



Socialization

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- the socialization process
- agents of socialization in childhood
- socialization throughout life

Have you ever observed a newborn baby? If so, perhaps it occurred to you that the creature before your eyes was like nothing else you had ever seen. Your reaction would be correct—newborns have little resemblance to the babies they become six months later or the children they develop into by the age of three. Human newborns are wholly dependent on adults for their survival.

Humans gain their independence only after a long childhood and a great deal of learning. We have much to learn—the values, beliefs, and norms of our society, the physical, mental, and social skills we'll need, and how to perform the roles society expects of us. Personality development leads to a sense of self, which changes throughout life—in childhood, in adolescence, in adulthood, and even at the end of our lives.

The Socialization Process

The special kind of learning that sociologists call **socialization** is the process by which we learn to become members of society. We do this as we make the rules and norms of the society our own and learn to perform our social roles, guided by the expectations of others. Socialization is a lifelong process; however, it is most intense during childhood. Our first socialization experiences, usually with immediate family members, shape our personalities and teach us the skills for survival.

Personality Development

Personality includes all the relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that distinguish one individual from another. The socialization process helps shape an individual's personality. During childhood, people experience rapid physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. However, personality development continues throughout life. Many traits remain the same as a person ages.

Heredity and Environment

Is an individual's personality shaped primarily by heredity or by the environment

Did You Know?



The Importance of Language

Other species have ways of communicating, but they do not have the intellectual ability to create and use the complicated set of symbols necessary for human language. Dogs may bark to go out or sit in response to a hand signal, but we can't teach them to read and write. Porpoises appear to contact one another with different sounds, but even the most admiring researchers can't compare their communication system to human language. Since language is the chief medium of human learning, the socialization process would be impossible without it.



in which he or she grows up? This question has been the subject of much debate.

EXAMPLE: During the 19th century, researchers reacted to Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection by emphasizing **instincts**, or inherited behavior patterns. The "herding instinct" was used to explain the fact that people live in communities, and the "maternal instinct" explained mothering.

EXAMPLE: Late in the 19th century, a Russian physiologist named Ivan Pavlov conducted an experiment with dogs that illustrated how learning could affect instincts. Pavlov showed that a dog could learn to associate the ringing of a bell with food and to salivate whenever it heard the bell, whether or not it saw food at the same time.

Over the next few decades, some researchers discounted heredity totally, claiming that environment alone shapes infants.

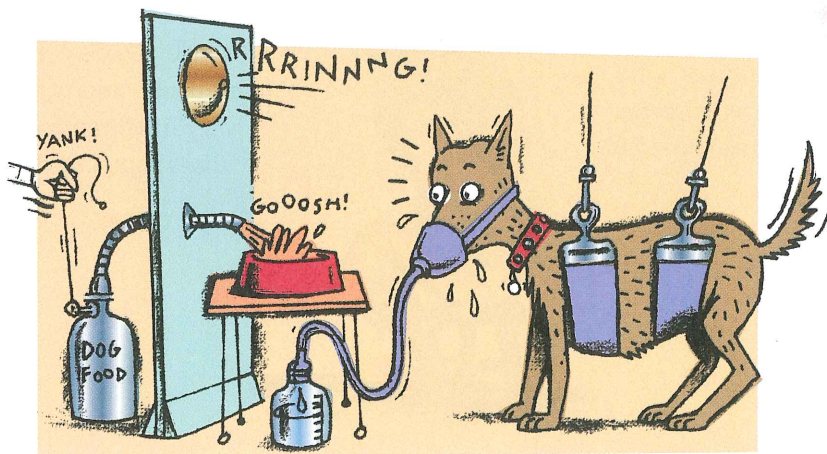
EXAMPLE: The American psychologist John B. Watson claimed that he could train

an infant to become anything he wanted—artist, lawyer, or thief—no matter what the child's ability or ancestry.

