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BEYOND SPECIALIZATION: THE QUEST FOR INTEGRATION IN MIDCAREER

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One need not go back too far in history to reach a point where the concept of career was basically unnecessary for understanding social and organizational functioning and the course of individual lives. Before World War I one's choice of occupation and chances for vertical mobility were largely determined by family origin, social class, and geographical/cultural location. Lives were determined more by the chance of birth than by the choice of opportunity. While the ascribed status of class and caste is still the rule in many parts of the world today, in Western technological societies rapid technological change, increased communication and mobility, and universal education have effectively undermined these social role determinants of personal identity to the point where U.S. researchers are now able to find little association between economic success and social class, level of education, and mental ability (Jenks 1979). What these complex statistical analyses seem to boil down to is that one's career path (at least as measured by the limited criteria of economic achievement) is to a large extent a matter of luck: being in the right place at the right time and being able to capitalize on it.

These findings are not unrelated to the sudden preoccupation in the 1970s with the midlife crisis, which can be defined as a dawning awareness that one's early life course has been shaped by role-bound choices of work and family, made at a time when opportunity seemed more limited and consequences less clear. It is in this context that the authors see the challenge of adult career development as a chal-

lenge of learning: learning to renew one's self and one's abilities to seize new and different opportunities while maintaining a coherent yet expanded sense of identity. For this reason a definition of career has been chosen that goes beyond narrow occupational limits to encompass the person's total life space, emphasizing the central role that self-management and personal identity play in defining and shaping one's life direction. Career in this large sense is defined as the self-mediated progress through time and space of transactions between the person and his or her environment. In this chapter this definition will be used to explore the developmental dynamics of the career paths of professional men and women. The focus will be on the changing concerns and priorities of these individuals in early adulthood, the midlife transition period, and in later adulthood as they attempt to cope with personal needs for self-fulfillment, new emerging developmental tasks in adulthood, and changing social values and structures.

THE PHASES AND DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF ADULT LIFE

The scientific study of personality development, in spite of its major emphasis on the childhood years, has begun in recent years to address the processes of growth throughout the life cycle. In 1950 Erikson published the first of several seminal works on his epigenetic eight-stage model of psychosocial development throughout the life cycle, building on Freud's theory of psychosexual development. This work has stimulated the current generation of work on the adult stages of development (see Levinson et al. 1977; 1978; Gould 1972; Neugarten 1968; Havighurst 1978) and has been popularized by Sheehy (1976). In Erikson's model the stages are precipitated by the convergence of internal and environmental forces that require a new kind of adaptation and from which one undertakes the development of new capacities and strengths.

While there are minor disagreements among these researchers on adult development, a general model is emerging from their collective research efforts. The essential features of this model are the following:

Personality development throughout the life cycle occurs through a succession of relatively predictable phases.

Within each phase there is a cycle of intensity and quiescence—a disruption to the quasi-stationary equilibrium (in Lewin's terms) of one's former pattern of adaptation leading to intense coping efforts and heightened activity (often involving significant changes in orienta-

tion and situational arrangements), followed by establishment of a new equilibrium.

The disequilibrium is generated, in each phase, by the emergence of a new focal conflict or dilemma created by new internal forces, environmental pressures and demands, or both.

One can cope with the focal conflict in defensive, or developmental ways, that is, the consequences may be positive or negative, growthful or regressive.

Growth involves the active engagement in a set of developmental tasks appropriate to resolving the focal conflicts and satisfying the personal needs and social responsibilities that are central to each developmental stage.

Havighurst (1978) defines a developmental task as one "which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks." He sees the young adult (age 20 to 38 or 40) as faced with two basic tasks: "He wants to explore possibilities, before making some permanent choices, especially about his occupational career. At the same time he wants to get himself established in a life structure which offers continuity and growth." The specific developmental tasks of this period are selecting a mate, starting a family, rearing children, managing a home, getting started in an occupation, and taking on civic responsibility. The major striving during this period (according to Neugarten [1968]) is toward establishing mastery over the outer world. Hence, one's orientation is largely other-directed in keeping with one's concerns about where and how one fits in society. Major preoccupations are achievement and recognition.

Toward the end of this period, many people begin to reexamine their purposes, drives, and life-style. They take stock of their accomplishments and resources, and begin to question what they should do with the rest of their lives. That is to say, they enter the often disconcerting midlife transition.

In middle adulthood the frenetic turning inward of the midlife transition mellows to a more quiet preoccupation with inner life associated with an acceptance of limited time left in life and with increased confidence in oneself and what one can do. The developmental tasks of middle adulthood, according to Havighurst, are achieving mature social and civic responsibility, assisting teenaged children to become responsible and happy adults, reaching and maintaining satisfactory performance in one's occupational career, developing adult leisure time activities, accepting and adjusting to the physiological changes of middle age, and adapting to aging parents.

