

Adolescence




It's sometimes frustrating to be an adolescent; you're too old to act like a little kid, but you haven't yet reached full adult status. Despite the frustrations, it's a stage of life packed with significant changes. Better than that, it's *your* stage of life!

Just for a minute, think of yourself in the fourth grade. Think of your physical self, the things you liked to do, the sorts of thoughts that occupied your mental life, the activities you engaged in, and the friends you had. How have you changed between then and now? Just the thought might leave you chuckling, glad that you've left your former self behind. The changes that occur during adolescence are probably the most dramatic changes you'll ever go through, with the possible exception of the rapid changes that occurred very early in your life.

In a sense, everything about an introductory psychology course relates to you. Pick any module and you will find relevant material that helps you understand yourself and your world better. Yet no module is more relevant to you than this one. Adolescence is where you're at! The physical, cognitive, and social aspects we discuss in this module are psychology's best and most current efforts to explain this time of your life.

What Is Adolescence?

 **13-1** What is adolescence, and how does our culture affect it?

Imagine living in a hunting and gathering society that celebrated your thirteenth birthday with a ceremony proclaiming you an adult. Shortly thereafter, you would marry, start your family, and settle into your adult life-style. Your occupational choices would be quite limited. If you're female, you would likely devote yourself to child-rearing and domestic tasks. If you're male, your occupation might well be hunting. Societies like this still exist in some parts of the world. Had you been born into one, your adolescent experience would be brief and vastly

Module 13

Learning Goals

- 13-1** Define adolescence and describe how culture affects it.
- 13-2** Describe the major physical changes that occur during adolescence.
- 13-3** Explain how adolescent reasoning differs from the reasoning of younger children.
- 13-4** Describe behaviors supporting the idea that developing a sense of identity is the primary social challenge of adolescence.
- 13-5** Explain how the three key developmental issues apply to adolescence.

adolescence The transition period from childhood to adulthood, extending from puberty to independence.

different from what you are most likely experiencing now as a teen in the developed world. Even in the more rural 1800s, your transition from childhood to adult life would have happened more quickly. At that time, formal education for many young people ended with eighth grade, and young couples married, began farming, and started a family before they turned 20. Now, however, adolescence is becoming increasingly long and complex. **Adolescence** is the transition period from childhood to adulthood; it extends from puberty to independence.

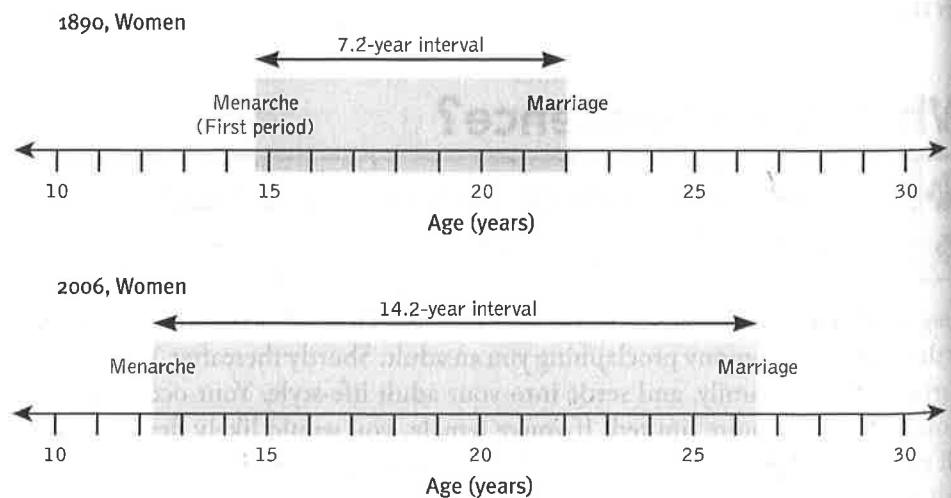
Adolescence begins with sexual maturation, which is happening about 2 years earlier than it did 100 years ago (see **Figure 13.1**).¹ Adolescence is being prolonged on the other end, too. As more and more students continue their formal education to college and beyond, independent adult status is delayed longer and longer. Many young men and women are also waiting longer to marry and start families. Adolescents may depend at least partially on their parents for financial support well into their twenties and sometimes longer.

The fact that most teenagers reach physical maturity long before they are able to assume adult roles can—and does—create some tension and frustration, which you have most likely experienced. One day you may be eager to sample a more adult activity (say, a road trip to another town to visit friends), only to have your parents deny permission because they feel you're not quite ready for that much independence. Next thing you know, your harmless but exuberant roughhousing with a sibling or friend is interrupted with a parental admonishment to grow up and act your age. When you want to be an adult, the message is often to be patient and wait. When you want to act like a child, you hear that it's important to be responsible and mature.

