

## Maturity

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### Citation:

Abi-Hashem, N. (1999). Maturity. In D. G. Benner & P. C. Hill (Eds.), *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling* (2nd ed., pp. 730-731). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

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In order to better understand the concept of maturity, it would be helpful to define, not only what maturity is, but also, what it is not. Maturity is a process, not a destination. It is a journey, not an arrival point. Maturity is completion and not perfection. Maturity is not the absence of needs or struggles. Essentially, it is a state of completeness blended with a good degree of personhood and wholeness.

To be mature means to be fully developed in mind, body, and soul and fully seasoned in personality as a whole. Maturing is unfolding the inherent talents and abilities, especially what has been latent, dormant, or underdeveloped. It is fulfilling one's potential, attaining a good measure of height, and maintaining the established growth over time. Maturing reflects stability, depth, refinement of character, inner security, and integrity. In other words, it is the process of advancing toward completion and becoming ripe in form and substance.

Some aspects of maturity are time related (like physical maturation). Other aspects are experience related (like emotional maturity). Similar to the global human personality, there are many facets to maturity: intellectual-mental, interpersonal-relational, affective-emotional, spiritual-existental, social-cultural, physiological-physical, adaptive-behavioral, and financial-material. Maturity is a simple concept and a complex phenomenon at once. Most often, people mature in one or two areas faster (or slower) than the others. It all depends on the individual's degree of exposure, influence of others, self-discipline, tolerance of pain, personal worldview, and general life experience. It is worth noting here that maturity can take place, not only on an individual level, but also on familial, communal, and cultural levels as well, though the process may involve different dynamics and broader dimensions.

Spiritual maturity is a process as well. It is not an outcome of one time event. In fact, maturity is not a state of sinlessness but a healthy awareness of one's humanness. Our humanity includes not only the strengths, accomplishments, positive qualities, and bright sides of ourselves

but also the weaknesses, limitations, failures, negative qualities, and dark sides (the shadow). Maturity is completion or, more accurately, it is the process of being completed. This principle is well conveyed in 1 Corinthians 1:10 "... you be made complete [or united]," and in Philippians 1:6 "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you shall completed it until the day of Christ Jesus."

Progress, not perfection, should be the goal of maturity. It is learning to keep the flow of progress alive and maintain the achievement of growth. Maturity is the ability to transform schooling into learning, knowledge into wisdom, incidents into insights, and casual encounters into rich experiences. It is the virtue of learning from one's own mistakes and failures, having the courage to apologize and ask for forgiveness, and remaining human and humble in the midst of successes and great accomplishments.

The following are some characteristics of a healthy self, signs of an ego strengths, and marks of a mature person:

- Being in touch with self and knowing one's own deep passions, needs, emotions, desires, unresolved issues, impulses, and reactions.
- Ability to delay gratification.
- Accepting one's limitations and admitting one's weaknesses.
- Learning to grieve well the losses of life.
- Tolerating ambiguity; not always having answers or knowing all.
- Displaying healthy lifestyle habits, coping strategies, and reality testing.
- Achieving a healthy balance between giving and receiving.
- Having clear personal boundaries.
- Ability to assess and view oneself and the world realistically (neither overestimating or underestimating).
- Able to be transparent (open, honest, and accountable) and capable of intimacy and closeness.
- Projecting a sense of integration and harmony rather than fragmentation and splitting.
- Being at ease with self; being comfortable and content when alone or when with others.
- Mastering the skills of self examination, self-discovery, and self-awareness.
- Able to share deeply and make a good contribution in the life of others.

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*See also:* Codependency; Congruence; Dominance; Ego Strength; Empathy; Healthy Personality; Inner Healing; Life Span Development; Maturity; Perfectionism; Personality, Christian Theories of; Sanctification; Self; Self-Actualization; Self-Disclosure; Self-Esteem; Virtue, Concept of.

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