

CHAPTER 9

PSYCHOSOCIAL THEORIES

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Psychosocial theories emphasize the idea that personality is intrinsically social and that the important issues of personality concern how people relate to others. Several psychosocial theories focus on early life. Mahler's *object relations* theory proposes that infants are psychologically merged with their mothers and that they separate and individuate during the first three years of life. How this takes place influences later adjustment.

Kohut's *self psychology* resembles object relations theory. He said humans have *narcissistic* needs that are satisfied by other people, represented as *selfobjects*. If the child receives enough mirroring (positive attention) from *selfobjects* (chiefly the mother), the sense of self develops appropriately. If there's too much *mirroring*, the child won't be able to deal with frustrations. If there's too little, the development of the self will be stunted.

Some of these ideas are echoed in the work of attachment theorists such as Bowlby and Ainsworth. *Secure attachment* provides a solid base for exploration. There are also patterns of *insecure attachment* (*ambivalent* and *avoidant*), which stem from inconsistent treatment, neglect, or rejection. There's increasing interest in the idea that infant attachment patterns persist and influence adult personality. There is now a great deal of work on this topic, assessing adult attachment in several ways. Although people do display diverse ways of relating across their social connections, a core tendency seems to exist. Adult attachment patterns influence many aspects of behavior, including how people relate to work activities and how they seek and give emotional support, as well as how they relate to romantic partners.

Another important theory of the psychosocial group is Erikson's theory of *psychosocial* development. Erikson postulated a series of crises from infancy to late adulthood, giving rise to ego strengths that influence one's *ego identity*: the consciously experienced sense of self. Erikson assumed that each crisis becomes focal at one stage but that each is present in a less obvious form throughout life.

The first crisis concerns the development of a sense of *basic trust*. The child then becomes concerned with control over its body and the sense of *autonomy* that comes with that. The next issue is *initiative*, as the child seeks to exercise its power. As children enter the school years, they begin to realize that the social environment demands being *industrious*. With adolescence, the child enters a new stage of life and has a crisis over *identity*. In young adulthood, identity issues give way to concern over *intimacy*. In adulthood, the person's concern is over *generativity*. Finally, in the last stage of life, people confront the *integrity* of their lives as a whole.

Assessment techniques from the psychosocial view are similar to those of ego psychology but focus more on relationships. This approach also leads to use of play for assessment with children. The psychosocial view of problems focuses on the idea that problems are rooted in relationship issues. Kohut suggested that pathological narcissism stems from inadequate childhood mirroring. Insecure attachment seems to create a risk for depression.

These theories approach therapy in ways similar to those of ego psychology, but there are additional variations. One of them is *play therapy* for children. Object relations and attachment theories also suggest that a relationship with a therapist is critical in permitting reintegration of the sense of self or establishing a sense of secure attachment.

KEY TERMS

Attachment: An emotional connection to someone else.

Competence motivation: The need to be effective or successful in dealing with the environment.

Effectance motivation: The need to have an impact on the environment.

Ego control: The extent to which a person controls or inhibits impulses.

Ego identity: The overall sense of self that emerges from transactions with social reality.

Ego quality (ego strength or virtue): The quality that becomes part of one's personality through successful management of a crisis.

Ego resiliency: The ability to flexibly modify one's typical level of ego control to adapt to new contexts.

Epigenesis: The idea (adopted from embryology) that an internal plan for future development is present at the beginning of life.

Feelings of inferiority: The feeling that one is deficient in some way.

Life-span development: The idea that developmental processes continue throughout life.

Mirroring: The giving of positive attention and supportiveness to someone.

Narcissism: A sense of grandiose self-importance and entitlement.

Narrative: A story you compose for yourself about life to create a coherent sense of identity.

Object relations: An individual's symbolized relations to other persons (such as parents).

Play therapy: The use of play as a procedure for conducting therapy with children.

Psychosocial crisis (or conflict): A turning point in a developmental period when some interpersonal issue is being dealt with and growth potential and vulnerability are both high.

Self psychology: Kohut's theory that relationships create the structure of the self.

Selfobject: The mental representation of another person who functions to satisfy your needs.

Separation–individuation: The process of acquiring a distinct identity; separating from fusion with the mother.