This is not to imply that adolescence must be a time of stormy rebellion and confusion. Teenagers display tremendous accomplishments—excelling in school, on the job, as volunteers, at sports, and in other creative endeavors. The transition from child to adult is jarring for some families, who struggle mightily with issues surrounding the amount of independence and responsibility teenagers should have. But others seem to navigate these waters with a minimum of disturbance and disruption. For most families, the gradual growth in maturity and responsibility on the part of the teen is matched by a growing confidence on the part of the parents.

For most teenagers, the experience of adolescence is an exciting opportunity to explore the possibilities of adult life. In fact, four out of five teenagers agree with the statement, "I would choose my life the way it is right now."²

FIGURE 13.1
Adolescence Is Taking Longer
Puberty is happening earlier, and marriage, financial independence, and the end of formal education are happening later. These events are stretching adolescence on both ends. (From Guttmacher Institute, 2006.)





moodboard/Alamy



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Adolescent Scenes

Are these activities that you enjoy? Can you identify other typical adolescent activities?

MAKE IT STICK!

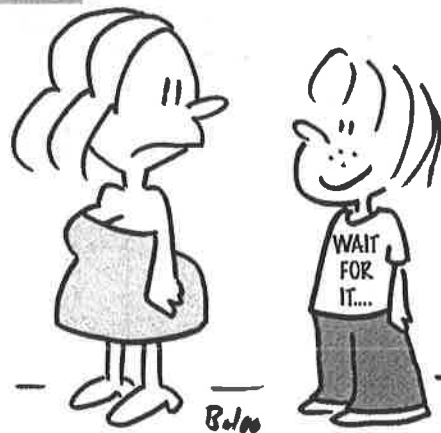
1. Which of the following aspects of adolescence is most likely to differ among cultures?
 - a. Menarche
 - b. The development of primary sex characteristics
 - c. The effect of hormonal changes on secondary sex characteristics
 - d. How the end of adolescence is defined
2. True or false? Adolescence is longer in more complex societies.
3. True or false? The path through adolescence resembles a stormy rebellion in most families.

Physical Development in Adolescence

13-2 What major physical changes occur during adolescence?

The most important physical development of adolescence is **puberty**, the period of sexual maturation during which a person becomes capable of reproducing. A flood of hormones, which lead to physical and emotional changes, triggers this amazing time of change. Puberty generally begins earlier in girls (about 11 years of age) than it does in boys (around 13 years). Although puberty begins years later in some individuals than in others, it generally starts earlier now than it used to.³ One of the most obvious changes is a growth spurt. Sixth- or seventh-grade girls often tower

puberty The period of sexual maturation, during which a person becomes capable of reproducing.



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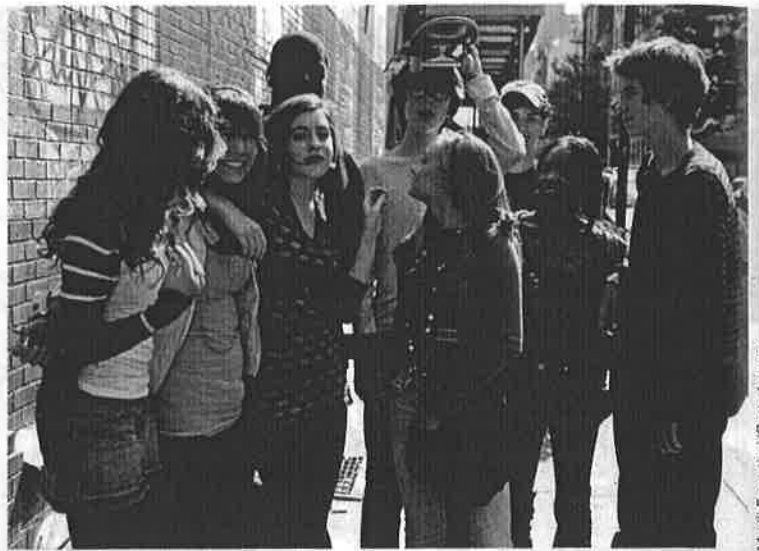
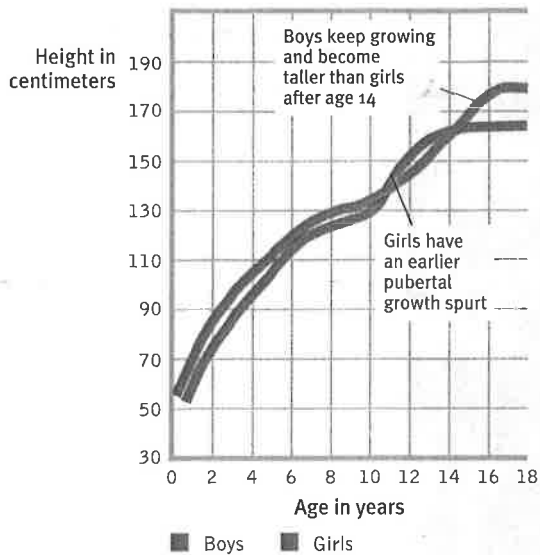