Today, most social scientists believe that both heredity and the environment shape human personality. One area of study is particularly interested in this relationship. **Sociobiology** is the study of the biological bases of social behavior. It assumes that particular forms of behavior become genetically linked to a species if they contribute to the species' fitness to survive. Sociobiologists place a strong emphasis on the biological basis of human behavior. For them, even such varied cultural behaviors as ways of practicing religion or choosing mates are determined by biological factors.

Birth Order

How much do brothers and sisters affect your personality? Does it matter if you are an only child or an oldest, middle, or youngest child? Research indicates that **birth order** does shape children's personalities.



- * **Only Children** appear to endure much pressure to achieve and excel. As a result, they tend to be overactive, seeking to be involved socially, especially in leadership roles. They also tend to worry more than children with siblings (brothers and sisters) about almost everything.
- * **Oldest Children** have many traits of only children, since they had no siblings until the second child was born.

Research indicates that firstborn children are more likely to be cooperative, cautious, and achievement-oriented than their siblings.

- * **Later Children** tend to be better in social relationships and to be more affectionate, friendly, and creative than their siblings. They may not be as driven to achieve as the oldest child, but they may gain recognition for their sensitivity and sense of humor.

Sociologist's Perspective

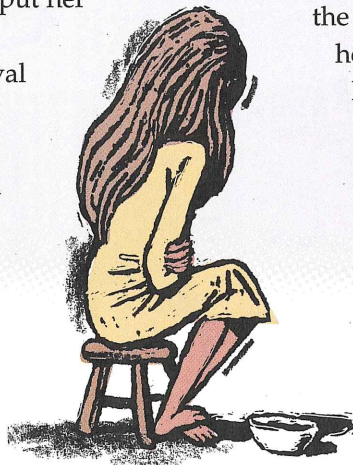


Anna of the Attic

What would children be like if they had no socialization experience? For obvious reasons, researchers don't usually experiment with isolating children, but occasionally a case is found in which a child is raised in near-total isolation. Such a case was "Anna of the Attic." Anna was an illegitimate child whose unwed mother put her in an attic room in order to escape the violent disapproval of Anna's grandfather, who refused to acknowledge her existence. Anna remained in

the attic for nearly six years, ignored by her mother, except for being fed just enough to keep her alive.

When social workers discovered Anna, she was little more than a skeleton and could not sit up, walk, or talk. She made progress once she was placed in a special school, but she never behaved normally in the four and a half years between the time she was discovered and her premature death. Sociologist Kingsley Davis concluded from his observations of Anna that very little human behavior arises spontaneously.



Parents

For most children, the first attachment is to the mother. Researchers believe that this vital connection begins before birth, and that after a baby is born, he or she wants to stay close to the mother. Psychologist Lee Salk found that if the rhythm of the mother's heartbeat is continued, the child seems more secure. When a recording of a mother's heartbeat (as heard in the womb) was played in a nursery of newborns, the babies cried less, breathed better, and rested more calmly. Of course, fathers play an early role in their children's development as they hold and care for them. Later, both parents serve as role models who shape children's perceptions of sex roles and family membership.

Influence of the Culture

Cultures shape the development of children's personalities. A society's cultural environment may determine which personality traits are emphasized. For example, modern U.S. culture encourages competitiveness and friendliness.

The Sense of Self

One of the most important results of early childhood socialization is the development of the sense of self. For the first month or two of life, babies don't know the difference between their own bodies and actions and the people and objects around them. They cry in reaction to such physical stimuli as hunger, wetness, or cold. At some point, babies realize that they make the noise and that they can control their voices and

actions. The sense of self—the conscious perception of one's identity as distinct from others—develops gradually during childhood and changes throughout life.

Many sociologists and psychologists have studied the development of self. Each has a different point of view, but taken collectively, their theories help us understand how the socialization process shapes the sense of self.

Locke's Tabula Rasa

The 17th-century English philosopher John Locke believed that human babies are shaped by socialization to be good or bad, optimistic or pessimistic, generous or selfish. For Locke, each child is born a *tabula rasa* (Latin for "blank slate") that will accept just about any writing. Children have no personalities at birth, but acquire them through social experiences. Locke's view is generally *not* accepted today because most researchers believe that biology and such factors as birth order play some role in personality development.