The life cycle thus can be conceived as spanning these three broad phases. In childhood and adolescence the focus is on acquisition of those interests, values, propensities, and competencies that make one a unique person ready to live in the adult world. The next 20 years or so constitute a period of differentiation and specialization during which the person finds a place in that world and learns how to function more or less effectively within it. Generally, during this period one's focus is outward, attending to environmental possibilities and constraints and what one needs to do to adapt to and master living in one's life structure. At some time in midlife there tends to be a (not always deliberate or articulated) questioning and reexamination of one's life and a turning inward aimed toward a more effective integration of the whole self and life circumstances. There is nothing magical about age per se; the shift from one phase to another, while fairly predictable, varies considerably from person to person depending both on one's psychological condition and on how one is viewed and treated by others.

It is also important to differentiate life phases from developmental stage or level. The phases Sheehy identifies, for example, reflect age-related conditions and challenges of life. Developmental tasks are set before one. These may or may not be faced and worked through in developmental ways. Consequently, personal growth or increased maturity may or may not accrue from them. Growth in terms of enhancement of self-insight, wisdom, competence, ego strength, adaptability, or personal integrity (while perhaps correlated with the movement through life phases) clearly reflects a different conceptual dimension. Changing circumstances and adjustments to them do not automatically imply personality development, although they often provide the conditions and stimulus for growth to occur.

SELF AND CIRCUMSTANCE:
THE COMPLEX CHALLENGES OF ADAPTATION

The person is an open system; so much so that one can hardly make sense of a person's behavior or experience without giving deep consideration to the environment within which that person is functioning. The concept of adaptation is rooted in the transactions between the person and the relevant environmental context. The person exists at every moment in some context that offers opportunities and constraints for meeting personal needs. Moreover, most contexts are quite dynamic, making demands on the person to respond in certain ways and not in others. These demands may often have little to do with the person's needs or wishes. Located in other persons, group norms, organizational dynamics, or even the forces of nature, these

demands have an agency of their own, independent of the person and that person's purposes. Adaptation involves both pursuing the opportunities for personal fulfillment in the situation and responding to the demands of the situation.

In fact, the person lives in and strives to adapt to two worlds: the external world to which reference has just been made and an inner world that has its own complexities, dynamics, and mysteries. Much of the inner world is rooted in the physiological processes of living, but of perhaps equal or greater importance is a wide range of psychological processes that go on at various levels of awareness, some of which never reach full consciousness. Even while individuals are coping with the press of an external context, they are also dealing, in some way, with these internal goings-on.

Moreover, the inner and the outer worlds interact. External events stimulate or arouse internal processes whether or not these processes are recognized. Similarly, internal processes give rise to behaviors to which others in the environment may be anything but indifferent. Action based on internal desires causes changes in contextual dynamics and demands. Hence the person is faced with adapting conjointly to both worlds. Levinson (1978) has captured this personal environment transaction in his concept of life structure, meaning the pattern of relationships between the person and significant others, groups and organizations, physical settings, activities, and self during a given period of life. That is to say, at any particular time there is a structural relationship between internal experience and external reality.

Much about one's circumstances is influenced by external forces. Some changes (such as death of a loved one) are imposed upon people —they become victims of their circumstances and they have little or no choice but to live with them. Nevertheless, people generally have a great deal of choice in life structure. Even in situations totally defined and structured by others, it is possible for the person, more often than not, to choose whether to become involved in that situation. To a considerable extent, once in a situation, much can be done to alter one's environment, to restructure conditions and relationships in ways that make them more fitting and fulfilling for the person. For example, a manager may not have full choice in what responsibilities fall within his purview (for example, which subordinates will be assigned to his area), but he often has considerable latitude in determining how tasks will be approached and in style of management. Similarly, family members can often renegotiate responsibilities for various household tasks. In these terms adaptation is a two-way street; one can alter the situation to fit oneself as well as adjusting oneself to fit the situation. One is active agent as well as sometimes pawn in the flux of changing life structures. Choicefulness in enter-

ing, altering, and leaving various environmental structures is ultimately what gives one at least some mastery over circumstances. A consequence of this is that, just as people can create or find living arrangements that give some modicum of comfort, security, and gratification, they can seek out and build new life structures that provide conditions and experiences for further personal development.

LEARNING AS THE CORE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

Movement through life's phases may occur with dramatic or only minor changes in circumstantial structure. Similarly, it may coincide with substantial or no personal growth and development. One may adapt to new circumstances or new life demands in old ways and, in spite of modification in behavior, remain essentially unchanged by the experience. Yet the changing pressures, conditions, and opportunities are often the ground for new spurts in personal growth.

