

Stages of Life-cycle: Eight Emotional Building Blocks of Development

Stage	Positive Resolution	Negative Resolution	Age (est.)
1	Basic Trust (safety) The world is a good place and I belong in it. Good attachment beliefs.	Basic Mistrust (danger) Guard is up. Set up to have control issues. Foundation is set to be out of balance for a lifetime.	0-18 mo
2	Autonomy (assert) Can say “no.” Independent, free. “I can do it myself.” Learning how to make own choices—practicing & experiencing.	Shame and Doubt (worthless) Problem: “Shame on you!” Symptoms: set up for people pleasing. Externally referenced.	18 mo.- 3 yrs
3	Initiative (explore) Developing imagination. Exploring options, exercising problem solving skills. Trying things out.	Guilt (severe introject) Internalizing the critic. Set up to beat self down for a lifetime, from within. Avoiding risk-taking.	3 – 7 yrs
4	Industry (builder) Accomplishments. “I’m good at something. I’m good for something.” Developing interests. Getting focused.	Inferiority (painful hider) Low self-esteem. Deeply held beliefs about inadequacy. Withdrawal. Self-doubt is magnified.	7 – 12 yrs
5	Identity (adjusted belonger) The pieces inside fit together. I have purpose. I know who I am. I know where I’m going. Maturity.	Identity Confusion (pieces don’t fit) Lost. Not fitting in. Confused about life and what to do with it. Inferiority is becoming my identity. Immiturity.	12 yrs to Late Adolescent, Young Adult
6	Intimacy (bonding) Opening up. Sharing feelings out loud. Connecting, working through conflicts and feelings.	Isolation (withering connections) Unable to resolve conflicts or address feelings in relationships. Walls. Settling for emptiness for fear of risks.	Young Adult
7	Generativity (a living system—like a lake) Helping others out of a deep inner well of “resources.” Giving back (not out of the need to be needed).	Stagnation/Self-Absorption (desperate self-maintenance) Holding on to everything for self. Needy, angry. Depressed. Like a stagnate pond—everything comes in, nothing goes out.	Adulthood
8	Integrity (soundness at center) Like a healthy tree—no rotteness at the core. Peaceful about death. Kids feel safe and nurtured with you. Sees worth in others.	Despair (bitter regrets) Blackness inside. Meanness towards others. Kids avoid you. Lacks wisdom. Sees others as worthless.	50+ to Late Adulthood