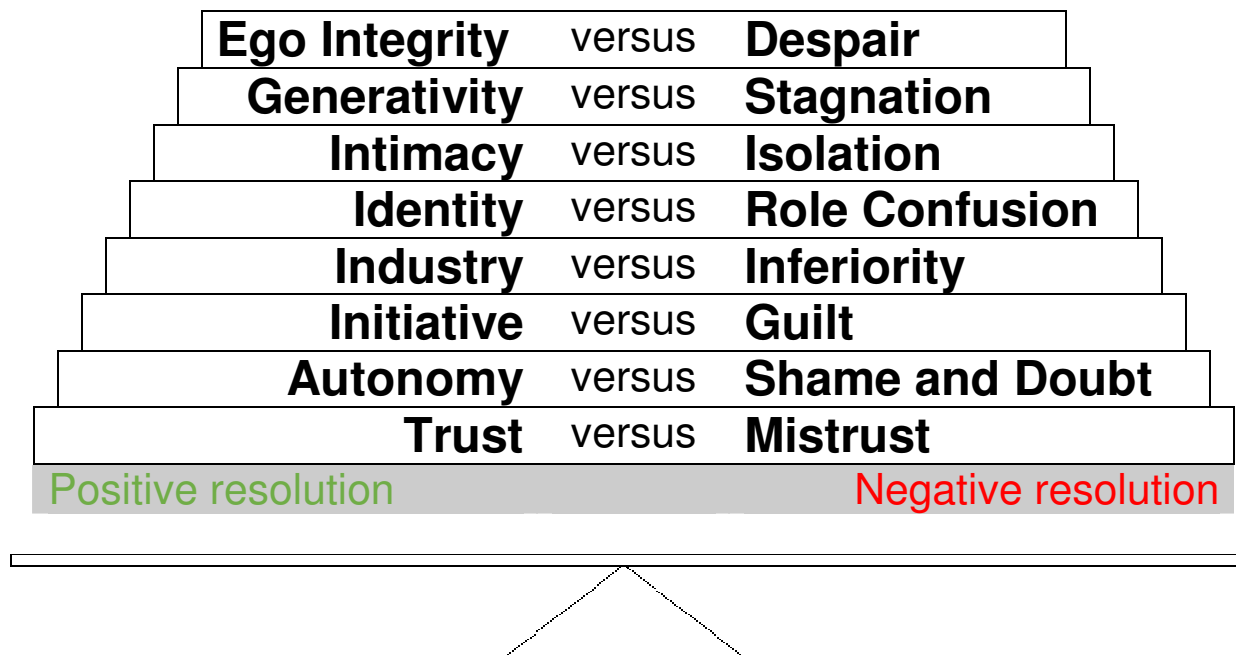
Life Stage	Psychosocial Conflict	Positive Resolution	Negative Resolution
Infancy (birth to 18 months)	Trust vs. mistrust	Reliance on consistent and warm caregivers produces a sense of predictability and trust in the environment.	Physical and psychological neglect by caregivers leads to fear, anxiety, and mistrust of the environment.
Toddlerhood (18 months to 3 years)	Autonomy vs. doubt	Caregivers encourage independence and self-sufficiency, promoting positive self-esteem.	Overly restrictive caregiving leads to self-doubt in abilities and low to self-esteem.
Early childhood (3 to 6 years)	Initiative vs. guilt	The child learns to initiate activities and develops a sense of social responsibility concerning the rights of others; promotes self-confidence.	Parental overcontrol stifles the child's spontaneity, sense of purpose, and social learning; promotes guilt and fear of punishment.
Middle and late childhood (6 to 12 years)	Industry vs. inferiority	Through experiences with parents and "keeping up" with peers, the child develops a sense of pride and competence in schoolwork and home and social activities.	Negative experiences with parents or failure to "keep up" with peers leads to pervasive feelings of inferiority and inadequacy.
Adolescence	Identity vs. role confusion	Through experimentation with different roles, the adolescent develops an integrated and stable self-definition; forms commitments to future adult roles.	An apathetic adolescent or one who experiences pressures and demands from others may feel confusion about his or her identity and role in society.
Young adulthood	Intimacy vs. isolation	By establishing lasting and meaningful relationships, the young adult develops a sense of connectedness and intimacy with others.	Because of fear of rejection or excessive self-preoccupation, the young adult is unable to form close, meaningful relationships and becomes psychologically isolated.
Middle adulthood	Generativity vs. stagnation	Through child rearing, caring for others, productive work, and community involvement, the adult expresses unselfish concern for the welfare of the next generation.	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.
Late adulthood	Ego integrity vs. 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.