Strange situation: A procedure used to assess the attachment pattern of infant to mother.

Symbiosis: A period in which an infant experiences fusion with the mother.

Transference: The viewing of other people through selfobject representations originally developed for parents.

TEST ITEMS

Multiple Choice

- (b/200) 1. As the ideas of Freud's followers continued to evolve, they:
- placed more emphasis on the superego and its functions.
 - placed increasing emphasis on relationships.
 - de-emphasized the mediating functions of the ego.
 - returned to Freud's emphasis on inner conflict and resolutions.
- (c/200) 2. In object relations theories, the "object" refers to:
- intrinsic goals.
 - the ego.
 - a person.
 - lifelong patterns.
- (b/200) 3. Although the concept of object relations derives from Freud's ideas, it is different in that objects relations emphasizes:
- conscious rather than unconscious processes.
 - ego functioning rather than id functioning.
 - unconscious rather than conscious processes.
 - id functioning rather than ego functioning.
- (c/200) 4. Object relations theories:
- consider the formation of psychic bonds to be a fundamental function of the id.
 - emphasize that one's pattern of relating to others is formed during adolescence.
 - assume that similar patterns of relating to others continue to occur throughout life.
 - have no connection to Freud's concept of ego cathexis.
- (a/200) 5. The period in which an infant is fused with its mother is called:
- symbiosis.
 - interdependence.
 - attachment.
 - fusion.
- (d/200) 6. _____ refers to the process by which an infant becomes aware of its distinct existence.
- Internalization
 - Differentiation
 - Accommodation
 - Separation-individuation

- (c/200) 7. According to Mahler, a child will experience _____ when the movement away from symbiosis occurs too quickly.
- insecure attachment
 - basic anxiety
 - separation anxiety
 - separation-individuation
- (d/201 Box9.1) 8. Many neoanalytic theories emphasized:
- that there is no merit to traditional Freudian ideas.
 - the importance of the superego.
 - sexual functioning.
 - the importance of the ego.
- (a/202) 9. _____ believed that relationships create the structure of the self.
- Kohut
 - Marcia
 - Erikson
 - Mahler
- (b/202) 10. To Kohut, selfobjects refers to:
- someone who is opposite to the self.
 - someone important in satisfying the self's needs.
 - someone who is threatening to the self.
 - impressions of oneself.
- (b/202) 11. Mirroring that occurs later in life involves transference, which is:
- using one's relationship with a therapist to repair relationships.
 - using one's orientation toward parents to relate to others.
 - a form of revenge based on anger at one's parents.
 - none of the above
- (c/202) 12. Unsuccessful mirroring results in:
- satisfaction of the child's narcissistic needs.
 - an initial, grandiose sense of self.
 - an inability to develop an adequate sense of self.
 - all of the above

- (a/203) 13. Bowlby used the term _____ to refer to an emotional connection with another person.
- a. attachment
 - b. symbiosis
 - c. synthesis
 - d. bonding
- (d/203) 14. Attachment theory states that children build “working models” of:
- a. the self.
 - b. others.
 - c. relationships in general.
 - d. all of the above
- (a/203) 15. Mary Ainsworth developed the strange situation, which:
- a. is a means of assessing infant attachment.
 - b. puts a child in a room with crying children.
 - c. puts a child in a room with multiple strange adults.
 - d. all of the above
- (c/204) 16. An infant who remains calm when its mother leaves and responds to her return in a rejecting manner is displaying _____ attachment.
- a. disoriented
 - b. resistant
 - c. avoidant
 - d. ambivalent
- (d/204) 17. Which of the following is true about mothers of children from different attachment groups?
- a. Often, it's the timing of actions rather than the actions themselves that differ between groups.
 - b. Mothers of secure and avoidant babies spend similar amounts of time holding their babies.
 - c. Mothers of secure babies respond quickly to their actions.
 - d. all of the above
- (b/204) 18. Mothers of securely attached infants and mothers of avoidant infants:
- a. return their babies' smiles at the same pace.
 - b. spend the same amount of total time holding their babies.
 - c. are more responsive than other mothers to their babies' crying.
 - d. are emotionally involved with their babies.

