

Developmental Tasks across the Life-Cycle

The Five Great Stages of Life

1. Becoming an Individual
2. Becoming Weaned away from Parents
3. Finding one's Basic Identifications
4. Achieving a Mature View of Life and the Universe
5. Achieving Simplification of Life so that the soul may with less and less impediment progress toward its chosen destiny.ⁱ

In order to adjust successfully and in order to prepare for the next phase of life, persons moving from one stage to the next should have accomplished the tasks of their current stage at a level appropriate for the society in which they live:

Developmental Tasks of Childhood

1. Physical skills necessary for ordinary games.
2. Wholesome attitudes toward oneself as a growing person.
3. Ability to get along with age-mates.
4. Appropriate masculine or feminine role identification.
5. Fundamental skills in reading, writing, and calculating.
6. Concepts and abstract thinking necessary for everyday living.
7. Conscience, morality, and a scale of values.
8. Personal independence.
9. Attitudes to facilitate social interaction in groups and within institutions.ⁱⁱ

Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

1. Forming new and more mature relationships with age-mates of both sexes.
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role and establishing heterosexual friendships.

ⁱ Lewis Sherrill, *The Struggle of the Soul* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 22.

ⁱⁱ Robert J. Havighurst, *Developmental Tasks and Education*, 3rd ed. (New York: David McKay Co., 1972), pp. 19-35.

ⁱⁱⁱ James L. Minton, "Adolescence: Stuck in the Middle," in James Hightower, *Caring for Folks from Birth to Death* (Nashville: Broadman, 1985, pp. 51-52.

3. Accepting one's body, with its particular characteristics, and learning to use it effectively.
4. Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults.
5. Selecting and preparing for an occupation.
6. Preparing for marriage and family life.
7. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior ("civic competence").
8. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system which effectively guide behavior.ⁱⁱⁱ

Developmental Tasks of Young Adulthood

1. Becoming Competent
2. Achieving Autonomy
3. Developing and Implementing Values
4. Forming an Identity
5. Integrating Sexuality into Life
6. Making Friends and Developing Intimacy
7. Loving and Making a Commitment to another Person
8. Making Initial Job or Career Choices
9. Becoming an Active Community Member & Citizen
10. Learning How to Use Leisure Time^{iv}

Developmental Tasks of Older Adulthood

1. Adjusting to decreasing physical health and strength.
2. Adjusting to retirement and reduced income.
3. Adjusting to death of spouse.
4. Affiliating with one's age group.
5. Meeting social and civic responsibilities.
6. Establishing satisfactory housing arrangements.
7. Finding meanings in life in the face of death.
8. Nurturing one another as husband and wife.
9. Maintaining contact with children and grandchildren.
10. Caring for elderly relatives.^v

^{iv} Gerard Egan and Michael A. Cowan, *Moving into Adulthood* (Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole, 1980), p. 32.

^v Albert L. Meiburg, "Senior Adulthood: Twilight or Dawn?" In *Caring for Folks from Birth to Death*, ed. James E. Hightower, Jr. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985), p. 126.