



CHAPTER ONE



Why are we the way we are?



Chapter Summary

In this chapter, Erikson explores the origins of our behavior, highlighting the interplay between heredity and the environment. From the earliest stages of life, our temperament is shaped by genetic inheritance and the influences around us. As children, we learn through imitation, absorbing core values and attitudes exemplified by our parents and peers. These foundations dictate our responses and interactions throughout life. Understanding these influences can empower us to reflect upon our own behavior in relation to others. Ultimately, the chapter emphasizes the significance of awareness in shaping who we choose to be.



The Roots of Our Behavior



Our behavior is influenced by both genetic traits and environmental factors even before we are born. This intricate interplay shapes our character and temperament. The foundations for our adult behavior are laid down at the genetic stage, establishing our unique patterns early on.

The Child's Perspective

Children begin life impulsively and adventurously. They act upon their desires without barriers, testing the world around them. This spontaneous behavior reflects their innate curiosity.



Imitation: The Learning Process

Children learn primarily through imitation, often mirroring same-sex parents or influential figures in their lives. This mimicking shapes their behavior significantly, establishing patterns that persist into adulthood.

Core Values Formed in Childhood

Core values emerge from foundational experiences in childhood, often instilled by parents and education. These values dictate our moral compass and principles, becoming ingrained in our identity.



The Influence of Attitudes

Attitudes evolve from personal experiences and reflect the perceptions formed throughout life. Different factors can influence or alter these attitudes, showcasing their fluidity compared to core values.

Behavior as a Reflection of Values

Our core values and attitudes converge to shape how we behave. This influenced behavior represents our authentic selves, dictating our actions and decisions in various contexts.

External Influences on Behavior

Despite our innate tendencies, external influences are always present, affecting our choices. We often wear different masks to adapt to our surroundings, altering how we present ourselves.

"We adapt our behavior based on our environment and the people around us."

Understanding Personal Behavior

Grasping how our behavior is perceived by others is essential for personal growth. It compels us to reflect on our actions and understand the motivations driving them.

"Self-awareness leads to improved understanding of how others perceive us."

The Formula of Behavior



Behavior can be understood as a function of personality and surrounding factors. This equation emphasizes the complexity and variability of human behavior.

The Continuous Cycle of Influence



Our behaviors continually influence others, generating a cycle of interaction. Recognizing this interdependence helps us navigate relationships and fosters understanding.



Recap

- "Even before birth, the stage for our behavior has been set."
- "A child believes they can manage anything—it's a pure, adventurous spirit."
- "Attitudes are shaped by our unique experiences and perspectives."
- "Behavior is a mirror that reflects our values and attitudes."
- "We adapt our behavior based on our environment and the people around us."



Thank You

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