Cooley's Looking-Glass Self

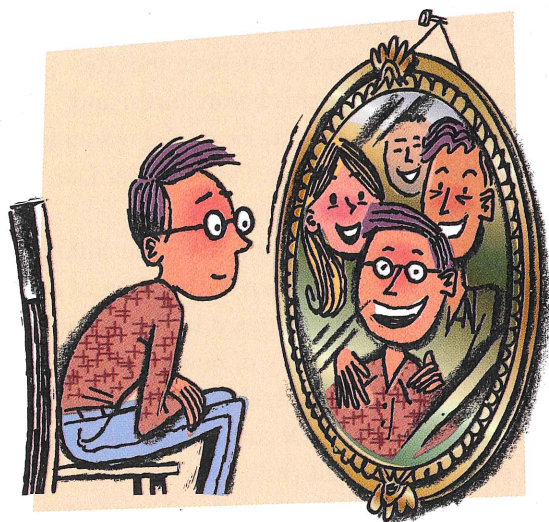
In the early 1900s, social psychologist Charles Horton Cooley proposed that we learn who we are by interacting with others. Our view of ourselves, then, comes from our impressions of how others perceive us. Cooley used the phrase **looking-glass self** to describe the self as developed by our social interactions with other people. According to Cooley,

the development of a self-identity or self-concept is a **three**-step process:

1. You imagine how you appear to others—family members, friends, even strangers.
2. You then imagine how others judge you. Do they think you are friendly or aloof? Fat or skinny? Smart or not? Attractive or ugly?
3. You use these perceptions of others' judgments to develop feelings about yourself. You may develop a sense of self-respect or a sense of shame, a sense of confidence or a sense of inadequacy, depending on your idea of how others judge you.

This combination of feelings becomes your sense of self.

One thing to notice about Cooley's theory is that the sense of self results from how a person "imagines" he or she looks to others. That imagination may be incorrect, and so we may develop our self-concepts based on reactions that don't really exist. For example, you may believe your friends think that you are not very much fun to be around. Even if it is not true, you may come to see yourself as a boring person. However, you may adjust your self-view based on another set of interactions, so that you come to see yourself as boring to some people but not to others.



Mead's Role Taking

Like Cooley, American sociologist George Herbert Mead based his role-taking theory on how social interactions shape personality. According to Mead, the self emerges in **three** distinct phases:

1. **The Preparatory Stage**, in which children merely imitate the people around them, particularly family members. A child may sweep the floor with his or her own tiny broom, or may wheel a personal, pint-size suitcase through an airport, following Mom's or Dad's model.
2. **The Play Stage** (around the age of three), in which children develop skills in using symbols—gestures, objects, and language that form the basis of human communication. In this stage, the child develops the ability to pretend to be

other people, a process known as **role taking**. The child no longer just imitates, but actually pretends to be someone else—a parent, a cartoon character, or a fairy princess.

3. The Game Stage (around the age of eight or nine), in which children learn to respond to and understand the roles that others around them take. Not only do they play roles themselves, they understand that others around them take roles as well. For example, a child of eight or nine is able to play a game of baseball and understand that one person is playing the pitcher, another an umpire, and another the batter. In this stage, children respond to many people and are capable of understanding a wider social context.

Mead divides the sense of self into two parts, the “I” and the “me.” The “I” is the unsocialized, self-interested part on which children under three rely almost totally.



“Oh, yes, indeed. We all keep a sharp eye out for those little clues that seem to whisper ‘law’ or ‘medicine.’”

Did You Know?



“Significant Others”

The phrase “significant others,” commonly used today to refer to important people in our lives, is derived from Mead’s theory of role taking. Harry Stack Sullivan coined the term to refer to the first people a child imitates and eventually pretends to be, usually family members and close friends.

During the play stage, children begin to develop the “me,” the part that is aware of other people’s expectations and attitudes—the socialized self.

