

Stages of Development: Shame and Guilt

Erik H. Erikson

Encyclopædia Britannica

Freud's emphasis on the developmental unfolding of the sexual, aggressive, and self-preservative motives in personality was modified by the American psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson, who integrated psychological, social, and biological factors. Erikson's scheme proposed eight stages of the development of drives, which continue past Freud's five stages of childhood (oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital) and through three stages of adulthood. The stages proceed in leaps according to what is called an epigenetic process. The term epigenesis, borrowed from embryology, refers to the predetermined developmental sequence of parts of an organism. Each part has a special time for its emergence and for its progressive integration within the functioning whole. Each phase of emergence depends upon the successful completion of the preceding phase. According to Erikson, environmental forces exercise their greatest effect on development at the earliest stages of growth, because anything that disturbs one stage affects all of the following stages. As if controlled by a biological timetable, each given stage must be superseded by a new one, receding in significance as the new stage assumes dominance. A constant interleaving at critical periods—in which some parts emerge while others are suppressed—must proceed smoothly if personality problems are to be avoided.

The Freudian theory of development with Erikson's modifications provides for a succession of drive-control (inner and environmental) interactions. These can be fit into a schema of polar attitudes that develop in progressive stages of a person's life, creating a conflict at each stage which should be resolved to avoid extremes of personality development. Erikson thus evolved his eight stages of development, which he described as:

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| 1. Infancy: | trust | versus | mistrust |
| 2. Early childhood: | autonomy | versus | shame and doubt |
| 3. Preschool: | initiative | versus | guilt |
| 4. School age: | industry | versus | inferiority |
| 5. Puberty: | identity | versus | identity confusion |
| 6. Young adulthood: | intimacy | versus | isolation |
| 7. Middle adulthood: | generativity | versus | stagnation |
| 8. Late adulthood: | integrity | versus | despair |