FIGURE 13.2
The Growth Spurt

Girls start the growth spurt earlier, but once boys catch up around age 14, they tend to grow taller than girls. (From Tanner, 1978.)

primary sex characteristics

The reproductive organs—ovaries, testes, and external genitalia.

secondary sex characteristics

Nonreproductive sexual characteristics, such as breast and hip development in females and voice quality and facial hair in males.

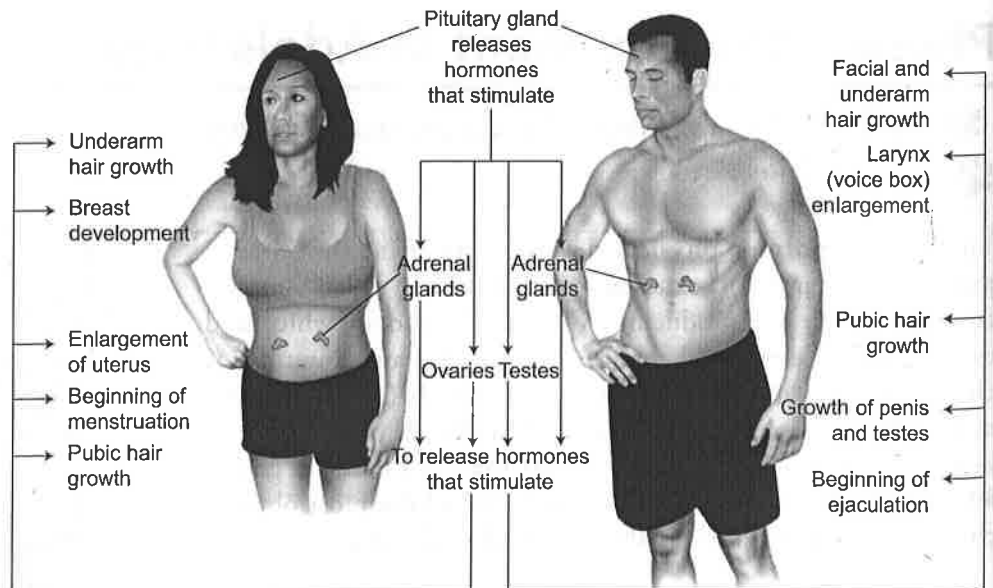
over their male classmates, but soon the boys catch up and outgrow the average female (see **Figure 13.2**).⁴

During the growth spurt, both primary and secondary sex characteristics develop (see **Figure 13.3**). The **primary sex characteristics** are the reproductive organs—the *testes* in males and the *ovaries* in females. The **secondary sex characteristics** are nonreproductive sexual characteristics, such as breast and hip development in girls and voice quality and facial hair in boys.

Two of the more obvious events of puberty are the beginning of menstruation (known as *menarche*) for females and the beginning of ejaculation for boys (which often happens during sleep as a *nocturnal emission*). Each is a memorable event that produces a variety of emotions in the young woman or young man. Teens who have been prepared to expect these events are more likely to view them as positive, rather than frightening or negative, experiences.^{5,6,7}

FIGURE 13.3
The Wonder of Puberty

The release of hormones during puberty triggers amazing changes in the body. Some of those changes are illustrated here.



Sexuality is certainly a *biological* event, but *cognitive* and *cultural* factors also govern sexual behaviors. Our culture is saturated with sexual imagery. A typical hour of prime-time network television contains about 15 sexual references, most of which ignore the risks of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.^{8,9,10} Add to this the sexual content of popular music, movies, print media, and the internet, mix in the increased sex drive triggered by the hormones released during puberty, and you have a recipe for the dramatic increase in teen sexual activity in the United States over the course of the past century.¹¹ Teens receive a decidedly mixed message calling not only for abstinence but also for safe sex, protected by condom use. Rarely discussed are the tremendous emotional risks of committing oneself sexually to another person. Is it any wonder that making decisions is sometimes so difficult, especially when teens are still working to complete their development of decision-making skills (as we will see in the next section)? The good news is that in recent years, many teens seem to be handling this pressure better than they were a few years ago. The rate of teen pregnancy in the United States is declining because fewer teens are sexually active, and the ones who are do a better job of protecting themselves.^{12,13}

Another potential source of conflict, anxiety, and misunderstanding is **sexual orientation**, one's attraction toward people of a particular gender. Heterosexuals (or straight people) are attracted to members of the opposite sex, whereas homosexuals (gay men and lesbian women) are attracted to members of the same sex. A number of scientific studies indicate that 1 percent of men and 4 percent of women are homosexual.^{14,15,16} Most of the remaining men and women are heterosexual, with perhaps 1 percent bisexual (attracted to members of both sexes).