- (a/204) 19. Infant attachment coded at age 1 is highly predictive of responses to parents at age:
- a. 6
 - b. 10
 - c. 12
 - d. 16
- (c/205) 20. People with ambivalent attachment report that falling in love:
- a. is almost impossible.
 - b. takes a lot of work.
 - c. is easy and can happen "at first sight."
 - d. is a waste of time.
- (a/206) 21. Following a break-up, people from which group are most likely to turn to family and friends?
- a. secure
 - b. ambivalent
 - c. avoidant
 - d. dependent
- (b/207) 22. According to Bartholomew & Horowitz, people with avoidant attachment can be further divided in to which two subgroups?
- a. dismissive and hateful
 - b. dismissive and fearful
 - c. dismissive and anxious
 - d. dismissive and ambivalent
- (c/208) 23. According to Baldwin's work on attachment:
- a. most people have the same attachment style in all of their relationships.
 - b. attachment style is quite unstable over time.
 - c. most people have more than one attachment style across relationships.
 - d. infant attachment bears little resemblance to adult attachment.
- (b/208) 24. Who is LEAST likely to seek support as anxiety increases?
- a. those who are secure
 - b. those who are avoidant
 - c. those who are ambivalent
 - d. those who are disorganized/disoriented

- (a/209) 25. Who was most likely to use social support during the threat of missile attacks in Israel?
- a. those who were secure
 - b. those who were ambivalent
 - c. those who were avoidant
 - d. those who were disorganized/disoriented
- (d/210) 26. Which of the following romantic pairings is most rare?
- a. a secure and an avoidant individual
 - b. an ambivalent and an avoidant individual
 - c. two secure individuals
 - d. two ambivalent individuals
- (a/210) 27. Using the categorical model of attachment, studies have found that avoidants tend to be _____, secures tend to be _____, and ambivalents tend to be _____.
- a. introverted, extraverted, neurotic
 - b. neurotic, conscientious, introverted
 - c. neurotic, extraverted, introverted
 - d. introverted, intelligent, neurotic
- (b/211) 28. Unlike Freud, Erikson believed that personality development:
- a. proceeds in an orderly sequence of stages that everyone experiences.
 - b. continues to evolve throughout life.
 - c. is divided into the id, ego, and superego.
 - d. none of the above
- (c/211) 29. One of Erikson's most important contributions to psychology was the notion of:
- a. children continuing to develop even after the onset of adolescence.
 - b. boys and girls developing differently.
 - c. life-span development.
 - d. unconscious forces in development.
- (a/211) 30. According to Erikson, the conscious experience of self is called:
- a. ego identity.
 - b. functional autonomy.
 - c. primary ego autonomy.
 - d. secondary ego identity.

- (a/211) 31. According to Erikson, ego identity:
- a. constantly changes across the lifespan.
 - b. remains stable from infancy on.
 - c. changes up through early childhood and then remains stable.
 - d. changes up through late adolescence and then remains stable.
- (c/211) 32. According to Erikson, each stage of psychosocial development is marked by a(n):
- a. rapid period of psychological growth.
 - b. initial regression to an earlier stage of development.
 - c. psychosocial crisis.
 - d. all of the above
- (a/212) 33. According to Erikson, the successful negotiation of a stage of development results in:
- a. ego strength.
 - b. the superego.
 - c. pride.
 - d. self-acceptance.
- (b/213) 34. The crisis encountered in the infancy stage of psychosocial development is:
- a. autonomy vs. shame and doubt.
 - b. basic trust vs. basic mistrust.
 - c. initiative vs. guilt.
 - d. industry vs. initiative.
- (b/213) 35. *Will* develops immediately following the resolution of the:
- a. trust vs. mistrust conflict.
 - b. autonomy vs. shame and doubt conflict.
 - c. initiative vs. guilt conflict.
 - d. industry vs. inferiority conflict.
- (d/214) 36. The psychosocial conflict that occurs during the preschool years (about age 3-5) is called:
- a. trust vs. mistrust.
 - b. industry vs. inferiority.
 - c. autonomy vs. shame.
 - d. initiative vs. guilt.