Freud’s Unconscious and Conscious Minds

Have you ever commented that someone you know has a big “ego”? If so, you were borrowing from the theory of one of the most famous people in recent history: Sigmund Freud. Freud originated **psychoanalysis**, a theory holding that unconscious childhood experiences and instinct-based drives largely shape personality and behavior. Freud saw much less harmony between the individual and society than did Cooley and Mead.

Instead Freud believed that **three** parts of personality were continually at war:

1. **The Id** represents the most primitive and selfish part of human personality. Infants are born with an id that demands immediate fulfillment of biological needs. For example, the id controls hunger and physical discomfort, and a baby reacts to those stimuli almost instinctively.
2. **The Superego**, or conscience, develops as a child goes through the socialization process. The superego is the internalized voice of society that has the job of telling the id “no.”
3. **The Ego**, according to Freud, develops last. It attempts to mediate between the selfish id and the societal demands of the superego. By trying to satisfy the id in a socially acceptable way, the ego becomes the heart of the personality, the acting self. Freud’s writings reflect

his belief that the ego’s job is impossible, so constant conflict characterizes human personality.

Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development

The changes over time in the way we think, learn, reason, and acquire language take place in a process known as **cognitive development**. Psychologist Jean Piaget recognized **four** stages through which children go as they mature:

1. **Stage I**. This first stage involves acquiring *motor intelligence*. A child from birth to about two years old begins to develop motor and sensory skills, such as moving hands to reach an object, coordinating body parts to crawl and then walk, and developing taste preferences for food. In this stage, babies learn to distinguish hands, feet, and other body parts as part of themselves, distinct from all other objects.





Moral Development

Suppose a boy is dying of a disease that can only be cured by medical procedures his parents cannot afford. In desperation, the child's father robs a store in order to save his son's life. Is his action right or wrong? Researcher Lawrence Kohlberg studied children's reactions to such moral dilemmas and concluded that a sense of morality develops in stages as children grow up.

At first, children do as they are told, mainly because they fear punishment. Next, they begin to realize that good

behavior brings rewards. They become increasingly aware of the opinions of others and gradually develop ideas about right and wrong. Then, as children begin to listen to ideas that differ from their own, they start to recognize moral conflicts. For example, they might understand why the boy's father would steal, but they realize what a problem it would be if everybody decided to steal. Eventually, children become self-directed and develop universal principles of justice that may be applied to everyone.

- 2. Stage 2.** During the second, or *preoperational*, stage, children begin to use words and symbols to describe objects or ideas. Between the ages of two and seven, children learn to communicate with other people, but they are still self-centered and unable to adopt the points of view of others. Children in this stage cannot yet understand volume, speed, or weight.
- 3. Stage 3.** From seven to twelve, the intellect develops swiftly. Piaget called this the *concrete operational stage*. Abstract concepts such as love and death only

have meaning in terms of specific "concrete" references, such as "Love is hugging Daddy and Mommy."

- 4. Stage 4.** During the *formal operational stage* of adolescence, individuals begin to think abstractly and so are able to think about theories and questions of morality. In school, they are able to learn complex mathematical operations and understand the differences between two ideologies, such as capitalism and communism. They are able to reflect on their self-images and future hopes.

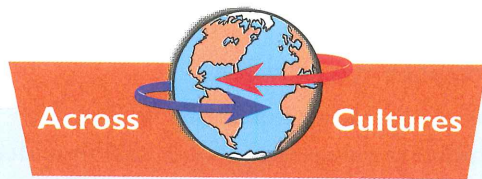
Agents of Childhood Socialization

A mother teaches her four-year-old son to dress himself. A father helps his daughter

balance on a bicycle before setting her free to ride. These ordinary situations demonstrate the importance of **agents of socialization**—individuals or institutions that teach a society's culture.