We do not know precisely what determines sexual orientation, but research suggests that some possibilities are unlikely. Studies have *not* been able to establish that homosexuality is related to parenting styles, a person's hatred or fear of the opposite sex, or a childhood history of being raised by or exploited by homosexual adults.¹⁷⁻¹⁹ There have been studies suggesting that a variety of biological factors may impact sexual orientation. For example, several hundred animal species exhibit some same-sex behavior,²⁰ and researchers have changed the sexual orientation of rats by manipulating the mother's hormones during pregnancy.^{21,22}

A final aspect of physical development in adolescence relates to continued maturation of the brain, a process that begins before birth. After puberty, the brain becomes more efficient as unused connections among nerve cells in the brain disappear.²³ The frontal lobes of the brain—responsible for planning, judgment, and controlling impulses—are the last to complete this development, a process that isn't fully completed until about 25 years of age.²⁴

sexual orientation Enduring sexual attraction toward people of the opposite sex (heterosexuality), one's own sex (homosexuality) or to both sexes (bisexuality).

MAKE IT STICK!

- _____ is a girl's first menstruation.
- True or false? Development of the testes is a secondary sexual characteristic.
- Enduring sexual attraction toward members of one's own or the other gender is called sexual _____.

1. *Preconventional moral reasoning*—This primitive level of moral reasoning is characterized by a desire to avoid punishment or gain reward. Most children under the age of 9 show this type of moral reasoning, and some adults never progress beyond this level. Examples of statements that indicate preconventional reasoning include, Heinz was wrong to steal the drug because he might be put in jail, or Heinz was right to steal the drug because he would then have the companionship of his wife longer.
2. *Conventional moral reasoning*—The primary concern of conventional moral reasoning is to fit in and play the role of a good citizen. People at this level have a strong desire to follow the rules and laws of society. Conventional moral reasoning is typical of most adults, according to Kohlberg. It is generally apparent by early adolescence, when Piaget's formal operational thought kicks in. Examples of statements indicating conventional moral reasoning include, Heinz was wrong to steal because stealing breaks the law, or Heinz was right to take the drug because most people would do what they must to protect a family member.
3. *Postconventional moral reasoning*—Postconventional moral reasoning is characterized by references to universal ethical principles that represent the rights or obligations of all people. Most people do not reach this third level. Individuals at the postconventional level might say, Heinz was justified because everyone has a right to live, and he was simply trying to help his wife stay alive, or Heinz was wrong because everyone must respect the property of others, even the property of a selfish and greedy druggist.

Has Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning survived the test of time and the scrutiny of other researchers? As is often the case, some evidence supports his theory, while some doesn't fit quite so well. Follow-up studies support the idea of a progression from preconventional to conventional thought in childhood.³⁰ The postconventional stage is not strongly supported. The evidence indicates that this stage is largely a product of the white male population Kohlberg sampled.^{31,32} This sample came mostly from groups that value *individualism*. In North America and Western European countries, for example, individual goals tend to take precedence over group objectives (children are taught to stand on their own two feet and think for themselves). And in these countries, there is evidence of a progression to postconventional thinking. But in more *collectivist* cultures (like many in Asia), with a greater emphasis on shared group goals (children are taught to put the needs of the family and community ahead of the self), the notion that postconventional morality is superior to conventional morality receives less support. Similarly, North American women, who tend to be more communal than their male counterparts, also show less of Kohlberg's postconventional reasoning.

Kohlberg emphasized moral reasoning, but Jonathan Haidt³³⁻³⁵ believes that *feelings* are more important than reasons. Haidt argues that we make up our minds in moral situations based on intuition—what our gut tells us—and then use reasoning to defend our gut reactions. Whether our moral choices are based more on reasoning or more on our head or our gut, they are important choices in our lives. Ten years from now, how do you think you will feel about the moral choices you are making now as a teenager?

MAKE IT STICK!

1. Which best describes the stage that Jean Piaget stated most young people enter during adolescence?
 - a. Reasoning that involves thinking about the effects our moral actions have on others
 - b. The ability to think logically and form theories about abstract questions
 - c. A search for both identity and intimacy through exploration
 - d. The risk-taking stage because of crucial sexuality decisions
2. According to Lawrence Kohlberg, most adolescents would think it's wrong to drive through a red light because
 - a. you might get caught and have to go to traffic court.
 - b. we need to respect the rights of other drivers.
 - c. we imagine what it's like to be in a car hit by the car that runs the red light.
 - d. it's against the law and the rules of the road.
3. Kohlberg's stages may not apply in _____ cultures—cultures that place greater emphasis on shared group goals.

