



I

# Major Theories and Issues





## QUICK LOOK AT THE CHAPTER AHEAD

Freud's influence on theories of human development is in these areas:

- The structure of personality has three components: id, ego, and superego.
- Defense mechanisms protect the ego from unpleasant feelings, especially anxiety and guilt.
- There are three levels of awareness: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious.
- Children's control over primitive urges progresses through five psychosexual stages.
- Psychoanalysis brings into awareness unconscious conflicts, motives, and defenses so that they can be resolved.
- Early experience in childhood is the root of adult behavior and defenses.



# 1

## Freud: Psychoanalytic Theory

### TERMS

- Anal stage
- Conflict
- Conscious
- Countertransference
- Defense mechanisms
- Displacement
- Ego
- Fixation
- Genital stage
- Id
- Identification
- Latency stage
- Oedipus complex
- Oral stage
- Phallic stage
- Preconscious
- Projection
- Psychoanalysis
- Rationalization
- Reaction formation
- Regression
- Repression
- Superego
- Transference
- Unconscious



## WHO WAS FREUD?

Born in 1856, Sigmund Freud was raised in Vienna, Austria, as the son of a Jewish merchant. After completing medical school in 1886, Freud began practicing neurology, specializing in hysteria. Concluding that its origins were sexual in nature, he developed psychoanalytic techniques to encourage patients to recall past experiences. When female patients reported prepubertal sexual encounters with their fathers, Freud struggled with deciding whether these encounters were fantasies or actual events. He underwent self-analysis, and his theory of psychosexual development ultimately evolved from this process.

Freud indulged in cocaine to relieve his depression, but his addiction to nicotine caused his death from cancer of the mouth. In 1938, he left Vienna in poor health to seek refuge from the Nazis, who had destroyed his Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. Freud died in London in 1939.



## STRUCTURE OF PERSONALITY

Freud divided personality into three components: id, ego, and superego. His concept of the **id** was influenced by Darwin. The id is the seat of instinctual drives, especially sex, food, and aggression. Operating on the pleasure principle, the id seeks immediate gratification and wants to avoid physical and psychic pain. It engages in primary process thinking, which is illogical and indulges in fantasy.



Freud divided personality into three components: id, ego, and superego.

The id's self-serving drive for pleasure conflicts with society's norms for acceptable behavior. The **ego** emerges from this conflict, and works to keep the id out of trouble. It balances the id's drives with society's expectations by making decisions based on the reality principle—that is, delaying gratification until socially appropriate means for meeting instinctual drives can be found. The ego engages in secondary process thinking, which is realistic, and tries to solve problems.

The **superego** is the moral component of the personality. Emerging around ages 3 to 5 years, the superego represents an internalization of social standards for good and bad behavior. It is the individual's way of policing his or her own behavior. When the superego becomes too demanding, the individual feels excessive guilt for failing to meet moral perfection. In the absence of a superego, the individual feels no remorse.



Emerging around ages 3 to 5 years, the superego represents an internalization of social standards for good and bad behavior.



## LEVELS OF AWARENESS AND DREAMS

Freud identified three levels of awareness: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. The **conscious** consists of awareness of the present. The **preconscious** lies just below the surface, housing material that the individual knows but is not thinking about right now. The **unconscious** contains memories, thoughts, and desires of which the individual is not aware but that may have a profound influence on the person's behavior, such as hostile feelings toward a loved one. The id rests entirely



in the unconscious. In his 1899 book *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud argued that the “royal road” to the unconscious is dreams.



## CONFLICT AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS

Freud believed that the internal battles between the id, ego, and superego create **conflict** in the personality. The drives for sex and aggression are particularly conflicted because they are subject to ambiguous social norms—also known as mixed messages—and, therefore, are more likely to be unfulfilled. Unconscious internal battles produce anxiety, which can slip into consciousness and cause distress. **Defense mechanisms** (Table 1-1) protect the ego from unpleasant feelings, especially anxiety and guilt. They include **rationalization, repression, projection, displacement, reaction formation, regression, and identification**. Defense mechanisms are unconscious and are not the same thing as coping.



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## STAGES OF PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Freud used the term “sexual” broadly, meaning an innate drive for physical pleasures. Freud proposed that children’s control over these urges progresses through five psychosexual stages (Table 1-2). The failure to progress is referred to as **fixation**.

During the **oral stage** in the first year of life, the main source of pleasure is the mouth, such as sucking and biting. Adult oral fixations include smoking and eating.

The **anal stage** focuses on the toddler’s pleasure in controlling bowel movements. Toilet training, which represents society’s first effort to control the child’s self-serving physical drives, causes conflict between child and caretakers. Adult anal fixations involve anxiety about being punished for not performing.