The difference between mere readjustment and development is a function of the learning that occurs through the experience. Personal development involves increasing self-insight and recognition and acceptance of one's complex, ever-changing dynamics. It also involves increased understanding of one's world and how it works. It involves increased capacity for taking responsibility for oneself coupled with increased competence in pursuing one's ends in personally fulfilling and socially beneficial ways. All of these increases come about through a variety of learning processes—processes that can occur in any setting and continue throughout one's life.

Some processes of adaptation are reflexive and automatic (such as increased heart and breathing rates in times of danger, cold weather, or physical exertion), but the more important kinds have to do with taking in and understanding the world or oneself and acting selectively to influence one or the other. That is to say, those adaptations that have the greatest bearing on career development or personal growth and fulfillment are those that involve one or another process of learning.

Experiential learning theory provides a model of learning and adaptation processes consistent with the structure of human cognition and the stages of human growth and development (see Figure 13.1). It conceptualizes the learning process in such a way that differences in individual learning styles and corresponding learning environments can be identified. The core of the model is a simple description of the learning cycle; of how experience is translated into concepts, which, in turn, are used as guides in the choice of new experiences. Immediate concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection. These
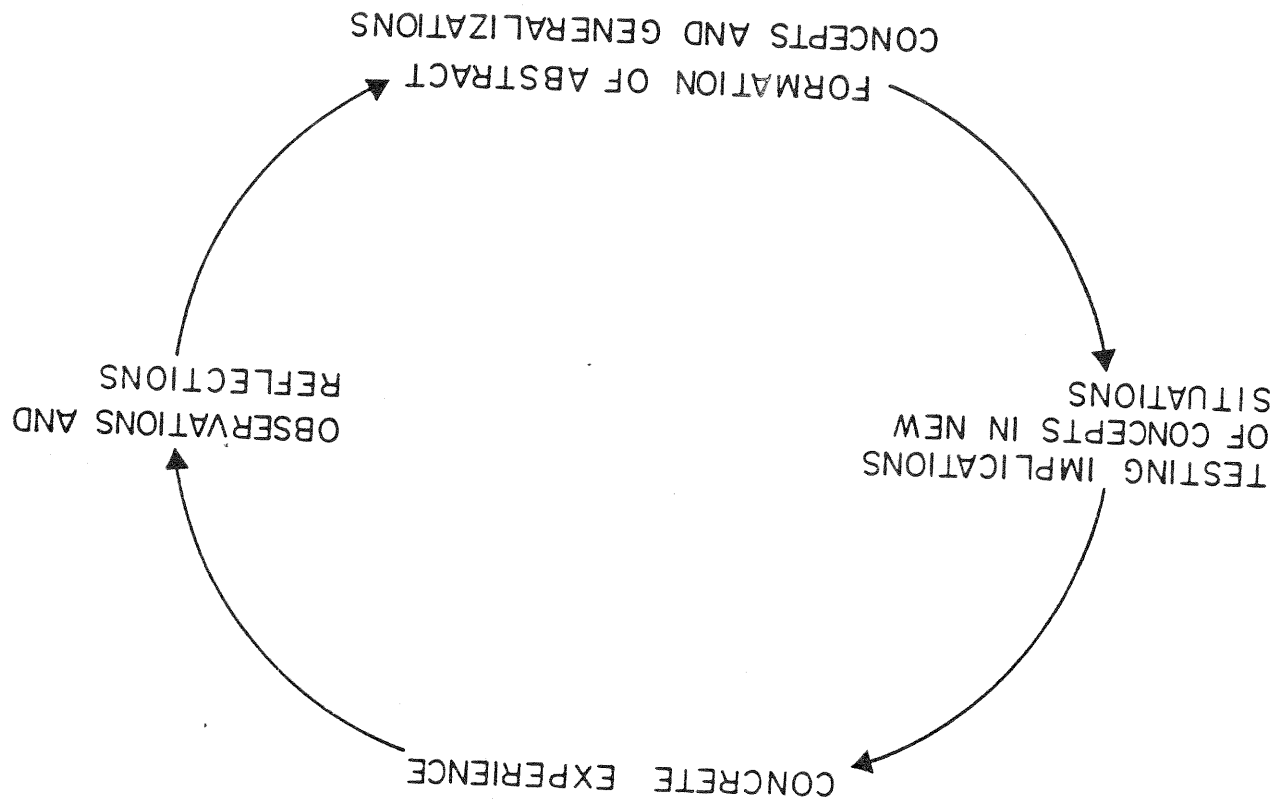

FIGURE 13.1   The experiential learning model.

observations are assimilated into a theory from which new implications for action can be deduced. These implications or hypotheses then serve as guides in acting to create new experiences. The learner, to be effective, needs four different kinds of generic adaptive abilities: concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AE). That is, one must be able to involve oneself fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences (CE); one must be able to observe and reflect on these experiences from many perspectives (RO); one must be able to create concepts that integrate one's observations into logically sound theories (AC); and one must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE). Yet this ideal is difficult to achieve. Can anyone become highly skilled in all of these abilities or are they necessarily in conflict? How can one be concrete and immediate and still be theoretical?