Social Development in Adolescence



13-4 What behaviors support Erikson's idea that developing a sense of identity is the primary challenge of adolescence?



To be human is to be social. Even the shyest among us experiences some social interaction as a part of normal development. Social interaction lies at the heart of all communication, from daily negotiations between siblings to the gestures exchanged by drivers squabbling over who has the right of way at an intersection. Your friendships and romances, decisions about conformity and nonconformity, and concerns about popularity and separation from family all relate to social development.

Erik Erikson's theory of social development³⁶ illustrates how certain issues peak during different periods of life, including adolescence. He divided the life span into eight stages, ranging from infancy to late adulthood (see **Table 13.1**). Each stage has its own psychosocial developmental task. This task is a challenge, and the way the individual handles the task will lead to a more desirable or less desirable outcome. For example, in healthy situations, infants will develop more trust than mistrust, toddlers will develop more autonomy than shame or doubt, and preschoolers will show more initiative than guilt about their attempts to be independent. Let's take a closer look at what Erikson had to say about adolescence and young adulthood, the two stages you are closest to.

Developing Identity

During adolescence and into the early twenties, your primary task is to develop an **identity**, a strong, consistent sense of who and what you are. According to Erikson, the adolescent's task is to solidify this sense of self by testing and integrating various roles. As you try on different ways of thinking and behaving (What do I value in life? What are my priorities? Why did I act that way?), your goal is to generate an ever-stronger sense of self.



Ted Stroschinsky Photographic Archive/Getty Images

ERIK ERIKSON (1902–1994)
Created an eight-stage theory of social development.

identity One's sense of self; according to Erikson, the adolescent's task is to solidify a sense of self by testing and integrating various roles.



Robin/Alamy

Initiative versus guilt



Michele Constantini/PhotoAlto/Alamy

Industry versus inferiority



Ladi Kirri/Alamy

Identity versus role confusion

TABLE 13.1 Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage (Approximate Age)	Issues	Description of Task
<i>Infancy</i> (0 to 1 year)	<i>Trust vs. mistrust</i>	If needs are dependably met, infants develop a sense of basic trust.
<i>Toddlerhood</i> (1 to 3 years)	<i>Autonomy vs. shame and doubt</i>	Toddlers learn to exercise their will and do things for themselves, or they doubt their abilities.
<i>Preschooler</i> (3 to 6 years)	<i>Initiative vs. guilt</i>	Preschoolers learn to initiate tasks and carry out plans, or they feel guilty about efforts to be independent.
<i>Elementary school</i> (6 years to puberty)	<i>Industry vs. inferiority</i>	Children learn the pleasure of applying themselves to tasks, or they feel inferior.
<i>Adolescence</i> (teen years into 20s)	<i>Identity vs. role confusion</i>	Teenagers work at refining a sense of self by testing roles and then integrating them to form a single identity, or they become confused about who they are.
<i>Young adulthood</i> (20s to early 40s)	<i>Intimacy vs. isolation</i>	Young adults struggle to form close relationships and to gain the capacity for intimate love, or they feel socially isolated.
<i>Middle adulthood</i> (40s to 60s)	<i>Generativity vs. stagnation</i>	Middle-aged people discover a sense of contributing to the world, usually through family and work, or they may feel a lack of purpose.
<i>Late adulthood</i> (late 60s and older)	<i>Integrity vs. despair</i>	When reflecting on his or her life, the older adult may feel a sense of satisfaction or failure.

The search for identity during adolescence has several characteristics:

- *Experimentation*—Adolescents often experiment in healthy ways: exploring and taking advantage of a variety of school opportunities, observing various adult role models, or imagining life in a variety of careers. (What would it be like to be a physician? An artist? What about a schoolteacher, a nurse, or a firefighter?) As adolescents sort out what is and isn't appealing, experimentation can become less healthy and productive, such as involvement with drugs or risky sexual behavior.
- *Rebellion*—Healthy development includes building some independence. Most parents have an image of what their children should become, and most children maintain the same core values as their parents. Nevertheless, the search for identity during adolescence may involve testing the limits parents set or adopting styles of fashion and grooming that adults may not accept or understand. But the drive for independence becomes unhealthy when rebelling against society's standards takes the form of criminal or

self-destructive behavior. Healthy adolescents exercise their independence in ways that do not harm themselves or others.