Agents of Childhood Socialization			
	Main Task	Level and Kind	Key Areas of Influence
Family	Transmits attitudes, values, and norms.	<i>Strong, decisive</i> * verbal and nonverbal. * intentional and unintentional.	Gender roles. Love and affection. Political views. Religious practices. Marriage and parenthood.
Schools and Daycare Centers	Transmit knowledge and life skills.	<i>Significant</i> * intentional via curriculum. * unintentional via teacher behavior and attitudes.	Adult authority. Peer relationships. Workings of impersonal organizations.
Peer Groups	Transmit how to behave in voluntary relationships.	<i>Grows stronger with age</i> * indirect. * frequent.	Friendship. Playmates. Business relationships.
Mass Media	Transmit societal attitudes, values, and norms. Provide information of all kinds.	<i>Debated</i> * unintentional, but children spend more time in front of television than in school classes. * intentional in some programming, unintentional in others.	Attitudes about politics. Styles, fads, product brands. Social expectations regarding families and right and wrong behavior. Attitudes toward violence and vice.

The lifelong socialization process involves many different agents, as shown in the chart on page 76. The family is the principal agent of socialization for children.



Gender Roles in the South Pacific

Anthropologist Margaret Mead's study of three tribes in the South Pacific is a landmark analysis of cross-cultural gender roles. Mead lived with the Arapesh, the Mundugumor, and the Tchambuli. She found among the Arapesh that both men and women were loving, considerate, and cooperative. Both tended children and were responsible for food. The Mundugumor men and women, in contrast, were usually ruthless and violent toward each other. Among the Tchambuli, the women dominated the men, provided for their families, and were indifferent to their families. The men cared for the children and were more emotional. Mead concluded from her studies that masculine and feminine roles are taught by culture, not inherited.

Socialization Throughout Life

As we move through the different stages of life, we are socialized to new roles.

Adolescence

In preindustrial societies, children go right into adulthood through a ritual known as a *rite of passage*. For example, among the Kota people of the African Congo, adolescent boys paint themselves blue—the color of death—to symbolize the death of childhood. Among the Cheyenne Indians, marks are made on a girl's body to announce that she has become a woman. Fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds have children, take other responsibilities, and are fully accepted as adults.

Most teenagers in the United States, however, are not children anymore, but they are not yet adults. You are in a stage “in between” called **adolescence**, a status that exists only in industrial and postindustrial societies. The stage of adolescence exists primarily because complex societies need a highly trained and educated labor force. Education takes a long time, so we have a long period of adolescence that lasts through high school and college, and sometimes beyond.

Adolescents are physically adults, but they are not allowed to take on many adult roles, such as voting or going to war. This time “in between” is characterized by the heightened importance of peers, increasing levels of responsibility, a search for identity, and conflicting pressures and concerns.



Importance of Peers

The importance of peer groups increases as children grow older, reaching its peak when they become adolescents. While adults are eager to socialize a new generation to accept adult roles, adolescents are determined to gain independence from adults. Since adolescents realize that they must eventually become independent adults, they must shed the dependence characteristic of childhood. As adolescents begin the difficult process of gaining independence from their families, they turn to peers for guidance. The reactions of friends are more important to teenagers than those of parents, teachers, and other adults.

Adolescents tend to spend a great deal of time in tight-knit groups that provide strong emotional support. As they put distance between themselves and their families, they replace the old ties with ties to their new group of friends. Together

friends face the insecurity and uncertainty of being an "in between." They share secrets, listen to music together, and often annoy parents with long phone conversations. It's all a part of understanding their changing roles and finding new identities.

Increased Responsibility

The gradual transition from childhood to adulthood means that adolescents shoulder more adult responsibilities as they go through their teens. In U.S. society, most people learn to drive a car during adolescence. The day a teenager gets his or her driver's license is a watershed event in reaching adult independence. At home, parents may require their teens to baby-sit younger brothers and sisters, or they may help them set up their own bank accounts. As students, adolescents acquire knowledge and skills necessary for adulthood.

As high school graduation approaches, most teenagers make postgraduation plans for work or college. At the age of 18, they are able to vote, a major step toward civic maturity. Much socialization during adolescence is *anticipatory*—it prepares young people for the time to come when they are truly independent.