Source: Adapted from Erikson (1964a).

## Erik Erikson: Psychosocial Stages of Development

Unlike Freud who believed development ends during adolescence, Erikson believed that development continues beyond puberty across the lifespan based on how the individual deals with conflicts or crises.

The following are Erik Erikson's eight psychosocial conflicts that we need to resolve across the lifespan. 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 periods.




If there are more positive experiences than negative experiences, one has a positive resolution at that stage.

- A positive resolution of each conflict (Erikson called them crises) contribute to a progressive strengthening of the self and a positive resolution at early stages increases the chances that an individual will positively resolve a crisis at late stages.
- A negative resolution of each conflict contribute to a progressive weakening of the self and a negative resolution at early stages increases the chances that an individual will negatively resolve a crisis at other stages.

## **Initiative versus guilt (3-6 years)**

During this stage, people 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?

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

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 initiating explorations.
- If a child is punished for these initiating these explorations (which can violate social norms), they will develop a sense of guilt.

Example:

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.

## Initiative vs. guilt

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 make a decision 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?






## Industry versus inferiority (6-12 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 to complete jobs or failing to teach the child, leads to frustration and perhaps learned helplessness.

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

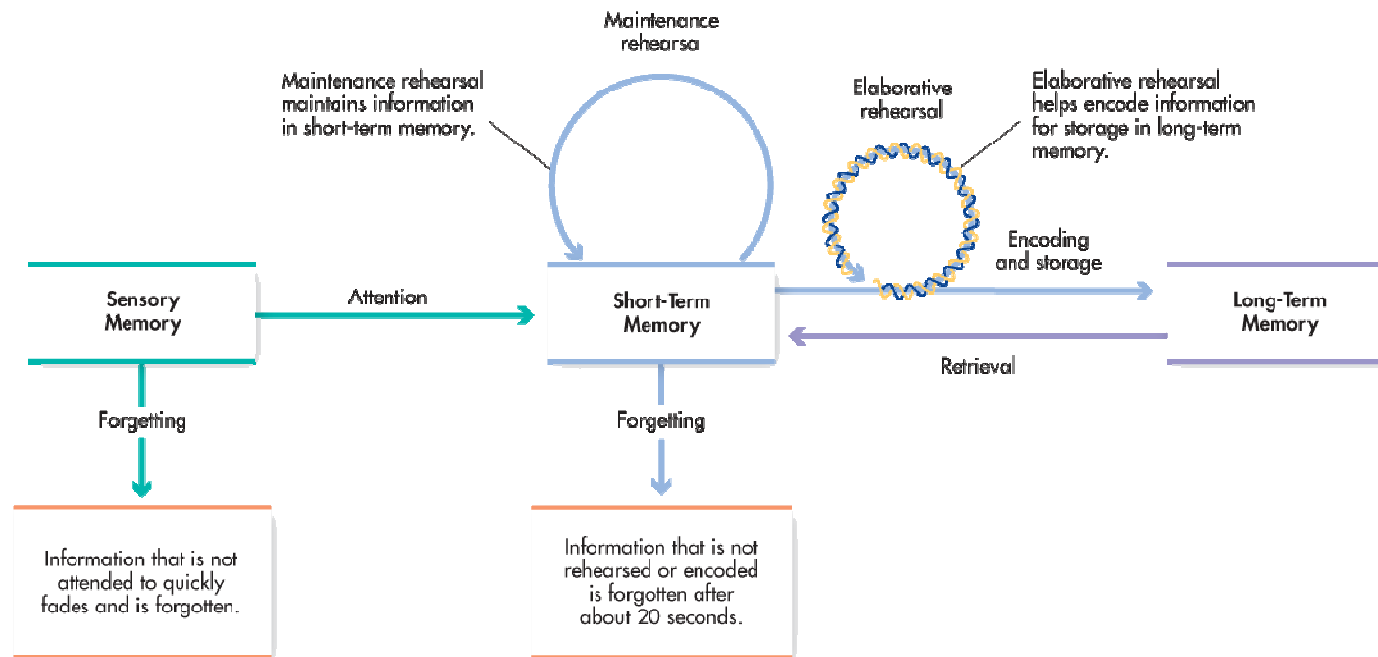
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Inferiority</b>
<p>Through successful accomplishments, the child develops a sense of pride and competence in schoolwork, home and social activities.</p>  <p>(image source: Carpenter and Huffman)</p>	<p>Through a lack of successful accomplishments and failure "to "keep up" with peers,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

