

### Psychosocial Development: Young Adulthood

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### Psychosocial Development: Young Adulthood

#### General Stages

- The 20s: complete break from family; choices of **affiliation** and **achievement**
- The 30s: time of re-examination and questioning of one's commitments

For women: if not mothers—biological clock  
if mothers—children's independence

\*Note that to the extent these stages exist, **they are not tied to age**

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

### 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

#### □ 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

### 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.

### 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 **under**estimate, adolescents **over**estimate 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