

# Chapters 8-16 human adjustment text book

Psychology



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My Reflections on the Individual and Society This has been such a great learning experience for me as it has opened various perspectives on human development, personality and relationships. I learned that so many factors influence the growth and development of the individual that as he goes through the life span and the personality that emerges likewise impacts society. If one develops a stable, pro-active and positive personality, then he gets to be a productive member of society. On the other hand, negative life experiences can affect one's personality development and the outcome may be a weak, bitter and unsuccessful individual who is unable to contribute to society.

The discussions in the past weeks have all been interesting as it related to more adult material. My additional readings have given me a better understanding of adult development with Erikson's Psychosocial theories, and in particular, adulthood begins with the conflict of Intimacy vs. Distantiation vs. Self-Absorption. This life stage puts the young adult in a position that makes him seek intimate relationships either with close friends or a prospective mate in a love relationship. One becomes in need of strong emotional bonds, and if intimacy is not achieved, then alienation and isolation takes place (Erikson, 1963). As the individual approaches middle adulthood, the lifestyle expected of him by society is either having established a family of his own and/or having an established career (Santrock, 2006). Caught between Generativity vs. Stagnation, adults in the mid-life stage have a strong urge to leave a legacy by helping the new generation. They become very productive as they adjust the discrepancy between one's dream and one's actual accomplishments. Failure to achieve a sense of productivity results in psychological stagnation (Erikson, 1963).

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However, I also learned that it is not too late to learn new things even when one is middle-aged. The myriad of opportunities available for learning is ours for the taking. Never before has knowledge been so accessible! Being a lifelong learner is a choice anyone could take (Kungu & Machtmes, 2009). Learning can be derived not only from schools but all around us – through seminars and workshops on a variety of subjects and interests, through knowledgeable people one comes in contact with and through the internet, the information gateway that is accessible to anyone. It only takes one's positive disposition to choose to become productive in the middle to later years because if not, then indeed, one will just stagnate, deteriorate and stop developing.

The motivation to learn is affected by the reinforcements to learning namely intrinsic motivation or the inner drive to learn which leads to personal fulfillment; extrinsic motivation, which consists of rewards such as high grades or a prize for performing well; social reinforcement, an example of which is praise and approval from significant persons in an individual's life; and achievement, or the attaining of the learning goal. Having an interplay of the four kinds of reinforcement is the most effective way to motivate a learner to pursue more knowledge and acquire more skills (Stoll, L., Fink, D. & Earl, L., 2003).

In Erikson's final Psychosocial stage, Integrity vs. Despair and Disgust, ego integrity over one's lifetime is evaluated. If one looks back at the life he has lived with few regrets, then ego integrity is achieved. On the other hand, failure to achieve ego integrity leads to feelings of despair, hopelessness, guilt, resentment and self-rejection (Erikson, 1963). My observations of the elderly reflect this. Those who remain with youthful, jolly and pleasant

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personalities despite the challenges that old age present, have usually lived fulfilling lives. They maintain close relationships with their families and friends and continue to learn new things. However, those whose personalities have become more somber, and seemed to have lost the zest for living, have several regrets and feel hopeless that they cannot be amended this late in their lives.

Having an idea of what the future holds for me in terms of developmental expectations, I am empowered to pave my own life path. I choose to be positive and embrace life's challenges. I envision myself to live a long and fruitful life in the company of family and friends and share healthy and happy relationships as we go through our lives' journey.

#### References

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