- (d/215) 37. Those who have reached the school-age psychosocial stage are:
- a. learning the nature of adult work.
 - b. being introduced to the tools of adult work.
 - c. acquiring the role of citizenship.
 - d. all of the above
- (b/215) 38. Competence develops from successful adaptation to the:
- a. preschool stage.
 - b. school age stage.
 - c. adolescence stage.
 - d. young adulthood stage.
- (a/215) 39. The psychosocial stage, which represents a more dramatic break with the past than any other to this point, is:
- a. adolescence.
 - b. school age.
 - c. young adulthood.
 - d. preschool.
- (a/216) 40. According to Erikson, identity derives from:
- a. a melding of private and social self-conceptions.
 - b. a resolution of the Oedipal conflict.
 - c. the willingness to share the most personal aspects of oneself with others.
 - d. the opportunity to explore the environment.
- (c/216) 41. In many ways, Erikson viewed acquisition of a _____ as a person's major life task.
- a. feeling of belonging
 - b. well-modulated conscience
 - c. sense of identity
 - d. none of the above
- (d/217) 42. How is attaining a sense of identity (in Erikson's sense) related to marriage?
- a. Both men and women who have attained a sense of identity are more likely to get married.
 - b. Women who have attained a sense of identity are more likely to get married.
 - c. Women who have attained a sense of identity and marry are more likely to get divorced.
 - d. none of the above

- (c/217) 43. Research shows that:
- men with stronger identities are less likely to marry.
 - women with stronger identities are more likely to marry.
 - women with stronger identities who marry are less likely to divorce.
 - women with stronger identities who marry are more likely to divorce.
- (c/218) 44. The psychosocial crisis in the adulthood stage is:
- integrity vs. despair.
 - intimacy vs. isolation.
 - generativity vs. stagnation.
 - industry vs. inferiority.
- (a/218) 45. A positive balance of generativity results in the ego quality of:
- care.
 - love.
 - belonging.
 - attentiveness.
- (b/218) 46. Emerging from the ego integrity vs, despair crisis with a sense of integrity creates the ego quality of:
- care.
 - wisdom.
 - love.
 - belonging.
- (a/219) 47. The term *epigenetic developmental theory* implies that:
- each crisis in development exists in a primitive form at birth and is present in some form at every other stage of development.
 - each crisis is experienced only once.
 - development proceeds in a smooth, continuous fashion.
 - development can simply go dormant for long periods of time (as in the latency stage).
- (b/220) 48. The one fundamental theme that seems to run through all of the psychosocial theories is that:
- personality development consists of stages.
 - people need to develop a sense of trust in their relationships.
 - people need to develop a sense of identity.
 - it is better to give than to receive.

- (c/221) 49. From the psychosocial perspective, assessment often involves:
- the use of modified projective techniques.
 - paper and pencil measures.
 - measuring the person's view of relationships.
 - a kind of introspection.
- (c/222) 50. According to the psychosocial perspective, one of the best ways of assessing the personalities of children is to watch them while they:
- solve puzzles.
 - sleep.
 - play.
 - interact with each other.
- (b/222) 51. Using play to assess personality is objective in the sense that:
- the therapist is asked to form an impression of the child.
 - there is often a behavioral record.
 - the child's statements are rarely taken at face value.
 - all of the above
- (c/222) 52. Psychosocial therapists attribute behavioral problems to difficulties in:
- resolving id-superego conflicts.
 - the development of a conscience.
 - relationships.
 - learning.
- (d/222) 53. Pathological narcissists:
- need constant attention from others.
 - may erupt with extreme rage if thwarted.
 - display a sense of deserving others' adulation.
 - all of the above
- (a/222) 54. Kernberg claimed that narcissism comes from:
- parental rejection.
 - insufficient ego development.
 - having every need and desire immediately fulfilled.
 - inadequate peer socialization.

- (d/223) 55. Avoidant attachment has been implicated in the development of:
- bulimia.
 - anxiety-disorders.
 - schizophrenia.
 - depression.
- (c/224) 56. Psychosocial therapists emphasize _____ as part of the therapeutic process.
- catharsis
 - sublimation
 - relationships
 - insight

