

Detailed Chapter Outline with Key Terms

Chapter 16: Psychosocial Development in Middle Adulthood

Focus: Madeleine Albright, Top-Ranking Diplomat

- *Middle adulthood:* The twenty-five year span between the ages of 40 and 65.

LOOKING AT THE LIFE COURSE IN MIDDLE AGE

CHANGE AT MIDLIFE: CLASSIC THEORETICAL APPROACHES

- *Self-actualization:* Full realization of human potential.

Normative-Stage Models

Carl G. Jung: Individuation and Transcendence

- **Individuation:** In Jung's terminology, emergence of the true self through balancing or integration of conflicting parts of the personality.

Erik Erikson: Generativity versus Stagnation

- **Generativity versus stagnation:** In Erikson's theory, the seventh critical alternative of psychosocial development, in which the middle-aged adult develops a concern with establishing, guiding, and influencing the next generation or else experiences stagnation (a sense of inactivity or lifelessness).
- **Generativity:** In Erikson's terminology, concern of mature adults for establishing, guiding, and influencing the next generation.
- *Care:* The virtue of the seventh crisis in Erikson's theory, a widening commitment to take care of the persons, the products, and the ideas one has learned to care for.

Kotre's Four Forms of Generativity:

- *Biological:* Conceiving and bearing children.
- *Parental:* Nurturing and raising children.
- *Technical:* Teaching skills to apprentices.
- *Cultural:* Transmitting cultural values and institutions.
- *Communal:* In Kotre's terminology, the expression of generativity involving care and nurturance of others.
- *Agentic:* In Kotre's terminology, the expression of generativity involving personal contributions to society.

Jung's and Erikson's Legacy: Valliant and Levinson

- **Interiority:** In Neugarten's terminology, a concern with inner life (introversion or introspection), that usually appears in middle age.

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Timing of Events: The Social Clock

THE SELF AT MIDLIFE: ISSUES AND THEMES

Is There a Midlife Crisis?

- **Midlife crisis:** In some normative-crisis models, stressful life period precipitated by the review and reevaluation of one's past, typically occurring in the early to middle forties.
- **Midlife review:** Introspective examination that often occurs in middle age, leading to reappraisal and revision of values and priorities.
- *Developmental deadlines:* Time constraints on one's ability to accomplish certain things, like having a baby.
- *Ego-resiliency:* The ability to adapt flexibly and resourcefully to potential sources of stress.

Identity Development: Current Theoretical Approaches

Susan Krauss Whitbourne: Identity as a Process

- **Identity process model:** Whitbourne's model of identity development based on processes of assimilation and accommodation.
- **Identity assimilation:** In Whitbourne's terminology, effort to fit new experience into an existing self-concept.
- **Identity accommodation:** In Whitbourne's terminology, adjusting the self-concept to fit new experience.
- **Identity style:** In Whitbourne's terminology, characteristic ways of confronting, interpreting, and responding to experience.
- *Assimilative identity style:* A person who uses assimilation more than accommodation in adapting a self-concept.
- *Accommodative identity style:* A person who uses accommodation more than assimilation in adapting a self-concept.
- *Assimilate:* Take experiences into oneself without changing self.
- *Accommodate:* Change oneself to fit new experiences.
- *Balanced identity style:* Healthiest style, in which identity is flexible enough to change when warranted but not unstructured to the point that every new experience causes the person to question fundamental assumptions about the self.

Generativity, Identity, and Age

- *Life-course perspective on generativity:* The idea that generativity, rather than being only a midlife stage of development, can be affected at any point in time by such things as social expectations, social roles, gender, education, race, ethnicity, and cohort concerns, as well as the timing and sequence of life events.

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Narrative Psychology: Identity as a Life Story

- *Narrative psychology*: Field that views the development of the self as a continuous process of constructing one's own life story.
- *Generativity script*: Life story in which generativity plays a key role, and which gives the life story a happy ending.
- *Commitment story*: Life story of highly generative adults typified by selfless dedication to social improvement and helping others.

Gender Identity

- **Gender crossover**: In Gutmann's terminology, reversal of gender roles after the end of active parenting.

