

# Erikson's Theory of Social Development

Erik Erikson (1902–1994), a German psychologist, developed one of the most well-known theories of human development. Erikson's theory was based on what he viewed as a series of central conflicts that define various stages of our lives. The conflicts are rooted in our interactions and relationships with others. According to the theory, successfully resolving each conflict results in "virtues," or favorable outcomes. The list below briefly describes each stage and the outcomes that can result when the conflict is resolved favorably.

## Stage 1: Trust vs. Mistrust (Ages 0–1)

Infants who receive consistent care are able to trust others and gain a sense of security.

## Stage 2: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (Ages 1–3)

Toddlers who are supported and encouraged in their independent choices gain confidence in their ability to adapt to the world.

## Stage 3: Initiative vs. Guilt (Ages 3–6)

Children who are given opportunities to assert themselves and exercise their own ingenuity become more comfortable as leaders and decision-makers.

## Stage 4: Industry vs. Inferiority (Ages 6–13)

Children whose initiative and ingenuity are reinforced by caregivers and teachers gain confidence in their ability to achieve goals.

## Stage 5: Identity vs. Role Confusion (Ages 13–19)

Teenagers who are given opportunities to explore different options about themselves and their potential futures gain a sense of their role in the world.

## Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation (Ages 20–30)

Young adults who are able to sustain close friendships and romantic relationships develop a sense of care for others and learn to value commitment.

## Stage 7: Generativity vs. Stagnation (Ages 30–60)

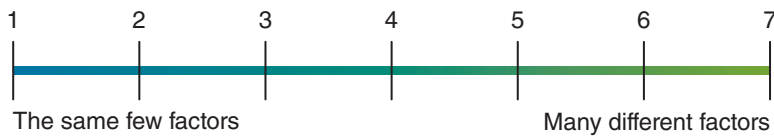
Adults who raise their own families, find success in their jobs, and develop close ties to their communities and other organizations develop a sense of themselves as productive members of society.

## Stage 8: Ego Integrity vs. Despair (Ages 60+)

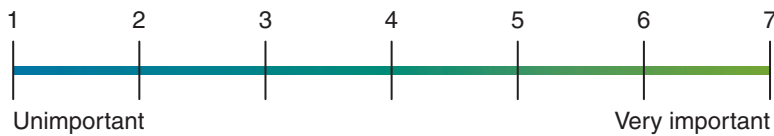
Senior citizens who are able to reflect on their own lives with a sense of purpose and accomplishment feel satisfaction and contentment.

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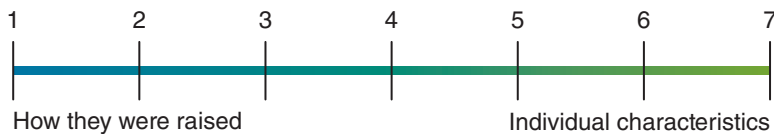
**Scale A:** According to Erikson's theory, children's social development is based on



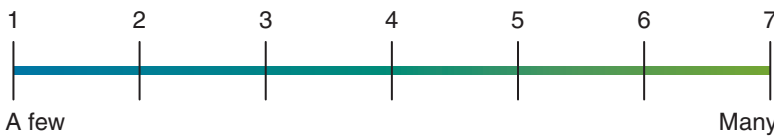
**Scale B:** Erikson believed that the first 3 years of life were \_\_\_\_\_ to later development.



**Scale C:** According to Erikson's theory, by the time children reach adolescence, their personalities are primarily a result of



**Scale D:** Erikson would argue that there are \_\_\_\_\_ paths toward healthy social development.



## Writing Portfolio

Based on Erikson's theory, the most important factor that contributes to who we are can be summed up as [*make a claim based on the theory*]. To understand why, one has to know a few things about the theory, such as [*summarize a few data points from the reading*]. Of course, Erikson's theory is only useful if we can agree on certain assumptions about people. One such assumption is [*provide a warrant to explain Erikson's theory*] and I [*agree or disagree*] with this assumption because [*explain*].