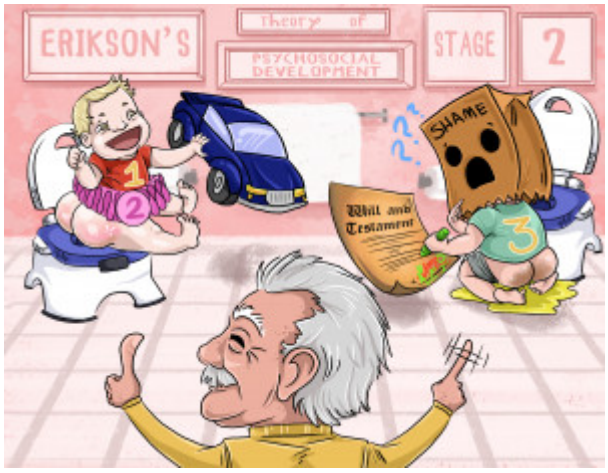
Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development - Stage 2 (Toddler)

Erikson assumes that a psychosocial crisis occurs at each stage of development. Erikson believes psychological needs of an individual conflict with the needs of society. Erikson believes a toddler must form a sense of autonomy as they grow physically and begin to become more mobile.



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Age

Toddler (1-3 Years)
Toddlers
Erikson’s second stage of psychosocial development occurs during the first 1-3 years of life.

Basic Conflict

Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
Auto vs. Bag-of-shame
Erikson believes that all toddlers must assert a sense of independence and autonomy. This is achieved when toddlers walk away from their caregivers, picking out what toys they play with, and choosing what they want to wear and eat. Erikson believes it is critical to allow children to explore the limits of their abilities within an encouraging environment. Instead of putting on a child's clothes, a parent should be supportive, have patience, and allow the child to try to do things, such as dress themselves. This also allows children to learn how to ask for help when they need it.

Important Events

Toilet Training
Toilet-training Toilets
Erikson believes how a child is toilet trained and how they view this experience helps shape how they approach the world. He believes successful toilet training helps a child develop willpower, and helps teach them to know the difference between holding on and letting go.

Virtue

Will
Will-and-testament
If a sense of autonomy is developed, a toddler can have a sense of independence or own personal will. If the virtue of will is achieved, when a toddler is faced with new challenges in life, there will be a good possibility that the child will feel they can handle them autonomously, and have the determination to tackle them.

Freud Stage

Anal
Anal-anus
Freud’s psychosexual stage during toddlerhood that parallels Erikson’s psychosocial “autonomy vs. shame and doubt” stage, is the anal stage. The anal stage has to do with toilet training, specifically anus/bowel and bladder control and the pleasure it brings the child to defecate/urinate, and the control they have over these actions. He believes early or harsh potty training can lead to the child developing an anal-retentive personality; a person who is is obsessively clean and tidy, who hates messes, and is punctual and respectful of authority. This is thought to be because they got pleasure from retaining their feces as toddlers, where their caregivers were insisting they defecate by placing them back on the toilet. On the contrary, a person who had a more liberal potty

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training experience can develop into someone who is anal expulsive. This is a person who likes giving things away, who likes sharing things, and who is messy, disorganized and rebellious.

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