

Adult Life Stages

| Stage | Key Issues | Self-Image | Goal Focus | Relationships | Community |
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| Autonomy / Tentative Choices (18 - 26) | Autonomy vs. Dependence, Tentative vs. Lasting Choices | Developing sense of personhood as separate from parents and childhood peer groups | Defining self as an individual and establishing an initial life style | Testing out new relationships (e.g., love interests, peer groups, and friends) | Realigning focus from family of origin to new peers and groups |
| Young Adult Transition (27-31) | Turmoil vs. Certainty Settling Down vs. Keeping Things Open | Questioning sense of self and who/what we want to become | Re-assessing initial life style and making more permanent choices/commitments | Sorting out and deciding which relationships will become more permanent | Re-thinking and evaluating commitments and connections |
| Making Commitments (32-40) | Master vs. Apprentice Permanent vs. Tentative Choices | Firming up/establishing a more permanent sense of self and who/what we want to become | Deciding a life direction and defining/ aggressively pursuing a dream of what we want to accomplish in life | Making more permanent commitments to love relationships, friends, and peers | Establishing more permanent connections and community ties/ responsibilities |
| Mid-Life Transition (41-48) | Resolving Key Polarities Immortality vs. Mortality Constructive vs. Destructive Nurturing vs. Aggressive | Re-examining realities of projected ego and image vs. true self and struggling to define/accept true self | Questioning the dream whether or not it was achieved and developing a more mature sense of what is really important | Recognizing/ acknowledging one's own negative, as well as positive, impact on relationships and correcting course for deeper, more authentic connections | Disengaging from group and cultural pressures/norms to re-evaluate and restructure priorities |
| Leaving a Legacy (49-65) | Contribution vs. Personal Benefit Other vs. Self Centered Social vs. Independent Accomplishments | Letting go of earlier inaccurate ego images and accepting oneself as a worthwhile being with weaknesses as well as strengths | Making the best of the time one has left to help others and leave a positive legacy | Settling into more realistic and rewarding relationships based on recognizing/ forgiving each other's imperfections as human and helping each other grow | Re-engagement on a deeper, more objective, less driven and more productive, level with family, friends, and society |
| Spiritual Denouement (66 and beyond) | Hope vs. Despair Survival of Spirit vs. Mortality Surrender vs. Control | Accepting self as dependent on a wisdom greater than one's own, recognizing that wisdom as benevolent, and submitting one's self and life to that wisdom's will | Tying things up and completing the development of the person/spiritual being we want to become | Accepting others and recognizing/ respecting humankind's diversity as part of a greater wisdom's plan | Recognizing that life is only part of a larger, more enduring spiritual community and helping others understand that |