Psychosocial Development: Young Adulthood

General Stages
- Social Clock
- Erikson: Intimacy vs. Isolation
  - Friendship
  - Marriage and Cohabitation
- Erikson: Generativity vs. Stagnation
- Stages of Parenthood

Social Clock – culturally set timetable, establishes when various life events will occur

Omitting that to the extent these stages exist, they are not tied to age

Erikson: Intimacy and Isolation

**Intimacy** = fusing of one’s identity with that of another. Capacity to commit self to *concrete affiliations and partnerships*, and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant *sacrifice and compromise.*

- Friendships - better than the family in buffering against stress, as guide to self-awareness, and as a source of positive feelings like joy
- Gender differences: Conversations and Expectations
  - women – self-disclosure
  - men – external matters—sports, politics, work
  - female-female pattern may better reduce loneliness and self-absorption
  - male-male pattern may be more effective and efficient, especially in work situations

Erikson: Generativity vs. Stagnation

**Generativity** = the motivation to achieve or the drive to be generative. Typically fulfilled through work and parenting

- Parenting: having children, nurturing them, and launching them into the world has a major impact on the parent’s development
- birth of a child brings conflict and challenges and begins the lifelong process of interdependence
- The bond is reciprocal (adults *need* children)
- Challenges emerge at every stage of child’s development
- Few young adults anticipate the time required for parenting

**Stagnation** = difficulties at intimacy lead to self absorption, result in sense of personal impoverishment and stagnation.

Marriage
- Not like it “used to be”
  - proportion of unmarried adults is higher than at any time in the past century
  - Worldwide research says married people are happier, healthier, and richer
  - One developmental factor affecting success of marriage is maturity of the partners (identity?)
  - A second factor is degree of similarity, or *homogamy*—marriage within same group
- Read About Cohabitation

Stages of Parenthood

1. Honeymoon Period (wedding – birth of first child)
   - Establishing relationship; intimacy prevails
2. Nurturing Period (birth – 2 years)
   - Overwhelming responsibility
   - Infringement on marital relationship
3. Authority Period (2-5 years)
   - Period of most direct confrontation between parents
     - Increased financial burden
     - Multiplying household tasks
     - Child’s growing need to exert independence
4. Interpretive period (5-12 years)
   - Relatively easy time
   - Important precursor to adolescence
5. Interdependent Period (adolescence)
   - New challenges defined by demands of adolescent
   - New alliances in family
   - Parents underestimate, adolescents overestimate generation gap (differences between generations)

6. Launching Period (children begin setting off on their own)

7. Empty Nest Period (last child leaves home)
   - Time of rejoicing—marital satisfaction returns to high levels characteristic of honeymoon period