True and False

- (T/200) 1. The psychosocial perspective has its roots partly in psychoanalytic theory.
- (T/200) 2. Followers of Freud who focused on relationships reflecting life's primary tasks have made a great impact.
- (F/200) 3. In the phrase "object relations," *object* refers to a material possession that helps define a person.
- (F/200) 4. According to object relations theory, the point of forming bonds with others is to satisfy the id.
- (T/200) 5. Mahler used the term *separation-individuation* to describe the process of an infant recognizing its distinctiveness from its mother.
- (T/200) 6. If a mother pushes too much toward individuation, separation anxiety can result.
- (F/201) 7. Patterns of relating to others in childhood strongly influence relationships through adolescence, but not much beyond that.
- (T/202) 8. According to Kohut's self psychology, relationships form the structure of the self-concept.
- (F/202) 9. A *selfobject* is a person's mental representation of him- or herself.
- (F/202) 10. *Mirroring* occurs in childhood, but not adulthood.
- (T/202) 11. According to Kohut, the child's sense of self is grandiose at first.
- (F/203) 12. According to attachment theory, children form working models of the self and others, but not of relationships in general.

- (T/203) 13. Infant attachment is assessed in a laboratory task referred to as the *strange situation*.
- (F/203) 14. Secure babies experience almost no distress when they are left alone by their mothers.
- (F/204) 15. Ambivalent infants stay calm when their mothers leave in the strange situation.
- (F/204) 16. Infants with the insecure attachment style of avoidance show deep distress when their mothers leave the room in the strange situation test.
- (T/204) 17. Insecure attachments have a self-perpetuating quality.
- (F/205) 18. Avoidant persons are more likely than ambivalent persons to report accepting their lovers' imperfections.
- (T/205) 19. Ambivalently attached persons are more likely than others to report that their relationship had been "love at first sight."
- (F/206) 20. Adults with the insecure attachment style of avoidance are most likely to obsess about lost lovers.
- (T/206) 21. Research on attachment has suggested that there are two dimensions to adult attachment: anxiety and avoidance.
- (F/207) 22. People who score as secure on self-report measures are very likely to score as secure on the Adult Attachment Interview, suggesting that they are measuring the same thing.
- (F/208) 23. Hazan and Shaver suggested that ambivalents use work as a way to escape from their lack of relationships.
- (F/208) 24. For avoidant men, there is no relation between how much anxiety their partner shows and how supportive they are toward their partners.
- (T/209) 25. Secure people in Israel were more likely to use social support following the threat of missile attacks.
- (F/210) 26. The attachment dimensions of avoidance and anxiety most closely resemble the personality factors of neuroticism and agreeableness.
- (T/211) 27. Erikson differed from Freud in emphasizing psychosocial rather than psychosexual development.
- (F/211) 28. Erikson agreed with Freud that one's personality is fully developed within the first few years of life.
- (T/211) 29. Erikson was one of the first researchers to advance the principle of life-span development.

- (T/211) 30. Erikson argues that people face a psychosocial crisis at each stage of development.
- (T/211) 31. Erikson used the words *crisis* and *conflict* interchangeably.
- (F/212) 32. At each of Erikson's stages, healthy psychological functioning arises from attaining the "good" quality and eliminating the "bad" quality.
- (F/213) 33. The primary conflict in the infancy stage of psychosocial development concerns autonomy vs. shame and doubt.
- (T/214) 34. Erikson's preschool stage corresponds to the same timeframe in which, according to Freud's theory, Oedipal conflicts emerge.
- (T/215) 35. Managing the conflict between industry and inferiority results in the ego quality competence.
- (F/216 Box9.3) 36. To Erikson, it is important to develop a sense of personal identity that is untainted by society.
- (T/217) 37. The result of successful identity negotiation is fidelity.
- (T/217) 38. Role confusion can result in identification with popular heroes or groups.
- (F/218) 39. Erikson believed that the desire for generativity reflects a shift in focus exclusively to one's closest relationships.
- (T/219) 40. The concept of epigenesis suggests that there's a readiness for each of Erikson's psychosocial crises at birth.
- (F/220) 41. According to McAdams, the presence of redemption themes and commitment stories are both positive but rarely co-occur.
- (T/221) 42. Social incompetence is one of the scales on Bell's object relations measure.
- (F/221) 43. The psychosocial approach places very little emphasis on people's views of their relationships.
- (F/222) 44. Erikson's play situation has no objective characteristics.
- (T/222) 45. People who are narcissistic believe they are particularly deserving of others' attention and adulation.
- (T/223) 46. Without knowing it, parents are capable of transferring to their children the same attachment styles that make them unhappy.
- (T/224) 47. Psychosocial therapists view the patient or client as a partner in therapy.