- **"Self"-ishness**—Relationships during adolescence tend to be "self"-ish. Teens increasingly learn about their unique selves as they move in and out of friendship cliques and romances. Each new relationship is a chance to try different ways of interacting. Teen friendships are genuine and important, but they tend to be temporary. Some people do maintain lifelong friendships with high school friends, but most young adults find that these friendships become fond memories as they settle into career and family patterns a few years later. Of course, if you'd told me this when I was a teenager, I would have said you were nuts! My friends were the center of my life in high school, but as I finished my education and moved on to my career, most of these friendships gradually and naturally gave way to others that have lasted longer. It will be interesting to see if technology makes it easier for your generation to maintain high school relationships than it was for mine, which had no access to social media apps and had to make costly long-distance phone calls.
- **Optimism and energy**—Most teenagers, armed with their new and more powerful cognitive skills, view the world with a fresh (and refreshing) perspective. They have trouble understanding why some children go to bed hungry and why adults tolerate pollution, discrimination, racism, or a thousand other injustices. Many adolescents are willing to tackle serious issues related to human rights, environmental concerns, political campaigns, and other causes. This willingness to contribute time and effort not only helps make the world a better place, but also helps teens develop a strong sense of their own priorities. (For more on the benefits of optimism, see Adolescence, Optimism, and Positive Psychology.)

Some adolescents realize a strong sense of identity with little or no struggle. A few may remain confused throughout their lives. Meeting this psychosocial challenge is especially difficult for those individuals who have struggled with the developmental tasks of previous stages. As you might imagine, achieving a sense of who you are is a lot easier if you're already trusting, autonomous, full of initiative, and industrious. Erikson felt that adolescents who had not achieved the developmental goals of their younger years could experience profound confusion about their place in the world. But even if developmental goals do not come easily, they are always within reach. Most of us hit some rough patches before the pieces settle into place in the late teens or twenties.



"Mom, you were young once ... right?"

Cartoon Stock

Who Am I?

As adolescents search for a strong sense of identity, they may experiment with a variety of different looks.



Rubberball/Mike Kemp/Getty Images



Arctic-Images/The Image Bank/Getty Images



valentinrussanov/Getty Images



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Adolescence, Optimism, and Positive Psychology

Erik Erikson teaches us that optimism is an important characteristic of adolescent identity. But how do you measure optimism? And does optimism really provide benefits? According to research done by positive psychologists, optimism truly is an important ingredient for happy, productive lives. Before we take a look at some of the benefits of optimism, answer this brief survey to see how you measure up on optimism.

Life Orientation Test: How Optimistic Are You?

Respond to each statement using the following scale:

0—strongly disagree; 1—disagree; 2—neutral; 3—agree; 4—strongly agree

1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
2. If something can go wrong for me, it will.
3. I'm always optimistic about my future.
4. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
5. I rarely count on good things happening to me.
6. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

To score yourself, first reverse the numbers you placed in answer to statements 2, 4, and 5. That is, for each of these items, change 0 to 4, 1 to 3, 3 to 1, and 4 to 0 (a 2 remains a 2). Leave the numbers in front of the rest of the statements unchanged. Then add up the numbers in front of all items to obtain a final score. Scores range from 0 to 24, with higher scores reflecting greater optimism. The average (mean) score is between 14 and 15.³⁷

If you scored 15 or above on the test, you are above average in optimism. Among college students, those who are more optimistic are less likely to experience loneliness, stress, and depression.³⁸ They are also less likely to experience physical illness.³⁹ These psychological and physical benefits seem to persist throughout the life span. In fact, optimistic people live an average of 7.5 years longer than those who are less optimistic.⁴⁰

Developing Intimacy

According to Erikson, young adults strive to achieve **intimacy**—the ability to form close, loving, and open relationships with other people; relationships that involve honest self-disclosure of feelings, ideas, and activities. Many people have their most intense, intimate relationship with a spouse, but not all marriages achieve this type of closeness. Intimacy is not necessarily sexual by nature, and it often occurs outside marriage with close, trusted friends and family members.

As noted earlier, Erikson realized that baggage from previous developmental stages would accumulate as we move from one stage to the next and that this baggage would affect our ability to negotiate current developmental challenges. Young adults facing the challenge of intimacy versus isolation cannot share themselves honestly and openly if they are still confused about their own sense of self.

Independence From Family

In Western cultures, separating from family to become more independent begins in childhood but picks up speed in adolescence.⁴¹ Children move from a primary



Ron Levine/Getty Images

Intimacy

Young adults strive to develop intimate relationships based on open, honest communication.

intimacy In Erikson's theory, the ability to form close, loving, open relationships; a primary task in early adulthood.