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

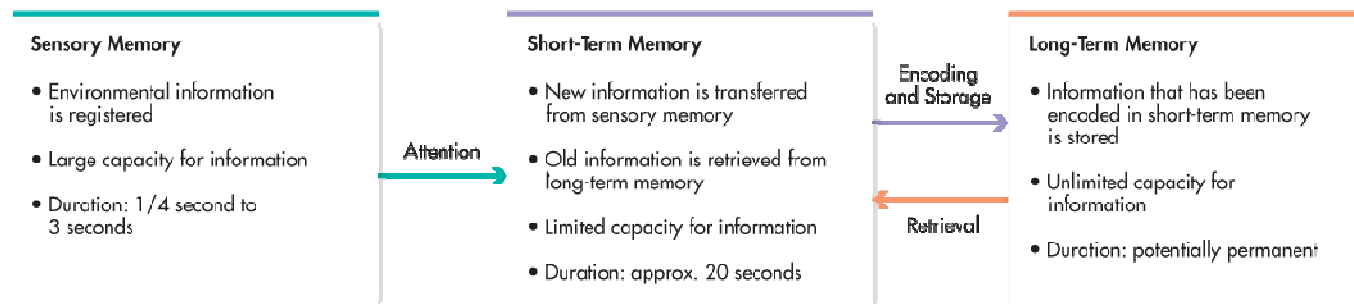
Example:

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.

# An Information-Processing Perspective on Intellectual Growth



**Figure 6.4**  
Hockenbury/Nolan, *Psychology*, 8e, © 2018 Worth Publishers



**Figure 6.1**  
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## **Executive functions**

Executive functions are a broad term that refers to every frontal lobe feat of self-control. As we grow through middle childhood, the brain develops and psychologists notice several “large changes” in

- Informational Rehearsal
- Selective Attention
- Inhibiting Responses

Information Rehearsal: Older children are observed to rehearse information. They understand that they need to rehearse information, and can account for their superior ability to learn compared to kindergartners.

- Simple rehearsal is a crude form of remembering information long-term.
- Elaborative rehearsal tends to be more effective in learning information.

## Executive functions

Selective Attention: When asked to only pay attention to the top row, older children were better able to remember the animals in the top row than younger children. Recall for the bottom row was just as good (I'd describe it as bad) for young and old groups).



Belsky, *Experiencing the Lifespan*, 5e, © 2019 Worth Publishers

Paying attention to relevant information is important for learning and acquiring information. The difficulty as adults is deciding and evaluating what is relevant and is irrelevant information instead of being told what is relevant and irrelevant information. Those who multitask and sleep deprived can have difficulties with this decision.

The ability to control and sustain attention is related to school readiness, math skills, language development and linked to a greater likelihood of completed college by age 25.

## **Executive functions**

Inhibition: Inhibition is the ability to perform some action that contradicts their immediate tendencies. Those who can inhibit immediate impulses and desired are more likely to be successful. As noted, even adults have problems with inhibiting short-term impulses for long-term goals.