Psychological Well-Being and Positive Mental Health

- *Positive*: Referring to mental health, a sense of psychological well-being and a healthy sense of self.

Emotionality

Life Satisfaction

Carol Ryff: Multiple Dimensions of Well-Being

Six Dimensions of Well-Being:

- *Self-acceptance*
- *Positive relations with others*
- *Autonomy*
- *Environmental mastery*
- *Purpose in life*
- *Personal growth*
- *Ethnic conservatism*: Tendency to resist assimilation and cling to familiar values and practices that give meaning to life.

Social Well-Being

- *Social well-being*: The quality of a person's self-reported relationships with other people, the neighborhood, and the community.

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Six Dimensions of Social Well-Being:

- *Social actualization: Belief in society's potential to evolve in a positive direction.*
- *Social coherence: Seeing the world as intelligible, logical, and predictable.*
- *Social integration: Feeling part of a supportive community.*
- *Social acceptance: Having positive, accepting attitudes toward other people.*
- *Social contribution: Believing that one has something valuable to give to society.*

Generativity as a Factor in Psychosocial Adjustment and Well-Being

RELATIONSHIPS AT MIDLIFE

Theories of Social Contact

- **Social convoy theory:** Theory of aging, proposed by Kahn and Antonucci, which holds that people move through life surrounded by concentric circles of intimate relationships or varying degrees of closeness, on which people rely for assistance, well-being, and social support.
- *Social convoys:* Circles of close friends and family members on who people can rely for assistance, well-being, and social support, and to whom they also offer reciprocal care.
- **Socioemotional selectivity theory:** Theory, proposed by Carstensen, that people select social contacts throughout life on the basis of the changing relative importance of social interaction as a source of information, as an aid in developing and maintaining a self-concept, and as a source of emotional well-being.

Relationships, Gender, and Quality of Life

CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Marriage and Cohabitation

Marital State and Well-Being

Marital Satisfaction

Cohabitation and Mental Health

Midlife Divorce

- **Marital capital:** Financial and emotional benefits built up during a long-standing marriage, which tend to hold a couple together.

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Gay and Lesbian Relationships

Friendships

RELATIONSHIPS WITH MATURING CHILDREN

Adolescent Children: Issues for Parents

When Children Leave: The Empty Nest

- **Empty nest:** Transitional phase of parenting following the last child's leaving the parents' home.

Parenting Grown Children

- *Tight-knit:* Intergenerational families in which the members live physically close and are emotionally close.
- *Sociable:* Intergenerational families in which there is less emotional affinity or commitment, although the members live physically close to one another.
- *Obligatory:* Intergenerational families in which there is a lot of interaction but little emotional attachment.
- *Detached:* Intergenerational families in which members are geographically and emotionally far away from each other.
- *Intimate but distant:* Intergenerational families in which members live far away from each other or spend little time with each other, but retain warm feelings.

Prolonged Parenting: The "Cluttered Nest"

- **Revolving door syndrome:** Tendency for young adults to return to their parent's home while getting on their feet or in times of financial, marital, or other trouble. (Also called the *boomerang phenomenon*.)

OTHER KINSHIP TIES

Relationships with Aging Parents

Contact and Mutual Help

- **Filial maturity:** Stage of life, proposed by Marcoen and others, in which middle-aged children, as the outcome of a filial crisis, learn to accept and meet their parents' need to depend on them.
- **Filial crisis:** In Marcoen's terminology, normative development of middle age, in which adults learn to balance love and duty to their parents with autonomy within a two-way relationship.

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Becoming a Caregiver for Aging Parents

Strains of Caregiving

- **Sandwich generation:** Middle-aged adults squeezed by competing needs to raise or launch children and to care for elderly parents.
- **Caregiver burnout:** Condition of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion affecting adults who care for aged persons.

Relationships with Siblings

Grandparenthood

The Grandparent's Role

Grandparenting after Divorce and Remarriage

Raising Grandchildren

- **Kinship care:** Care of children living without parents in the home of grandparents or other relatives, with or without a change of legal custody.