LIFE MATTERS

The Affordable Care Act now allows children up to the age of 26 to remain on their parents' health insurance. As you become an emerging adult, you can discover exactly who you are and what you want from life without the added expense of healthcare.

attachment to their parents to a primary attachment to their peers. You can observe this in any mall if you watch parents interacting with their preschool-age children and then watch parents interacting with their teenage children. Your first observation will probably be that not as many teenagers go to the mall with their parents! In fact, teens mostly hang out with other teens, and their relationships may be cliquish.⁴² Because of this teenage tendency for cliques, some teenagers feel excluded; these teenagers are prone to depression and loneliness, and a few of them may even lash out violently.⁴³

When parents and adolescents are together, they will probably display less warmth and emotional closeness than you'll see in families with younger children. **Figure 13.5** shows how this progression develops over time. As children become adolescents, arguments with parents tend to become both more frequent⁴⁴ and more intense.⁴⁵

Some families suffer as this move toward independence separates parents and children, but a much greater number adjust with a minimum of turmoil. Most of the time, parents and teenagers get along quite well, with 97 percent of U.S. teenagers reporting that they get along either "fairly" or "very" well with their parents.⁴⁶ In another study, more than half of all middle-class teenagers in a worldwide survey said that family relationships were the "most important" guiding principle in their lives, and 80 percent rated family relationships as "important."⁴⁷ This is good because a growing number of children will remain at least partially dependent on their parents for financial support and housing until their mid-twenties, a phase called *emerging adulthood*, which is defined in the next module.⁴⁸⁻⁵⁰

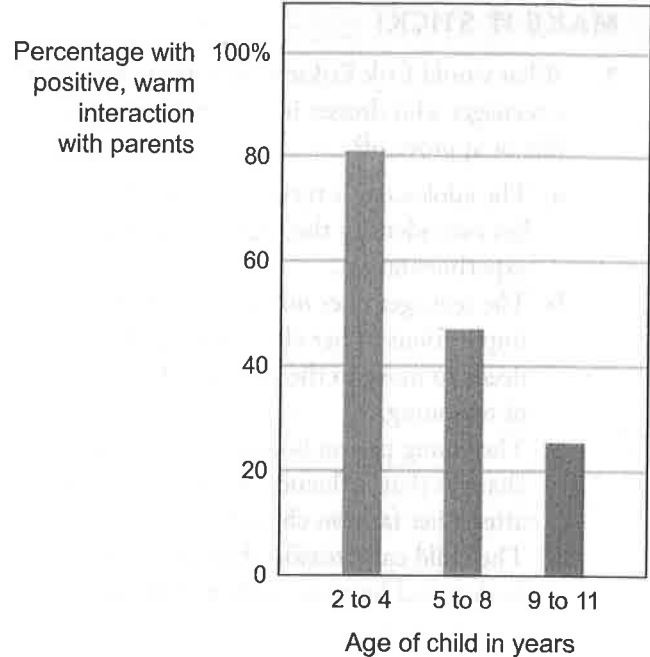
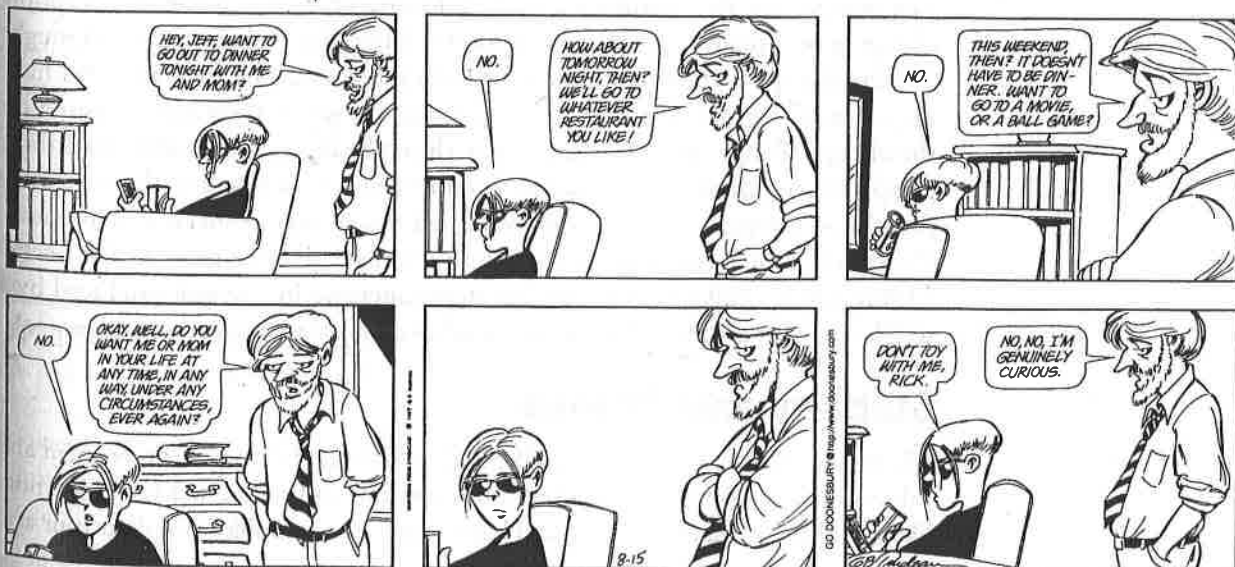


FIGURE 13.5
Changes in Parent-Child Relationships Over Time
 A large survey of Canadian families shows that there is less warmth, and presumably more distance, in parent-child interactions as children grow older. (From Statistics Canada, 1999.)