Search for Identity

As children, most of us get our sense of who we are from our families. We get a sense of place from our homes, and our dependence on our parents is almost complete. As we approach adolescence, we base more and more of our behavior on our peer groups. This dramatic shift understandably makes the question "Who am I?" a central one to

teens. The redefinition of self often takes many turns during the teenage years, including changing dreams and aspirations. "What do I want to do when I grow up?" "How can I relate to peers in friendships and in love relationships?" The growing sense of identity defines how we feel about ourselves in adulthood.

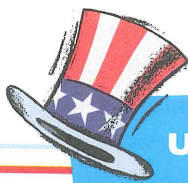
Pressures and Concerns

Any transitional period in life is stressful, and adolescence is no exception. The fact that adolescence is spread over several years makes it especially difficult for many

people. Peer pressure can encourage teenagers to make decisions about personal behavior that they later regret. Increasing responsibility brings new challenges and potential embarrassments. For example, a teenager may ask, "What if I fail my driver's test?" "What if I can't get into such and such a college?" Everyone will know!

Early and Middle Adulthood

All the socialization of childhood and adolescence pays off for people in many ways. For example, growing up in families prepares them to have families of their



U.S. Culture Connection

La Quinceañera: A Rite of Passage

Rites of passage are usually associated with simple or primitive societies, but modern societies have many rituals, such as graduations, debutante balls, or bar mitzvahs, that mark the end of childhood. In one example, Cuban-American girls mark the transition to womanhood at age 15 through a ceremony known as the *quinceañera*. Although ceremonies vary, the girls typically participate in a religious retreat, a church mass, and an elaborate dance or cotillon. In Miami, the popularity

of the *quinceañera* supports a network of party planners, caterers, and dress shops and the Miss Quinceañera Latina pageant.



own. Learning to read and write, to be law-abiding citizens, and to follow basic societal norms certainly helps adults cope with their lives.

However, no early socialization pattern can fully prepare a person for adulthood, partly because anticipating adult roles is not the same as actually taking them on. Parents may provide models for marriage relationships, but the experience of actually being married is different from what most young people ever imagine. Also, times change. Much adult socialization takes the form of **resocialization**—altering what we have learned earlier and learning new kinds of appropriate behavior.

Male and Female Life Patterns

As 21st-century Americans, we are taught to equally value the roles and statuses of men and women. Young women today have many of the same opportunities at work as men, and many fathers have taken more and more responsibilities at home. Nonetheless, men and women have somewhat different experiences as they go through early and middle adulthood. Psychologists Daniel Levinson and Irene Frieze point out some of those differences in their studies of the stages of adult development.

Daniel Levinson outlines **three** developmental stages for males in early and mid-adulthood:

1. The Novice Phase. From 17 to 32, men go through the ups and downs of first experiences with the adult world. They must leave home and achieve psycho-

logical and economic independence. Next, they deal with the contradictory expectations to explore new options—both in personal relationships and in the workplace—and to “settle down” to become responsible members of society. Finally, they must take stock of early decisions that they made and gear themselves up to “make it” in the adult world. This process often involves marriage, becoming a parent, and deciding on a career direction.

2. The Settling Down Period. The settling down period lasts from about age 33 to 39 and focuses on establishing oneself in society, usually by advancing in an occupation. During this period, men form commitments to work, family, friendship, and/or community.

3. The Midlife Transition. This period, from about age 40 to 44, is the bridge between early and middle adulthood. Many men take stock of the likelihood that they



“Your mother and I are feeling overwhelmed, so you’ll have to bring yourselves up.”

will realize their earlier dreams. Often they revise their dreams to be more realistic and achievable, and sometimes they become **mentors**, or close advisors, to younger people. By helping someone younger achieve his or her dreams, mentors may find that they can extend their influence beyond their own careers.

Irene Frieze focused her study on adult female development and found both similarities with and differences from the development of males. She suggests women go through **three** phases in early and middle adulthood:

1. **Leaving the Family.** Like men, women must leave home and establish their own adult identities. For many women, emphasis is placed on the influence of marriage in shaping their development. For women who combine marriage with career, marriage usually plays the dominant role, even in modern society.
2. **Entering the Adult World.** The dual roles of career and marriage—particularly including motherhood—place a strain on young women. They often feel they should be in two places at once and are not able to do both jobs as well as they would like. Many women have a break in employment when children are young, an experience that distinguishes female development from male.