- We need to inhibit our natural responses for stereotypes, use of schemas—both which are unconscious and automatic.
- We need to inhibit our natural impulses of eating poorly, sending off a quick email, or immediate gratification.
- We need to inhibit our “quick answer” with whatever sounds good and go with something more thoughtful.

## **Factors that Help the Development of Executive Functions**

Parents and teachers can facilitate (or hinder) the development of executive functions.

- Parents who model good executive functions (planning, rehearsal, inhibiting responses) are associated with children having these good executive functions.
- Having a secure attachment to your mother during the infant years was associated to a higher level of executive function at 5 to 6 years of age ([Santrock, page 157](#))

**Table 6.4: Information-Processing Guidelines for Teachers and Parents**

<b>General Principles for Younger (and Some Older) Children</b>
1. Don't expect boys and girls to remember, without prompting, regular chores such as feeding a pet.
2. Expect most children to have a good deal of trouble in situations that involve inhibiting a strong "prepotent impulse"—such as not touching desirable toys, following unpleasant rules, or doing homework.
<b>Throughout Middle Childhood</b>
1. Actively teach the child study skills (such as rehearsing information) and selective attention strategies (such as underlining important points) for tests.
2. Scaffold organizational strategies for school and life. For example, get the child to use a notebook for each class assignment and keep important objects, such as pencils, in a specific place.
3. Expect situations that involve multiple tasks (such as getting ready for school) and activities that involve ongoing inhibition (such as refraining from watching TV before finishing homework) to be especially problematic. Build in a clear structure for mastering these difficult executive-functioning tasks: "At 8 or 9 P.M., it's time to get everything ready for school." "Homework must be completed by dinnertime, or immediately after you get home from school."
4. To promote selective attention (and inhibition), have a child do her homework, or any task that involves concentration, in a room away from tempting distractions such as the TV or Internet.



## Emotional Development

Emotional regulation is the skills involved in controlling our feelings so that they don't get in the way of a productive life.

- We may need to cool our rage and anger to think clearly when rejected by our peers or do poorly at a task.
- We may need to manage our fear of failure to talk to our teacher or someone we have a crush on (modified from [page 174](#)),

Reducing our anxiety is important so that we may be more effective at the task at hand, or control our impulses for immediate gratification.

## Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is an evaluation of the self as either “good” or “bad” as a result of comparing the self to others.

How we describe ourselves changes with age.

- Young children (about 3 years old) tend to talk about themselves in terms of external facts.
  - I am 3 years old, I live at 304 West 18<sup>th</sup> street, I have a dog and a blue bicycle.
- Older children (about 4th grade) describe themselves with internal, psychological abilities and traits anchored in feelings.
  - I am nice to people, I feel sad when I think of my cat and I am embarrassed a lot around green people.
- and older children tend to describe themselves in relation and comparison to others.
  - I am not as tall as Jane, I can't do math as well as Susan.

Worldwide, self-esteem tends to decline during early elementary school. This decline in self-esteem may be related to our awareness of other people's skills that may be better than our own.

In Erikson's theory, entering the much larger world can be challenging increases the likelihood that there are others with better skills than our own and produce feelings of inferiority. For some, these feelings of inferiority may propel us forward to be successful in multiple areas—not just one, and this allows us to feel good about ourselves.

As we get older, our self-esteem tends to not rely on one quality. We can also focus on aspects we excel in to grow our self-esteem.

## **Self-Esteem**

Researcher Susan Harter identified five broad areas children draw on for self-esteem

- Scholastic competence (academic talents)
- Behavioral conduct (obedience or being “good”)
- Athletic skills (performance at sports)
- Peer likeability (popularity), and
- Physical appearance (looks).

It isn't enough to know how a child feels about each area of self-esteem (how well to they rate in each one) to evaluate their self-esteem. You would need to know how much that child values that area. If they don't value scholastic competence, and they are good or bad in that area, scholastic competence isn't going to influence their self-esteem that much.