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Independence
 Most adolescents achieve independence with relatively little friction in the family. Sometimes, however, things can become tense.

MAKE IT STICK!

1. What would Erik Erikson most likely say about a teenager who dresses in ways her parents don't like or approve of?
 - a. The adolescent is trying to establish her own identity through appropriate experimentation.
 - b. The teenager does not understand the moral implications of her clothing choices and needs to move to the postconventional stage of reasoning.
 - c. The young person is experiencing hormonal changes that influence sexuality, and this affects her fashion choices.
 - d. The child can't reason abstractly and understand how she looks to other people.
2. Erik Erikson's theory explains that many adolescents seem overly focused on themselves because
 - a. they haven't yet developed the postconventional reasoning skills they need.
 - b. they are going through hormonal changes that affect frontal lobe development.
 - c. their hypothetical reasoning skills are just beginning to develop.
 - d. they are searching for their sense of personal identity.
3. _____ describes a period when children remain partially dependent on their parents for support into their twenties.

Three Key Developmental Issues



13-5 How do developmental psychology's three major issues apply to adolescence?

Let's take a quick look at the three major developmental issues as we prepare to leave adolescence behind.

Continuity and Stages

Is our development more like the stage development of a tadpole turning into a frog or more like the continuous, gradual development of a sapling imperceptibly changing over many years into a towering oak tree? In adolescence and throughout the life span, there is support for both positions. The theorists who have played such a prominent role in developmental psychology have focused on the abrupt changes as individuals move through stages. Piaget identified these jumps for cognitive development, Kohlberg was concerned with changes in moral development, and Erikson examined transitions in social development. Other researchers turn their attention to the more gradual growth that occurs within stages, similar to the slow but steady increase in strength produced by a weight-training program. Development relies on both continuity and stages.

Stability and Change

The period of adolescence is affected by both stability and change. Temperament and values are most likely to stay constant; relationships and certain behaviors are more likely to change. Many successful and happy adults were troubled people at your age.

Nature and Nurture

This pervasive issue is as important in adolescence as in other developmental periods. We can see the role of nature in the genetically determined sequence of

changes that spark sexual feelings and interests. But nurture's hand is also evident: Adolescents learn to make decisions about expressing sexuality from their families and society. The expression of sexuality is determined by a complex interaction of both nature and nurture.

The opportunities and challenges of modern adolescence are a reflection of a complex world. Life was simpler in the nineteenth century, when educational and career opportunities were more limited, but few of us would choose to return to those more limiting times. Navigating adolescence successfully can be difficult, and most who travel this road will hit a few potholes along the way. It can also be an exciting adventure as people learn new freedoms and master new skills.

MAKE IT STICK!

- Which of the following factors is most likely to remain stable throughout adolescence?
 - Identity
 - Abstract thinking skills
 - Temperament
 - Risk-taking behaviors
- True or false? Nature refers to the impact of genetics on development.
- _____ is the idea that changes throughout life are slow and gradual.

Module 13 Summary and Assessment

Adolescence

13-1 What is adolescence, and how does our culture affect it?

- Adolescence is the transition period from childhood to adulthood.
- Adolescence begins with sexual maturation.
- The end of adolescence is more variable because people become adults at different times depending on how their society defines adulthood.

13-2 What major physical changes occur during adolescence?

- Puberty, triggered by hormones, is the period of sexual maturation during which a person becomes capable of reproducing.
- Primary sex characteristics are related to the reproductive organs.
- Secondary sex characteristics are nonreproductive, like beard development in boys and breast development in girls.

13-3 How does adolescent reasoning differ from that of younger children?

- Adolescents reason in Jean Piaget's formal operational stage, during which adult thinking and reasoning skills develop.
- Lawrence Kohlberg described how moral reasoning develops as we mature. Adolescents usually think at the conventional moral reasoning stage.

13-4 What behaviors support Erikson's idea that developing a sense of identity is the primary challenge of adolescence?

- The search for identity during adolescence has several characteristics: experimentation, rebellion, "self"-ishness, and optimism and energy.
- Adolescents change their primary attachment from their parents to their peers, which can cause turmoil, but most adolescents report positive relationships with their parents.