3. **Entering the Adult World Again.** Many women find that their children's growing independence allows them to reenter the workforce by the time they reach their early to middle 30s. Women then face many of the challenges men faced in their 20s. Ironically, women develop commitments to their careers right about the time their husbands are beginning to have serious doubts about their own careers.

Jobs and the Workplace

Increasingly, both men and women are expected to work for pay during most of their adult lives, which can mean working for 50 years or so. By definition, the labor force consists of all people 16 and older who have paid jobs or are seeking employment.

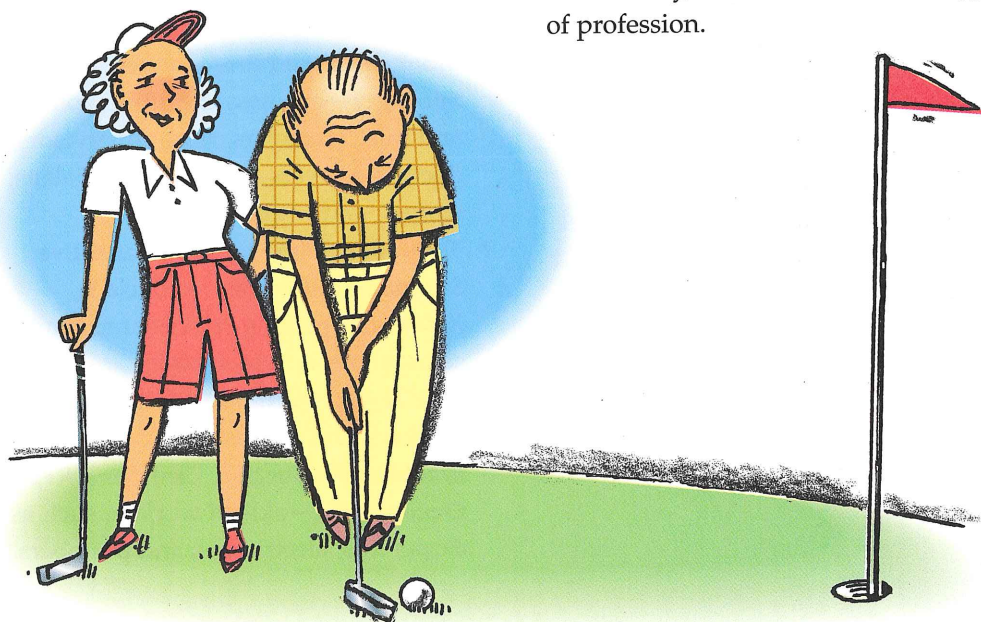
Occupations may be broken down into several categories:

- * **Managerial and Professional Specialty**—business executives, office and sales managers, store supervisors, doctors, lawyers, computer specialists, editors, and engineers.
- * **Technical, Sales, and Administrative Support**—laboratory technicians, X-ray and imaging technicians, retail salespeople, and secretaries.
- * **Service Occupations**—teachers, social workers, and nurses.
- * **Precision Production, Craft, and Repair Occupations**—skilled workers such as carpenters, electricians, and plumbers.

- * **Operators and Laborers**—unskilled workers in jobs requiring manual, often repetitive, skills, most of which involve operating some type of machinery.
- * **Farming, Forestry, and Fishing**—only a small percentage of Americans hold these jobs today.

Old Age

What is “old age”? Part of the definition seems to depend on how old you are. To young people, it may mean anyone over 30, but to people in their 50s, old age may refer to anyone over 70. The definition also changes as life expectancies increase. Many people today expect to live well into their 80s and 90s. Generally, we define old age by decreasing activity, retirement from work, and increasing problems with health.



Myth and Reality

A common misconception is that people over the age of 65 are all the same. People go through different stages as they grow older. Life at age 65 is very different from life at 85.

EXAMPLE: Among people in their late 60s, adjusting to retirement is a major developmental issue. For many people, by the time they reach their 80s, health issues take precedence over other issues.

