

# **SELF-ESTEEM AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

## **2. THEORIES**

### **2.1. Development Stages**

French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau challenged the preexisting child depravity theory, a Puritan concept that held that children were born evil, tainted with original sin, and therefore must be harshly disciplined and factually educated. Rousseau's principal contribution to education was the 1762 novel *Emile*, and it influenced many later educational pioneers. Have we reverted back to the child depravity theory? It doesn't seem so, as child-centered progressive education continues to grow. Its slow development may owe something to the reluctance for child-depravity theorists to abolish their belief that children are "bad". The theory that Rousseau primarily attached in his philosophy of education was that of child depravity. This theory stated that children are born with a tendency to evil, and are naturally, therefore, inclined to misbehave. The only way to combat this is to instill authoritarian teachers that rule their classroom with an iron fist. Rousseau was certainly not the first to attach this theory, but he was one of the greatest champions of anti-child depravity. Child depravity was a Puritan concept, and play was looked upon as idleness and their talk as nonsensical. This theory shaped education in the northern states of the U.S., over a hundred years before Rousseau wrote *Emile*, and it remained powerful in the northern U.S. for almost two centuries afterward.

Rousseau also recognized the importance in understanding child development, and outlined stages of development.

- **Infancy (Birth to age 5)** – The child learns directly from his senses
- **Childhood (5 to 12 yrs. old)** – The child begins to construct personality as he grows cognizant that his actions will cause consequences that are either pleasurable or painful. The child is curious by nature, and explores his environment, learning increasingly more through his senses. Rousseau argued that this method is much better than pouring endless lecture into the child, enforced by the threat of beating.

- **Boyhood (12-15 yrs. old)** - The child can now begin to learn through books about why the things in nature work the way they do, thus making a connection between the physical realm and the academic one.
- **Adolescence (15-18 yrs. old)** – The child is now ready to cope with the real world, and learn about big concepts such as society, economics, business and government. He's ready to go out and cultivate his “aesthetic tastes” as well, exposing himself to theater, art, and literature.

These stages of development would be expanded upon and revamped by psychologist Jean Piaget in his famous and still widely-accepted stages of development almost two hundred and fifty years later.

### 2.1.2. Erick Erickson

#### Eight Life Stages

Approx. Age	Virtues	Psycho Social Crisis	Significant Relationship	Existential Question	Examples
0-2 years	Hopes	Basic Trust vs. Mistrust	Mother	Can I trust the world?	Feeding, Abandonment
2-4 years	Will	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Parents	Is it okay to be me?	Toilet Training, Clothing Themselves
4-5 years	Purpose	Initiative vs. Guilt	Family	Is it okay for me to do, move and act?	Exploring, Using Tools or Making Art
5-12 years	Competence	Industry vs. Inferiority	Neighbors, School	Can I make it in the world of people and things?	School, Sports
13-19 years	Fidelity	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Peers, Role Model	Who am I? What can I be?	Social Relationships
20-39 years	Love	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Friends, Partners	Can I love?	Romantic Relationships
40-64 years	Care	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Household, Workmates	Can I make my life count?	Work, Parenthood
65-death	Wisdom	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Mankind, My Kind	Is it okay to have been me?	Reflection on Life

Erickson's stages of psychosocial development, as articulated by Erik Erickson, explain eight stages through which a healthily developing human should pass from infancy to late adulthood. In each stage, the person confronts, and hopefully

masters, new challenges. Each stage builds upon the successful completion of earlier stages. The challenges of stages not successfully completed may be expected to reappear as problems in the future. However, mastery of a stage is not required to advance to the next stage. Erikson's stage theory characterizes an individual advancing through the eight life stages as a function of negotiating his or her biological forces and sociocultural forces. Each stage is characterized by a psychosocial crisis of these two conflicting forces (as shown in the above table). If an individual does indeed successfully reconcile these forces (favoring the first mentioned attribute in the crisis), he or she emerges from the stage with the corresponding virtue. For example, if an infant enters into the toddler stage (autonomy vs. shame & doubt) with more trust than mistrust, he or she carries the virtue of hope into the remaining life stages.

## **2.2. Theoretical Principles**

### **2.2.1. Freud and Psychic Determinism**

Psychic determinism theorizes that all mental processes are not spontaneous, but are determined by the unconscious or preexisting mental complexes. It relies on the causality principle applied to psychic occurrences in which nothing happens by chance or by accidental arbitrary ways. It is one of the central concepts of psychoanalysis. Thus, slips of the tongue, forgetting an individual's name, and any other verbal associations or mistakes are assumed to have psychological meaning. Psychoanalytic therapists will generally probe clients and have them elaborate on why something "popped into" their head or why they may have forgotten someone's name rather than ignoring the material. The therapist then analyzes this discussion for clues revealing unconscious connections to the slip of verbal association. Psychic determinism is related to the overarching concept of determinism, specifically in terms of human actions. Therapists who adhere to the belief in psychic determinism assume that human action and decisions are predetermined and are not necessarily under their own control. In 1901, Sigmund Freud published *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* in which he detailed the importance of generally trivial or overlooked details in therapy sessions. It was in this work that Freud began to use the term, "Fehlleistungen" or translated as "Freudian Slip" to refer to seemingly unintended slips of the tongue. Freud interpreted these slips of the tongue as the result of unconscious desires or impulses. During psychoanalytic therapy sessions, Freud would dissect and question participants if they made a mental lapse or a slip of the tongue, as he

believed this would allow him an understanding of the unconscious motives of his patient.