The **phallic stage** occurs between the third and fifth years of life. Boys find pleasure in self-stimulation and compete with their fathers for the affection of their mothers. Freud thought that girls envied boys’ ability for self-pleasure and blamed their mothers for their lack of a penis. Girls compensate for this “deficiency” by forming an attachment to their fathers. The **Oedipus complex** refers to sexual desires for the parent of the opposite sex accompanied by hostility toward the parent of the same sex. This conflict coincides with the emergence of the superego. Freud believed that the resolution of this conflict is essential for healthy gender identification with the parent of the same sex. Some cross-cultural evidence supports the idea of an Oedipus complex in boys.



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A stage theory focuses on discontinuity in development, because it implies that development has clearly demarcated points of change.

During the **latency stage**, from age 5 through puberty, sexual urges become suppressed as children form social relationships beyond the family, especially with peers.



**Table 1-1** Defense Mechanisms

Mechanism	Explanation/Example
Rationalization	Creation of false but plausible excuses to justify behavior. Example: “Everyone else does it.”
Repression	Way of keeping anxiety-producing thoughts in the unconscious. Example: “Forgetting” a troubling experience.
Projection	Attributing your thoughts, feelings, or motives to somebody else. Example: Believing a co-worker for whom you have sexual feelings has made a pass at you.
Displacement	Diverting feelings that you have toward someone away from that person and toward another person or object. Example: Yelling at your spouse when you are angry at your boss.
Reaction formation	Behaving in a way that is exactly opposite the way you feel. Example: Crusading against pornography when you secretly enjoy it.
Regression	Reverting to immature behavior. Example: Adult temper tantrums.
Identification	Aligning yourself with a person or group that you admire as a way to form a positive self-identity. Example: Joining a sorority.

The **genital stage** begins with puberty. During adolescence, sexual urges can be appropriately directed toward peers of the opposite sex. A stage theory focuses on discontinuity in development, because it implies that development has clearly demarcated points of change.



## PSYCHOANALYSIS

The goal of **psychoanalysis** is to bring into awareness unconscious conflicts, motives, and defenses so that they can be resolved. Free association is the spontaneous expression of an individual’s thoughts and feelings. Interpretation involves the analyst’s attempt to explain the meaning of the client’s experience, including the symbolism in the client’s dreams. The analyst uses the client’s resistance to interpretation to further understand underlying conflicts.

**Table 1-2** Stages of Psychosexual Development

Stage	Age	Focus of Sexual Urges
Oral	First year of life	The mouth (e.g., sucking, biting)
Anal	Toddler	Controlling biological urges (e.g., bowel movements)
Phallic	3–5 years	Genital self-pleasure; the Oedipus complex
Latency	5 years–puberty	Suppressing urges
Genital	Puberty	Peers of opposite sex



Transference means that a patient may remind you of someone in your life and you may treat that patient in the same way that you treat that person—which may be either good or bad. Remember to treat each patient as an individual.

**Transference** occurs when clients relate to their analysts in ways that are similar to other significant relationships in their lives. **Countertransference** refers to the analyst's response to the client.

## SOURCE

Freud, S. (1924/1952). *A general introduction to psychoanalysis* (J. Riviere, trans.). New York: Washington Square Press.



## QUICK LOOK AT THE CHAPTER AHEAD

Erikson emphasized the role of the social environment in development:

- Development occurs through interacting with an ever-widening circle of people.
- There are eight stages of psychosocial development.
- Each stage is marked by a normative developmental polar crisis.
- Early negative experience is important in the development of personality, but it can be resolved at a later time.

# 2

## Erikson: Eight Stages of the Life Cycle

### Terms

- Identity foreclosure
- Integration
- Normative developmental crisis
- Psychological moratorium
- Psychosocial development





## WHO WAS ERIKSON?

Erik Homburger Erikson was born in Germany in 1902 to Danish parents. He studied child analysis at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute with Anna Freud, then emigrated to the United States in 1933. There, he developed affiliations with Harvard University, Yale University, and the University of California at Berkeley, establishing Child Guidance Clinics for the treatment of childhood psychological disturbances. Erikson and his wife Joan introduced the theory of the eight stages of the human life cycle at a White House Conference in 1950, the same year *Childhood and Society* was published. Erikson wrote *Identity: Youth and Crisis* in 1968, a time of great upheaval among American youth. He died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1994.



## THEORY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

While Freud emphasized internal psychosexual conflict in personality development, Erikson recognized that the social environment plays a significant role in shaping a child's sense of self. Erikson's theory of **psychosocial development** is based on the premise that humans interact with an ever-widening circle of people, beginning with mother and ending with humankind in general.

Each of the eight stages of the human lifecycle is marked by a **normative developmental crisis** that is resolved on a continuum between opposing positive and negative outcomes (**Table 2-1**).

