



## **ADULT TRANSITIONS: CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY**

Aging is a time of reappraisal, self-doubt, anxiety, and potentially the achievement of a more solid sense of self-acceptance. Some individuals, as they age, make changes in their job, spouse, or look; some get around to doing things that had been put off when they were younger, and some give up and feel despair and anger.

If the four major tasks developed by psychologist Robert C. Peck and listed below are mastered, there is a much better chance of living through the aging transitions with new opportunities rather than repeated crises.

The first task to be mastered is to come to **valuing wisdom vs. valuing physical powers**. Those who age most successfully are those who put the use of their heads about the use of their hands and bodies. Also the sheer experience that long living brings can help the aging person accomplish more than when they were younger through the use of wisdom and the ability to make the most effective choice among alternatives.

The second task is **socializing vs. sexualizing in human relationships**. It is important to take on a new kind of value in which men and women are defined as individuals, as companions, and as emotional supporters rather than primarily as sex objects. Relationships would be enriched and broadened their purposes.

The third task is **emotional flexibility vs. emotional impoverishment**. This implies the capacity to shift emotional investments from one person to another and from one activity to another. Individuals, when their parents die, their children grow up and leave home and their circle of friends and relatives begins to be broken, need the capacity to shift their interests to other ties in their community and vocational worlds and to develop new relationships and pursuits.

The last task is **mental flexibility vs. mental rigidity**. Some people utilize their experiences to achieve a degree of perspective and use their experiences as guides to solve new issues. Others tend to grow increasingly inflexible in their opinion and actions and are closed to new ideas. Here the task is to avoid rigidity and to be open to new options.

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