



Tween

How well do I relate to my own life?



Teen

How well do I relate to others?



The main goal of the tween years is to form a healthy sense of self. What does that mean? Figuring out what we do and don't prefer (liver, running, reading, vampires, etc.)...having a solid grasp of who "I" am and what I want or need. When we don't master feelings as tweens, then we don't know what we want as adults. We live for others because we aren't in touch with what we want to live for.

We expand our sense of "I" into feeling what it's like to experience what someone else is experiencing. If our good friend is having a bad day, we feel bad for them. Part of how our life goes depends on how their life goes, and we feel that inside ourselves. We meld into groups. For example, we feel intense joy with everyone else as we see our favorite band return to the stage for an encore.



Forming a healthy social identity and learning how to function well within groups is the primary task of the teen years. Adults want to see us care about being a good son, citizen, teammate, etc. rather than just about how to meet our own needs. We join cliques (jocks, nerds, goths) that help define who we are.

Here we craft stories, adding to them over time. We take our ability to categorize things and see how those categories relate to each other (i.e. do oil and water mix?) Our sense of time and perspective develops. We think about something we want to try, try it, and learn from it. We set goals because we understand that the consequences of our actions build up. If we weightlift for 10 consecutive weeks, we can reach the goal we set to add 30 pounds to the most we can lift.

Children rear each other through playing together and learning what's required to get along. We learn how to gain what we want from others. The perfect puppy face will cause Mom to give in and buy the candy at the grocery store every time!

Tweens learn cause and effect. We figure out how people, places, things, and situations work and fit together.

We recognize that actions have consequences for ourselves and others. As we do this, we use our new knowledge to tell stories and categorize.

Empathy is an essential part of being human. We stop bouncing like a racquetball from wall to wall based what others want from us. Life and the way we feel doesn't just happen to us, we respond to something with anger or compassion. We can now solidly hold how "I" feel, and yet also understand and feel how someone else or a group feels, too.

Different social groups have different rules and expectations that sometimes conflict. We learn how to prioritize, resolving the tensions created by belonging to several groups. How do we respond when Mom wants to come along for the planned couples getaway? When work asks us to put in extra time on an exciting project that will demand a sacrifice from our kids and spouse? The more we master personal boundaries in this way, the more we're showing up as adults with our behavior.



Society assumes we will take our own perspective on what it means to be a good son, citizen, or teammate. We must form our own method for weighing multiple factors and reaching well thought out decisions. The method guides what to do at the DMV, a complicated problem at work, or an ongoing conflict with our spouse.

We hold space for the many parts of ourselves at once.

We pick which emotions to feel at what times.

We help others grow.

We flow with them.

Without losing track of who we are and what we bring to the table, we include others, and we are more aware of how they change us, too. We are present while interacting; others sense this and trust us.

We understand the world as a web of interconnected systems, rather than being captured by one way of viewing the world.

We live "as the space within which diverse systems interact."



Feeling

How well do I relate to my own life?



Behavior

How well do I relate to others?



Thought

How richly do I comprehend and process the world?



Adult

How richly do I comprehend and process the world?



Noble

How might I creatively give back to the world?