Although the “Freudian slip” is considered the most popularized example of psychic determinism from Freud’s work, this concept of determinism is not the only one. The term psychic determinism encompasses other forms of mental lapses such as forgetting someone’s name. Psychic determinism was an extremely important feature of free association during psychoanalytic therapy. Free association was developed by Sigmund Freud as an alternative to the hypnotic method for treating neurotic patients. During free association, patients are encouraged to state whatever comes to their mind during the therapy session without censoring themselves. During free association, the client may at times have an image come to mind or say something that seems odd or unintentional. Instead of overlooking this, the therapist would begin to delve into the slip and determine the underlying cause of it, which Freud claimed as generally some unconscious impulse. During psychoanalysis and free association the patient would generally lie on a couch with the therapist sitting next to them. They would then begin their free association session.

### **2.2.2. Harry Stack Sullivan**

Harry Stack Sullivan was an American Ne-Freudian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who held that the personality lives in, and has his or her being in, a complex of interpersonal relations. Having studied therapists Sigmund Freud, Adolph Meyer, and William Alanson White, he devoted years of clinical and research work to helping people with psychotic illness. Sullivan laid the groundwork for understanding the individual based on the network of relationships in which he or she is enmeshed. He developed a theory of psychiatry based on interpersonal relationships where cultural forces are largely responsible for mental illnesses (see for example, social psychiatry). In his words, one must pay attention to the “interactional”, not the “intrapsychic”. This search for satisfaction via personal involvement with others lead Sullivan to characterize loneliness as the most painful of human experiences. He also extended the Freudian psychoanalysis to the treatment of patients with severe mental disorders, particularly schizophrenia.

Besides making the first mention of the significant other in psychological literature, Sullivan developed the Self System, a configuration of the personality traits developed in childhood and reinforced by positive affirmation and the security operations developed in childhood to avoid anxiety and threats to self-esteem. Sullivan further defined the Self System as a steering mechanism toward a

series of I-You interlocking behaviors; that is, what an individual does is meant to elicit a particular reaction. Sullivan called these behaviors Parataxical Integrations, and he noted that such action-reaction combinations can become rigid and dominate an adult's thinking pattern, limiting its actions and reactions toward the world as the adult sees it and not as it really is. The resulting inaccuracies in judgment Sullivan termed parataxic distortion, when other persons are perceived or evaluated based on the patterns of previous experience, similar to Freud's notion of transference. Sullivan also introduced the concept of "prototoxic communication" as a more primitive, needy, infantile form of psychic interchange and of "syntactic communication" as a mature style of emotional interaction. Sullivan's work on interpersonal relationships became the foundation of interpersonal psychoanalysis, a school of psychoanalytic theory and treatment that stresses the detailed exploration of the nuances of patients' patterns of interacting with others.

### **2.2.3. Law of Causality and Jung**

Carl Gustav Jung, often referred to as C. G. Jung, was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist who founded analytical psychology. June proposed and developed the concepts of extraversion and introversion; archetypes, and the collective unconscious. His work has been influential in psychiatry and in the study of religion, philosophy, archeology, anthropology, literature, and related fields. He was a prolific writer, many of whose works were not published until after his death. The central concept of analytical psychology is individuation – the psychological process of integrating the opposites, including the conscious with the unconscious, while still maintaining their relative autonomy. Jung considered individuation to be the central process of human development. Jung created some of the best known psychological concepts, including the archetype, the collective unconscious, the complex, the synchronicity. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a popular psychometric instrument, has been developed from Jung's theory of psychological types.

Jung saw the human psyche as "by nature religious" and made this religiousness the focus of his explorations. Jung is one of the best known contemporary contributors to dream analysis and symbolization. Though he was a practicing clinician and considered himself to be a scientist, much of his life's work was spent exploring tangential areas such as Eastern and Western philosophy, alchemy, astrology, and sociology, as well as literature and the arts. Jung's interest in philosophy and the occult led many to view him as a mystic, although his ambition was to be seen as a man of science. His influence on popular psychology, the

“psychologization of religion”, spirituality and the New Age movement has been immense. The law of synchronicity has to be understood. This is one of the greatest contributions of Carl Gustav Jung to modern humanity: the law of synchronicity. Science is based on the law of causality. The law of causality is mechanical. You heat water to a hundred degrees – it evaporates. Where you heat it is irrelevant – in the temple, in the church, in the mosque, it doesn’t matter; in India, in Tibet, it doesn’t matter. If you heat water to a hundred degrees, it evaporates; the water has no say in it. The water cannot say, “Today I am not feeling like it.” Or, “Today is Sunday and I am on a holiday, and I am not interested in becoming vapour.” Or, “Today I am not in the mood, and you can go on heating and heating and I will not evaporate.” Or, “Today I am suddenly feeling very generous towards you so I will evaporate at fifty degrees. I will favour you.” No, the water has no choice. The law is mechanical, it is causal. If you create the cause, the effect *has* the follow. And it is without any exception.