

Ego Integrity vs. Despair

Erikson's 8th Stage: Late Adulthood (Ages 65+)

The Developmental Question: "Was My Life Meaningful?"

Final psychosocial stage where individuals reflect on their lives and confront mortality

EGO INTEGRITY

Acceptance and Peace

- Accepting life as meaningful despite imperfections
- Finding coherence in life story
- Achieving wisdom and serenity
- Facing death with peace
- Sharing life lessons with others

DESPAIR

Regret and Hopelessness

- Viewing life as wasted or meaningless
- Dwelling on missed opportunities
- Bitterness and chronic regret
- Fear of death and dying
- Depression and social isolation
- Feeling it's too late to change

The Virtue: WISDOM

Broader perspective on life, acceptance of mortality, ability to mentor younger generations, emotional equanimity

Life Review: The Path to Integrity

Systematic reflection on life experiences helps achieve ego integrity by:

- Reframing failures and celebrating achievements
- Resolving lingering conflicts
- Finding patterns and meaning in life events
- Connecting personal story to larger narratives

Factors Influencing Ego Integrity Achievement

Cultural Factors

- Elder reverence vs. marginalization
- Collectivist vs. individualist values
- Cultural death attitudes

Spiritual Beliefs

- Transcendent meaning
- Explanations for suffering
- Continuity beyond death
- Community support
- Reduced death anxiety

Social Support

- Family bonds
- Meaningful friendships
- Intergenerational relationships
- Community involvement

Earlier Stage Resolution

- Identity formation enables coherent life narratives
- Intimacy creates validating relationships
- Generativity provides legacy evidence

Physical & Mental Health

- Chronic illness impacts but doesn't determine integrity
- Maintaining autonomy important
- Adequate support and pain management crucial