## Self-Esteem Distortions

Developmental psychologists identify two broad types of personality: externalization and internalization tendencies ([page 174](#)).

**Externalization** tendencies is a broad personality style that involves acting on one's immediate impulses and behaving disruptively and aggressively.

**Internalization** tendencies is a broad personality style that involves intense fear, social inhibitions, and often depression.

Normally, we base our self-esteem on signals and feedback from the outside world. We compare ourselves to others and get feedback from the larger social environment.

- Those with an **externalization tendency**, when confronted with feedback and comparisons they don't like (I'm not the smartest), may deny reality and impulsively blame others to maintain their unrealistically high sense of self ([page 175\\*](#)).
- Those with an **internalization tendency** may have intense anxiety that cause them to perceive failure for benign events (I embarrassed myself in front of the class, but everyone is too polite to say something). The anxiety may keep them from trying something new, assuming that they may fail ([page 175\\*](#)).

Children (and adults) face with internalizing and externalizing tendencies are at risk of failure, but for different reasons.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Self-Esteem Distortion</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
<b>Children with externalizing problems</b> act out “emotions,” are impulsive, and are often aggressive.	May ignore real problems and have unrealistically high self-esteem.	Continue to fail because they don’t see the need to improve.
<b>Children with little externalizing or internalizing tendencies</b>		
<b>Children with internalizing problems</b> are intensely fearful.	Can read failure into everything and have overly low self-esteem.	Continue to fail because they decide that they cannot succeed and stop working.

**Table 6.6: Identifying Your Self-Esteem Distortions: A Checklist Using Harter's Five Domains**

<b>You have <u>externalizing</u> issues if you regularly have thoughts like these:</b>
1. <b>Academics:</b> “When I get poor grades, it’s because my teachers don’t give good tests or teach well”; “I have very little to learn from other people”; “I’m smarter than practically everyone else I know.”
2. <b>Physical skills:</b> “When I play baseball, soccer, etc., and my team doesn’t win, it’s my teammates’ fault, not mine”; “I believe it’s OK to take physical risks, such as not wearing a seatbelt or running miles in the hot sun, because I know I won’t get hurt”; “It’s all statistics, so I shouldn’t be concerned about smoking four packs a day or about drinking a six-pack of beer every night.”
3. <b>Relationships:</b> “When I have trouble at work or with my family, it’s typically my co-workers’ or family’s fault”; “My son (or mate, friend, mother) is the one causing the conflict between us.”
4. <b>Physical appearance:</b> “I don’t think I have to work to improve my appearance because I’m gorgeous.”
5. <b>Conduct:</b> “I should be able to come to work late (or turn in papers after the end of the semester, talk in class, etc.)”; “Other people are too uptight. I have a right to behave any way I want to.”
<b>Diagnosis:</b> You are purchasing high self-esteem at the price of denying reality. Try to look at the impact of your actions more realistically and take steps to change.

**You have internalizing issues if you regularly have thoughts like these:**

1. **Academics:** “I’m stupid”; “I can’t do well on tests”; “My memory is poor”; “I’m bound to fail at science”; “I’m too dumb to get through college”; “I’ll never be smart enough to get ahead in my career.”

2. **Physical skills:** “I can’t play basketball (or some other sport) because I’m uncoordinated or too slow”; “I’ll never have the willpower to exercise regularly (or stick to a diet, stop smoking, stop drinking, or stop taking drugs).”

3. **Relationships:** “I don’t have any people skills”; “I’m doomed to fail in my love life”; “I can’t be a good mother (or spouse or friend).”

4. **Physical appearance:** “I’m unattractive”; “People are born either good-looking or not, and I fall into the *not* category”; “There is nothing I can do to improve my looks.”

5. **Conduct:** “I’m incapable of being on time (or getting jobs done or stopping talking in class)”; “I can’t change my tendency to rub people the wrong way.”

**Diagnosis:** Your excessively low self-esteem is inhibiting your ability to succeed. Work on reducing your helpless and hopeless attitudes and try for change.