(F/224) 48. Although they share some common elements, most of the psychosocial theories contain very different themes.

Short Essay

(200) 1. Describe how object relations theories are similar to and different from Freud's ideas.

They are similar in that both refer to an individual's bonds with external objects. They are different in that object relations theories focus only on bonds with other people, whereas Freud's ideas were more all-inclusive. They are also different in that, according to Freud, the bonds exist to satisfy the id. According to object relations theories, they exist to serve a basic ego function.

(203) 2. Briefly describe the "strange situation" assessment device that was developed by Ainsworth and her colleagues.

The strange situation is a series of events involving infant, mother, and a stranger. Of significance are two instances in which the infant is left alone with the stranger and then the mother eventually returns. Assessors examine infant's behavior throughout, paying special attention to its response to the mother's return.

(205-206) 3. Describe how adults with secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment patterns differ.

Secure people describe their love relationships as happier, friendlier, and more trusting. They also report longer-lasting relationships. Avoidant people are less accepting of partner faults, and are less likely to report currently being in love or ever having been in love. Ambivalent adults are intensely preoccupied with love relations, experience extreme highs and lows in their relationships, and are more likely to report having fallen in love "at first sight."

(207/Box9.2) 4. Explain how the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) assesses attachment style and how it relates to self-report measures.

The AAI is an interview that asks people to discuss early experiences with primary caregivers. The interviews are then coded, not so much for content but for coherence. Lack of childhood memories and/or idealization of caregivers are taken as signs of avoidance. Preoccupation with unresolved loss or abuse are taken as signs of anxious attachment. Although there is not a great degree of overlap between self-reports and results of the AAI, they both predict relevant outcomes.

(213) 5. Briefly explain how successful resolution of the conflict of trust vs. mistrust in the infancy stage helps a child with the next stage of conflict (autonomy vs. shame and doubt).

Infants who have gained a good sense of basic trust engage in more autonomous behavior later on. They explore more and self-initiate more behavior because they have basic trust in their environments. If they do not have a basic sense of trust, they are afraid of the world and won't be autonomous.

- (216-217) 6. Briefly describe the two ways in which one's self-concept must evolve in order to acquire a strong sense of identity following adolescence.

(1) Consolidate self-conceptions formed during previous psychological stages and merge them in a way that feels sensible; (2) this integrated self-view must then be integrated with the conception of yourself that others hold, reflecting the fact that your identity develops partly out of the impressions that are held of you by the people to whom you relate.

- (216-217) 7. Briefly define *role confusion* and give two examples of ways in which it might become apparent.

Role confusion: Absence of direction in one's sense of self; often reflected in inability to select a career (or a suitable major in school). May also lead to overidentification with popular heroes or groups, or even anti-heroes, as a way of filling the void.

- (218-219) 8. Define *generativity* and give three ways in which it is exemplified.

Generativity: Creating things in the world that will outlive one. Exemplified in: (1) Creating and leaving children; (2) nurturing and socializing children, providing family traditions; (3) creating ideas or physical objects; (4) teaching young people who are not one's own.

- (219) 9. Define the *epigenetic principle* as applied to Erikson's theory and describe two of its implications.

Epigenetic principle: The idea that there exists a blueprint for each crisis and stage of Erikson's theory at birth. Implications: (1) One's orientation to a crisis is influenced by the outcomes of earlier ones; (2) in resolving the crisis at any one stage, one is preparing solutions for later crises.

- (222) 10. How did Erikson use play in assessment?

Erikson created a situation in which children were exposed to a specific set of toys on a table. Children are supposed to imagine the table as a movie studio with the toys as actors and sets. The children create a scene and describe what is happening. This scenario allows children to choose characters that relate to things with which they are concerned or preoccupied. Although the situation is projective, it allows for an objective behavioral record and also allows the researcher to attend to the face value of the child's actions (i.e., it isn't necessarily assumed to have hidden meanings).

TEST YOURSELF 9-1

Source: Constantinople, A. (1969). An Eriksonian measure of personality development in college students. *Developmental Psychology*, **1**, 357-372.