Work and Retirement

Because U.S. society places a great deal of emphasis on work, for most adults an occupation is a master status. When retirement time comes, the transition may be very difficult. Adjustment to retirement depends on many factors: feelings of achievement of work-related goals, financial security, health concerns, and type of profession.

EXAMPLE: Some researchers have found that professionals and executives seem to adapt most easily to retirement. Their level of education may have prepared them to enjoy activities beyond the world of work. Their level of income may also be a factor.

New Expectations

As more and more people live well beyond retirement, they will socialize to a new set of expectations about the roles of seniors. Many will observe their peers taking up new interests, doing those things they had always wanted to do but had no time for when they were working and raising children. Some become active in voluntary service at youth centers or in hospitals. They find that giving of oneself in this way brings increased rewards.

Death and Dying

The last stage of life for all of us is the period that immediately precedes death. For most of us, this period comes at the end of old age, and it may include a prolonged period of illness. As we complete our life cycles, we often lose the hard-earned independence of adulthood and again rely on others for physical or financial assistance.

Many studies show that whereas the elderly fear dependence, many do not have an equal fear of death. Almost certainly this feeling comes from the sense that death is natural, and that one has lived as long as can be expected. Religious beliefs also influence an individual's reaction to death.

Did You Know?



Dying "On Our Own Terms"

According to a 2000 poll conducted by *Time* magazine and CNN, seven out of ten Americans say they want to die at home; instead, three-fourths die in medical institutions. Many die in pain, and in the presence of hospital personnel, not surrounded by family and friends. Research by Bill and Judith Moyers led them to argue that dying people should be allowed more freedom to choose how and when they die, and that we should all die "On Our Own Terms."

In a classic study, researcher Elisabeth Kübler-Ross outlined **five** stages of dying:

1. **Denial**, in which people ignore the truth that they are dying.
2. **Anger**, the reaction "Why me?"
3. **Bargaining** for the future, perhaps promising better behavior if allowed to live.
4. **Depression**, feeling hopeless about the future.
5. **Acceptance** of the sum total of one's life experiences and the inevitability of death.

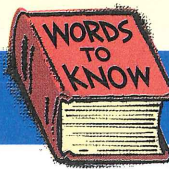
Chapter 4 Wrap-up

SOCIALIZATION

The socialization process for human beings lasts a lifetime. Humans use their ability to learn in constantly readjusting to the ever-changing demands of society. Personality development is influenced by both heredity and culture, and a sense of self develops as we age.

Children, adolescents, and adults have much to learn and relearn—values, beliefs, and norms as well as physical, mental, and social skills. Agents of socialization such as the family, schools, peers, and the media convey information and skills both intentionally and unintentionally. Individual variations abound, but experiencing a socialization process is one thing humans all have in common. Socialization continues throughout life, with each stage facing its own challenges.

Sociology



adolescence—period between childhood and adulthood in industrial and post-industrial societies; the teenage years. p. 77

agents of socialization—individuals or institutions that teach the culture of a society. p. 76

birth order—position of an individual among his or her siblings on the basis of the order of their birth; first born, middle child, and so forth. p. 69

cognitive development—process of changes over time in the way an individual thinks, learns, reasons, and acquires language. p. 74

instinct—inherited behavior pattern. p. 69

looking-glass self—Charles Horton Cooley's description of the development of self through social interactions with other people. p. 71

mentor—close advisor; usually an older person who takes an active interest in the career development of a younger person. p. 81

personality—all the relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that distinguish one individual from another. p. 68

psychoanalysis—Freud's theory that unconscious childhood experiences and instinct-based drives largely shape personality and behavior. p. 73

resocialization—process of altering what was learned earlier in life and learning new kinds of appropriate behavior. p. 80

role taking—activity in social development in which a child pretends to be other people. p. 73

socialization—process by which individuals learn to become members of society. It involves internalizing the rules and norms of society and learning to perform expected social roles. p. 68

sociobiology—study of the biological bases of social behavior. p. 69