## Promoting Realistic Self-Esteem

Simply raising self-esteem by telling others that you are a good person is helpful to a point. After a point where self-esteem doesn't match reality without any concrete accomplishments, praise can be harmful (see Erikson's Industry vs. Inferiority). True self-esteem comes from working for a goal and meeting that goal\*

When children are having trouble in a vital life domain (academics, physical, relationship, physical appearance, or conduct), it is important to

1. enhance self-efficacy (the belief that I can succeed if I work at it\*) and
2. promote realistic perceptions about the self.

As Erikson mentions in Industry vs. Inferiority, teachers (using the term generically) are important to help a child with these tasks.

To enhance self-efficacy,

- praise effort (you worked hard)
- instead of praising "innate ability" (you are smart).

Carol Dweck's research has found that elementary schoolers who were praised for being "very intelligence" (innate ability) had lower self-efficacy and were reluctant to attempt a more challenging task.

## Promoting Realistic Self-Esteem

To encourage accurate perceptions and develop good metacognitive abilities\*, adults need to continually provide accurate feedback on their performance. However, for some people, feedback on their performance can provoke anxiety. People dislike anxiety and avoid activities that will make them anxious, such as tests, supervisor evaluations, or peer evaluations. The behavioral perspective suggests that we are reinforced for avoiding feedback and the anxiety that accompanies it. The anxiety may arise from the punishment of failure.

In general, whether as a child or adult, valuing each child or adult as a person (see humanistic perspective and unconditional positive regard) and encouraging effort over “talent” promotes realistic self-esteem.

## **Promoting Morality and Prosocial Behavior**

Prosocial behavior: sharing, helping and caring actions.

- Empathy: Feeling the exact emotion that another person is experiencing. Generally, this is associated with feelings of anxiety or distress.
  - You feel upset when you see another person get hit.
- Sympathy: A state necessary for acting prosocially, involving feelings upset *for* a person who needs help. Unlike empathy, this is NOT associated with feelings of anxiety or distress.
  - You acknowledge that it is distressing when others get hit.

Developmental psychologists believe that sympathy, rather than empathy, is related to behaving in a prosocial manner.

## **Promoting Morality and Prosocial Behavior**

Prosocial behavior seems to naturally present during the first two years of life, but does NOT seem to develop as children grow older. One tendency that can prevent prosocial behavior is the development of the tendency to justify uncaring actions (p. 179).

For example

- Refugees are not like us—so we shouldn't let them into the United States.
- I refuse to give money to street people because if people weren't lazy, everyone could succeed.

Albert Bandura calls this tendency moral disengagement. Not helping those in need can make us feel anxious. We can reduce this anxiety by helping those in need or rationalizing our inaction.

## **Socializing Moral Children**

Western cultures tend to focus on the individual when attributing moral and prosocial behavior. We need to foster a positive social environment to bring out the best of us and avoid a negative social environment that can bring out the worst of us.

Factors that help

- Provide a secure, loving attachment
- Continually remind others about fundamental ethical principles (hurting people is wrong, lying is wrong, helping those in need, telling the truth is important).
- Pay attention to children's caring act and reinforce their behavior to their personality—it is a core aspect of who they are.
- Remind yourself of times that you were prosocial (positive psychologists advocate that you should think of at least 3 things that went well in a day).
- When children do a hurtful act, instead of punishing the child, have children reflect on their behavior to empathize how the other person feels.

## Table 6.7: How to Produce Prosocial Children

- Praise a child effusively when she is being generous, and label her as a caring person. Give her many chances to act prosocially, and keep reminding her of situations when she acted in a caring way.
- When the child has hurt another person, clearly point out the moral issue and alert him to how the other person must feel.
- Avoid teasing and shaming. When the child has done something wrong, tell her you are disappointed and give her a chance to make amends.
- As moral disengagement tends to flare up during concrete operations, when children define certain people or groups as “less worthy,” repeatedly emphasize basic moral precepts, such as the need to “help strangers” and “treat everyone with respect”—*and accompany these mantras by modeling these principles in your own life!*