Description of Scale: This test provides a measure of psychosocial development (Constantinople, 1969). Specific items may be sampled that are limited to those assessing the three stages of development surrounding adolescence and early adulthood--the one's most relevant to the lives of students. These stages (along with the psychosocial conflict associated with each) are: The school age (industry vs. inferiority), adolescence (identity vs. role confusion), and young adulthood (intimacy vs. isolation).

Students indicate the extent to which phrases fit them by assigning a number from 1 to 7. If the phrase is very uncharacteristic of them, they assign a 1. If the item is very characteristic of them, they assign a 7. If the phrase is neither especially characteristic nor especially uncharacteristic of them, they are to choose a number closer to the middle of the 1-7 scale. Three totals can be calculated that provide an indication of how well students have managed their conflicts over industry vs. inferiority, identity vs. role diffusion, and intimacy vs. isolation, respectively. Sample items representing these conflicts include "Conscientious and hard working," "Confidence is brimming over," and "Has sympathetic concern for others."

Recall that each of Erikson's psychosocial stages involves a conflict that must be managed. The test provides information about how well people handle the conflicts associated with these three stages. It's possible to uncover some interesting patterns in these scores. First, Erikson believes that how people resolve one conflict affects the way they resolve other conflicts. This implies that the scores should tend to be similar--perhaps all high or all somewhere in the middle.

Erikson views the conflict of identity vs. role diffusion as occurring roughly at the beginning of the college years, whereas that of industry vs. inferiority should have taken place earlier. The conflict of intimacy vs. isolation typically occurs toward the end of college or afterward. This would imply that students' scores on industry vs. inferiority may be higher than their scores on the other two scales. Finally, we should note that there is reason for optimism, even if some people's scores tend to be relatively low on all three scales. That is, Erikson believes it's never too late to resolve a conflict. As the text describes, older conflicts are reconfronted over and over again, with each new conflict faced.

TEST YOURSELF 9-2

Source: McAdams, D. P., & de St. Aubin, E. (1992). A theory of generativity and its assessment through self-report, behavioral acts, and narrative themes in autobiography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **62**, 1003-1015.

Description of Scale: This 20-item measure, called the Loyola Generativity Scale, assesses psychosocial development during adulthood. The psychosocial conflict associated with this stage is called *generativity vs. stagnation*. Respondents indicate on a 4-point scale how each item applies to them: (1 = the statement never applies to me; 4 = the statement applies to me very often). Sample items include "I try to pass along the knowledge I have gained through my experiences," and "I try to be creative in most things that I do."

Although Erikson and other researchers state that having children is one of the primary forms of generativity, this scale assesses broader forms of generativity, such as passing on knowledge and skills to future generations, making significant contributions for the betterment of one's community, leaving an enduring legacy, being creative and productive, and caring for other people. People who are not generative are labeled *stagnant* and are preoccupied with their own needs

TEST YOURSELF 9-3

Source: Emmons, R. A. (1987). Narcissism: Theory and measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **52**, 11-17.

Description of Scale: This article describes a scale designed to measure narcissism--an extreme form of self-absorption. The measure consists of four subscales which include the following: Leadership/Authority (e.g., "I have a natural talent for influencing people."), Self-Absorption/Self-Admiration (e.g., "I am an extraordinary person."), Superiority/Arrogance (e.g., "People can learn a great deal from me."), and Exploiteness/Entitlement (e.g., "I insist upon getting the respect that is due me."). Each item consists of a dyad of statements, and respondents are asked to indicate which one of the statements is most characteristic of themselves. The total number of narcissistic statements that are endorsed reflect the total narcissism score, with higher scores reflecting greater narcissism.

The construction of the scale was based on criteria for narcissistic personality disorder, which includes such characteristics as a grandiose sense of self-importance and uniqueness, exhibitionism, entitlement, and interpersonal exploitiveness. According to Kohut, this pathology stems from unsuccessful mirroring in childhood that results in an inadequate sense of self because of the frustrated narcissistic needs. Mirroring (positive, empathic, and accepting responses from others) gratifies a child's narcissistic needs and helps develop a sense of self-importance. In a healthy personality, narcissism is eventually channeled into realistic activities, becoming a sense of ambition and self-esteem

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