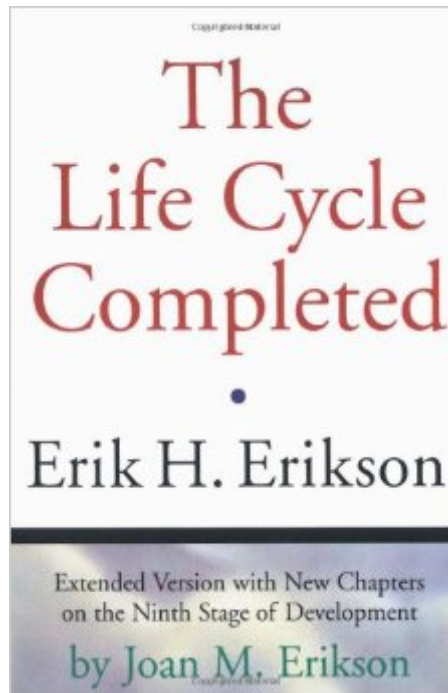




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# The Life Cycle Completed (Extended Version)



## Synopsis

"This book will last and last, because it contains the wisdom of two wonderfully knowing observers of our human destiny." — Robert Coles For decades Erik H. Erikson's concept of the stages of human development has deeply influenced the field of contemporary psychology. Here, with new material by Joan M. Erikson, is an expanded edition of his final work. *The Life Cycle Completed* eloquently closes the circle of Erikson's theories, outlining the unique rewards and challenges — for both individuals and society — of very old age.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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A winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, Erik H. Erikson was renowned worldwide as teacher, clinician, and theorist in the field of psychoanalysis and human development. Joan Mowat Erikson was born in Canada; she earned her B.A. in Education at Columbia University and an M.A. in Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. She is a teacher, writer, and craftsman and has worked with gold, silver, and precious stones. She is the author of a previous book, *The Universal Bead*. She is married to the noted psychoanalyst Erik H. Erikson.

Erik Erikson's *Life Cycle Completed* is a book I'd been looking forward to reading for a long time.

Having had some experience reading about Erikson's theory of personality, which mostly involves his eight stages of human development, I thought this might be an illuminating read. It wasn't. It's pretty horribly written, and unnecessarily abstruse. I'll give you an example of what I mean. Here's a quote from the book that I chose randomly from the earlier portion which is representative of the Erikson's writing:

In summary, the process of identity formation emerges as an evolving configuration—a configuration that gradually integrates constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles. All these, however, can only emerge from a mutual adaptation of individual potentials, technological world views, and religious or political ideologies. The spontaneous ritualizations of this stage can, of course, appear surprising, confusing, and aggravating in the shiftiness of the adolescents' first attempts to ritualize their interplay with age mates and to create small group rituals. But they also foster participation in public events on sports fields and concert grounds and in political and religious arenas. In all of these, young people can be seen to seek a form of ideological confirmation, and here spontaneous rites and formal rituals merge. Such search, however, can also lead to fanatic participation in militant ritualisms marked by totalism; that is, a totalization of the world image so illusory that it lacks the power of self-renewal and can become destructively fanatic.

Erikson, Erik H.; Erikson, Joan M. (1998-06-17). *The Life Cycle Completed (Extended Version)* (p. 74). W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition.

One of the obvious problems with the writing is not only that it's jargon-filled but that he loves to nominalize--make words into or rely heavily upon abstract nouns. As a little exercise here, I'll try to put into plain English as best I can what he said above. Here goes.

Forming your identity is about drawing upon different areas of your life that make you 'you.' From your innate characteristics and your basic drives toward food, clothes, shelter, and love to the capacities you've cultivated in yourself or the groups and roles you identify with and on down to your defense mechanisms--all of these play a role in making you 'you,' and there's this complex interplay with all these factors and your ever-changing (political, religious, technological) worldview. This period of identity formation is difficult and turbulent for adolescents but it can also be a great time for new kinds of spontaneous activity to emerge. Of course, we should always be mindful of how some of the habits we form during this period could be bad in the sense they became dangerous or become such a matter of ritual that they're conformist.

By the way, if you don't like my paraphrase, at least I gave a shot at clarity, which is more than I can say for Erikson's writing. My advice to the reader who would like to read this book to absorb Erikson's theory is to read from Chapter 5 onward. As far as I can tell, this is the portion of the book that his wife Joan Erikson wrote, and it's very lucid and explains Erikson's

theory much better than anything else in the earlier, chunkier part of the book.

Though I read the original many years ago, Erikson's theory of the evolution of our personality in 8 cycles is very, very interesting and it applies to everyone no matter when you were born. I read again this new version that includes a 9th cycle in order to remember and watch my own evolution in perspective. I highly recommend this book specially a people involved in humanistic careers.

It's a great book that will give you a detail look into the human development stages of growth. I would recommend it, especially to engagement couples, married couples, soon to be parents and parents. Erikson is one smart dude and in his book he goes into better depth and width than other expert do about psychoanalysis. I took one star off for me because of the words I couldn't understand and so it was a little tough to read.

I have always liked Erikson's developmental model...now, with the edition of Joan Erikson's final stage, it is even more relevant and tender.

Good product and delivered on time.

very dated and derivative.

excellent

I bought this book because I needed an in depth analysis of Erikson's Theory. I was happy to buy this book because it not only referenced his work and explained it well, but there was added perspective by the author that was helpful. Would suggest this book to anyone that is studying the field of psychology.

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