Personality is formed as a result of the resolution of these crises, leaving people with both strengths and weaknesses. The mature personality represents the **integration** of earlier stages of development, their crises, and resolutions, into later stages.

Unlike Freud, who was pessimistic about humans' ability to overcome an unfortunate early childhood, Erikson believed that humans rework earlier crises later in life. Their beliefs about the role of early experience are an important difference between Freud and Erikson, with Erikson being more hopeful than Freud. Reworking can be growth enhancing when the overall balance of the personality is more positive than negative. If earlier crises were poorly resolved, however, revisiting them can be disruptive, especially when doing so coincides with accidental life crises, such as illness or death.



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## THE EIGHT STAGES OF THE LIFE CYCLE

- **Trust versus mistrust.** Infants cannot meet their own needs for food, warmth, and comfort. When they can count on others—usually their mother—to meet these needs, they feel worthy of care and develop a sense of trust both in “self” and in “other.” Because an attentive mother cannot meet all the child's needs at all times, even a positive resolution includes a healthy degree of mistrust. Consistently poor caregiving leaves a child with a



Table 2-1 Stages of the Life Cycle

Developmental Crisis	Period	Developmental Struggle
Trust versus mistrust	Infancy	I can trust others and thus myself versus I can't trust and my needs are unworthy.
Autonomy versus shame and doubt	Toddler	"I am," "I can," and that's good, versus "I can't" and I am bad.
Initiative versus guilt	Preschool	I can control my busyness versus what I do is bad.
Industry versus inferiority	School-aged	I can make friends and do things well versus nobody likes me and I'm stupid.
Identity formation versus identity diffusion	Adolescence	I am in tune with myself versus I am confused, a nobody.
Intimacy versus isolation	Young adult	I share who I am with special others versus I am alone and I have nothing to share.
Generativity versus self-absorption	Adulthood	I am making a contribution versus it only matters if it matters to me.
Ego integrity versus disgust and despair	Senescence	This was my life and I am okay with it versus I am filled with regret, I failed.

sense of unworthiness that can negatively influence self-identity and relationships throughout life.

- **Autonomy versus shame and doubt.** Like Freud, Erikson realized that children's ability to control their body functions poses a major developmental crisis. While toddlers attach value to exerting autonomous will, caregivers disapprove of uncivilized behaviors. In a positive resolution, toddlers gain a sense of self-pride and autonomy when adults guide them to learn approved behavior: "I am good." Even healthy toddlers experience some shame, however. The more they experience disapproval without guidance, the deeper their shame and the more they doubt their own will: "I am bad."
- **Initiative versus guilt.** Preschoolers who like to do things can do the wrong thing. Like Freud, Erikson saw this stage as the birth of a conscience. A little guilt helps children keep their initiative within bounds. However, children who are overburdened by unrealistic expectations for good behavior can only fail; they may believe they do bad things, stifling their natural inquisitiveness.
- **Industry versus inferiority.** During the latency period, children channel their energy into developing friendships and becoming good at things, such as academics and sports. They enjoy being productive and learn from their failures. Children who do not experience themselves as being competent socially, physically, or intellectually develop a sense of inadequacy and inferiority.
- **Identity formation versus identity diffusion.** Identity formation in adolescence is a cornerstone of Erikson's theory. The developmental task is to integrate childhood identifications with new biological urges, assumption of social roles, and recognition of one's abilities and limitations. During the **psychological moratorium**, adolescents try on different identities, values, and social roles. Failure to form an identity may result in identity diffusion—of feeling like a nobody, with no sense of direction or commitment to a set of

values. **Identity foreclosure** occurs when adolescents assume a preordained role without question. Erikson coined the term “identity crisis” in reference to adolescence.

- **Intimacy versus isolation.** Once young people are secure in their identity, they can establish intimate relationships with friends and loving sexual relationships. Fear of losing one’s identity in a relationship can lead youth to avoid commitments, causing isolation and loneliness.
- **Generativity versus self-absorption.** Generative adults are productive members of society, guiding the younger generation, caring for elders, and contributing their talents for the betterment of all. Self-absorbed adults do not look beyond their own needs, become stagnant emotionally, or lack a core set of values.
- **Integrity versus disgust.** Individuals whose resolution of developmental crises have been relatively positive reach old age with a sense of ego integrity. They accept responsibility for what life is and was—whether it be good, bad, or indifferent. Individuals who have been emotionally isolated, self-absorbed, and without a secure identity end life in despair and regret. Erikson believed that it is never too late to positively reintegrate the personality, to learn life’s lessons, and to mature. Erikson never intended his stages to be viewed as what he later referred to as the “rosary” of development. They are a convenient heuristic, however.



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## SOURCES

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