

# What kinds of goals do Epicureans set for themselves?

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 19, 2026 at 10:07 AM

It might be good think about goals for an Epicurean through the framework of lifestages. In modern psychology Erik Erikson and others have presented ideas of lifestages.

I am posting a table of lifestages categories - we could then see if we can compare for any overlaps within Epicurean philosophy.

Query: a table showing adult stages of goals, responsibilities, and psychological growth

AI Overview:

Adult development involves distinct, often overlapping, stages focusing on increasing self-definition, intimacy, and responsibility. The following table synthesizes adult stages, drawing primarily from Erik Erikson’s psychosocial stages, Levinson’s life-structure model, and constructive development theory.

Table: Adult Stages of Development

Adult Stage	Approx. Age	Key Goals	Primary Responsibilities	Psychological Growth
<b>Emerging Adulthood</b>	18-25	Self-exploration, identity formation, testing life choices	Education, early career, establishing independence	Shifting from dependent child to self-sufficient young adult
<b>Young Adulthood</b>	19-40	Forming intimate relationships, career establishment	Career, marriage, starting a family, community participation	Intimacy vs. Isolation: Developing love and partnership
<b>Middle Adulthood</b>	40-65	Mentoring others, leaving a legacy, maintaining stability	Parenting (adolescents), caring for aging parents, peak career	Generativity vs. Stagnation: Creating lasting, productive value
<b>Late Adulthood</b>	65+	Reflection on life, adjusting to retirement	Passing on knowledge, leisure, health management	Integrity vs. Despair: Achieving wisdom and acceptance of life

## Detailed Breakdown of Adult Growth Stages

- **Emerging Adulthood (18-25):** Marked by instability and exploration, this stage is characterized by "trying out" different paths in love and work.
- **Early Adulthood/Young Adulthood (25-40):** The primary focus is "settling down," building a life structure, and forming deep, intimate bonds with others.
- **Midlife Transition/Middle Adulthood (40-65):** Often involves a reevaluation of past goals (midlife crisis) and a shift toward "generativity," or focusing on the next generation and community.
- **Late Adulthood (65+):** Focuses on "integrity," where the individual reviews their life, accepting both successes and failures to achieve a sense of wisdom.

## Key Concepts in Adult Growth

- **Self-Authoring Mind (Kegan):** Many adults move from a "socialized mind" (relying on others' expectations) to a "self-authored mind," creating their own values and moral compass.
- **Life Structure (Levinson):** Adults alternate between stable periods (building a life) and transitional periods (questioning that life).
- **Goal Orientation Shift:** Younger adults tend to focus on growth-oriented goals, while older adults shift toward maintenance and loss prevention.

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Another aspect to consider is that for some people who had difficult childhoods or had parents that did not provide adequate social/emotional modeling/learning, that those people might need to take effort to deal with and develop those skills during young adulthood (and later)...where as others may already have those skills and move forward more quickly in life.

[See the full 8 stages of Erikson](#)