

Erickson's psychosocial development

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Psychosocial Development Erik Erikson describes psychosocial development as occurring in stages. He describes the different stages according to personality traits shown at the various stages. I have interviewed and made my observations of persons at the different stages as follows: Infancy (birth to 18 months) Trust vs... Mistrust A one year old baby was observed during a session of breastfeeding. The baby is hungry and it is time for the mother to breastfeed him.

She picks up her son and holds him gently on her lap telling him she is going to give him some milk and attaches him on to her breast. The baby immediately calms down and sucks for a few minutes. While the baby is drinking, the mother looks at her son lovingly and the child fluctuates his attention from the mother to what is happening around him. The above behaviors show the affection and loving relationship between the baby and the mother who is very patient and gentle towards her son. This renders breastfeeding to be a wonderful experience to both mother and child.

According to Erikson, the first stage of trust vs...

Mistrust is shown in the above observations the baby fully trusts his mother who is caring for him with a lot of love, patience and predictability. This is shown in the fact that he calms down and is comfortable to look around him while he is feeding during the session. Early childhood (2 to 4 years) Autonomy vs... Shame and Doubt A boy of two and a half years who is still undergoing toilet training has been observed. The mother asks her son every two hours if he needs to go potty. The child is still inconsistent in his response but sometimes out of his own free will goes to the potty and points to it.

The mother pulls down the child's pants and gently asks him to sit down on the potty. She tells him that he is now growing into a big boy and that she will be very happy if he uses the potty. The boy sits down for a minute on the potty whilst his mother brings his blocks to play with him while he is sitting down on the potty. After a while the boy gets bored, stands up, runs into the kitchen and picks up a packet of biscuits. The mother explains to her son that as soon as he urinates in the potty she will give him a biscuit.

The child insists on eating the biscuits immediately and does not cooperate. The mother looks frustrated since she has been trying to potty train her son for the past few months without success. According to this stage of Erikson, the toddler becomes more mobile and assertive on his Independence. I think that this has been shown in the above observation. The toddler seems to try to please his mother initially by sitting down on the potty. Which he likes at the moment. When his mother refuses to give him a biscuit he protests and wants to have his own way.

On the other hand the mother seems to be at a loss on what to do next since she thinks that her son needs to be toilet trained in order to be accepted at his new school. The toddler does not seem certain of what he has to do yet. He still seems to be unprepared to be potty trained though he is showing first signs. He is showing he is bored and insecure when trying to use the potty. That is probably the reason why he went to fetch the biscuit so he will do something he likes instead of something which makes him feel less confident. The mother needs to be more patient and give more encouragement to her son regarding this issue.

Introducing stories of other toddlers/cartoon characters being potty trained, and maybe singing some songs might help her son be more motivated, calm ND patient in his training. Preschool (3 to 5 years) Initiative vs... Guilt A four year old girl was observed at play in a children's playground whilst her mother looked on. Initially the girl clutches her mother and does not want to go to play with the other children whom she doesn't know. The mother takes her daughter's hand and walks around the playground slowly with her daughter showing her the various activities and what fun it is to play with the other children.

After sometime the little girl sees a little see-saw in the form of a bright colored snake. She moves towards it ND climbs onto it and starts playing. After sometime she climbs down and runs towards the slide. She climbed up the slide behind the other children and took turns for about ten minutes on the slide enjoying the activity and sometimes looking at her mother for approval. After some time she moves on towards the other activities and starts playing with the other children feeling happy and secure. The mother looks happy that her daughter is mixing with the other children and is enjoying herself.

From time to time she encourages and praises her. When the child is told that it is time to go back home, she does not want to obey and throws a tantrum. The mother starts shouting at the child, the child continues to cry and lies on the ground. The girl seems to be insecure and shy when we arrive at the playground but then seems to gain confidence and starts playing with the other children. She enjoys the activities but still looks at her

mother for approval. According to Erikson during this stage children need to find a healthy balance between initiative and guilt.

This girl seems to be going through this stage by not wanting to leave her mother on her own and by aging the initiative and going around the playground to have fun and play with the other kids. When it comes to leaving the playground the girl does not accept the fact that she has to go back home and tries to assert herself by throwing the tantrum in order to have her way. In my opinion, the mother should have prepared the girl better and warned her that they only have a few minutes left before going home. Industry vs... Inferiority I interviewed a nine year old boy for this stage.

The boy seems to be doing very well at school. He told me that he is one of the best boys in class especially in mathematics. He likes reading and doing his homework. In fact he asks his mother to buy him some workbooks to have work to do during the summer holidays. When asked if there is something he wants to improve on, he mentions that he would like to be better in football and art. He also mentions that he worries that he has not done his work perfectly as his teacher would like him to. He seems to like to please his teachers and be considered to be the ideal student.

He also says that he enjoys going to school to play with his friends during break time. Although this boy seems to be doing very well academically, he still seems to feel some insecurity when it comes to pleasing his superiors. The boy seems to be competent and satisfied with his achievements. He likes learning new things and skills. According to Erikson the child's peer

group becomes more important and significant in the child's life at this stage in fact this boy emphasizes the importance of having friends at school and at the football he attends.

Adolescence (12 to 18 years) Identity vs... Role confusion For this stage I have observed and interviewed a 17 year old girl. When asked who she feels she is, she says that she is happy about herself, feels that she is full of Lana and energy and she has a very promising future in front of her. She says she would like to become a teacher and later on have her own family. In my observations she seems to be confident and very sociable with different people. This adolescent seems to be secure and happy as she has the support of her family and friends.

She is motivated to continue studying in order to reach her goal of becoming a teacher as well as to make her parents proud of her achievements. She feels self confident as a result of the support she receives from those around her. According to Erikson, during this stage, children become more independent and begin to look at the future. In fact this is shown by this adolescent during the interview when she talked with enthusiasm about her future plans in terms of career, relationships and families. Young Adulthood (19 to 40 years) Intimacy vs...

Isolation she is happily married and has two young children though she is kept very busy and hardly has time for herself, she feels very happy and satisfied with her life. She has also been qualified in a profession and she loves her work from which she has taken some time off for the moment to look after her young family. Besides her family, she has also kept contact

with some friends and sometimes they call each other to meet. According to Erikson, this stage involves forming relationships and long term commitments with persons who are not family members.

This woman seems to have acquired this stage in that she has established her professional career and settled down in her own family with her husband and children. Middle Adulthood (40 to 65 years) Generatively vs... Stagnation For this stage, I interviewed and observed a 46 year old woman. This woman has a family made up of a husband and three children. She also has professional lubrications. In the past few years she has changed her career so she would be able to spend more time with her family.

She said she feels useful and accomplished in both her family life as well as at work. According to Erikson during middle adulthood we establish our careers, settle down within a relationship, and have our own families we also give back to society through raising our children and being productive at work. It seems that this woman has moved on in this regard. Maturity (65 to death) Ego Integrity vs... Despair For this stage I have observed and interviewed a 77 year old man. During the interview, this man seems to enjoy narrating his past experiences and how life was in the past.