

Erikson's 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development

Quick Reference: Conflicts · Age Ranges · Virtues · Real-Life Examples

Stage	Age Range	Conflict	Virtue	Key Developmental Focus	Real-Life Example
Stage 1	Birth – 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust	HOPE	Reliable caregiving builds a fundamental sense of safety	Baby calms when caregiver responds to needs consistently
Stage 2	18 months – 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	WILL	Developing self-control and independence through doing	Toddler insisting on dressing themselves
Stage 3	3 – 6 years	Initiative vs. Guilt	PURPOSE	Goal-setting and purposeful exploration without fear	Preschooler organizing a pretend restaurant
Stage 4	6 – 12 years	Industry vs. Inferiority	COMPETENCE	Mastering skills through effort and peer comparison	Student reworking a failed assignment after feedback
Stage 5	12 – 18 years	Identity vs. Role Confusion	FIDELITY	Forming a coherent sense of self, values, and commitments	Teen exploring different roles, interests, and belief systems
Stage 6	Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	LOVE	Building genuine closeness through committed bonds	Young adult sustaining a deep, authentic partnership
Stage 7	Middle Adulthood	Generativity vs. Stagnation	CARE	Contributing to and investing in the next generation	Manager genuinely mentoring a junior colleague
Stage 8	Late Adulthood	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	WISDOM	Accepting life as lived with meaning rather than regret	Elder reflecting on choices without bitterness or regret

The 8 Virtues Across the Lifespan

Virtue	Color
Hope	Light Blue
Will	Light Green
Purpose	Light Yellow
Competence	Light Orange
Fidelity	Light Purple
Love	Light Pink
Care	Light Teal
Wisdom	Light Blue

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