Erik Erikson was a very influential German psychologist and psychoanalyst known for his theory of human development that explored the development of identity over eight stages of life from birth to death. Each stage is concerned with a particular conflict that must be resolved and a particular event or issue around which this conflict resolves itself. The following chart outlines the various stages:

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| **Stage** | **Age Range** | **Conflict** | **Event/Issue** |
| 1 | birth to  one year old | trust versus mistrust | feeding |
| 2 | one to three years old | autonomy versus doubt | toilet training |
| 3 | three to six years old | initiative versus inadequacy | independence |
| 4 | six to twelve years old | industry versus inferiority | school |
| 5 | twelve to eighteen years old | identity versus confusion | peer relationships |
| 6 | eighteen to forty years old | intimacy versus isolation | love relationships |
| 7 | forty to sixty-five years old | productivity versus stagnation | parenting |
| 8 | sixty-five years old until death | integrity versus despair | acceptance of one’s life |