A closer examination of the four-stage learning model would suggest that learning requires abilities that are polar opposites and that the learner, as a result, must continually choose which set of learning abilities to bring to bear in any specific learning situation. More specifically, there are two primary dimensions to the learning process. The first dimension represents the concrete experiencing of events at one end and abstract conceptualization at the other. The other dimension has active experimentation at one extreme and reflective observation at the other. Thus, in the process of learning, one moves in varying degrees from actor to observer, from specific involvement to general analytic detachment. These two dimensions will be considered more fully.

APPREHENSIONS AND COMPREHENSION: THE CONCRETE/ABSTRACT DIALECTIC

One's knowledge of the world (his/her particular world) is based on two different ways of grasping reality and, hence, on two contrasting psychological processes that facilitate adaptation. The first involves the here-and-now apprehension and awareness of the specific properties and occurrences in the immediate environment or in the current internal processes. It deals with being in touch with the actualities as they exist at the moment. Polyani (1958) uses the term tacit knowledge for this concurrent awareness and experience of the concrete conditions and events of one's context.

The capacity to tune in to, accept, and appreciate the situation and one's internal reactions in all their vicissitudes is an obvious asset for adaptation, particularly when the situation is itself highly dynamic or rapidly changing. To treat the world as static and guide

one's behavior by yesterday's generalizations about it, when in fact it is in flux, leads to misapprehending both the opportunities and constraints and thus to inappropriate behaviors and frustrating experiences. Similarly, to not know what one feels or needs or wants at the particular moment is to misunderstand the dynamic quality of oneself and one's inner world. Because of the continuous variation in sensations and perceptions, feelings and needs in interactions with other people, a well-developed capacity for engaging in and learning from concrete experiencing is particularly helpful in adapting to the affective complexities of life.

The second mode of grasping reality (comprehensions) is the mode one more readily thinks of when one thinks of knowing something; that is, one knows it through the application of concepts and analytic frameworks. One places it into some category that reflects its similarity to certain other objects, events, or ideas and differentiates it from still others. The capacity to analyze, to isolate elements from their contexts, to trace connections among elements, and so on, enables one to know things (such as objects, events, complex systems) in their broader reality. The issue here is not in grasping the actuality at the moment of its occurrence but, rather, in understanding the wider context, the dynamic functions, the potential utilities, and the predictable outcomes of what goes on within and around one. One gains these understandings largely through symbolic representations and analytic manipulations of these symbols.

The meaning attached to symbols (words, concepts, numbers, models) and the use of one or another logic in their manipulation enable one to reach beyond the fleeting actualities of present time and space. Through them, one understands the physical, social, economic, and political world; the interdependencies of systems and events; the relationships between action and extended consequences; and so on. Even at its simplest level, comprehension enables one to conceive of distant goals, to identify various tasks instrumental to attaining those goals, and to maintain a sustained effort toward them in the absence of relevant here-and-now stimuli. At more advanced levels, comprehension through symbolic manipulation provides the foundation for the creation and development of the highly complex systems of ideas, problem solving, social organization, production and distribution, and governance upon which society is built. The capacity to engage in and learn from abstract conceptualization promotes one's adaptation to the realities of the larger world, removed in time and space, and to the symbolic complexities of culture.

In general, apprehension and comprehension are complementary ways of knowing, and both make their special contribution to adaptation. Nonetheless, one sees them in a dialectical relation to each other. That is to say that the conditions that make for successful com-

prehension often interfere with highly attuned apprehension and vice versa. To engage fully in a concrete experience calls for holding in abeyance one's categories, conceptual schemes, and extended meaning in order to drink in the actualities as they occur. An analytic process fractionates and distorts the direct vivid experience, and particularly its holistic and organismic nature. Consequently, artists often suppress thinking in order to observe with clarity and purity—they rely on intuitive processes to translate what they observe into artistic expression. Similarly, good therapists work at suspending judgment and categorization in order to tune fully in to their client's affective processes.

On the other hand, one's comprehension powers would be quickly overwhelmed if one tried to fully cognize all the immediate sense data in their full complexity. Comprehension requires selective inattention as well as focused attention. One has to break the global and flowing character of experience in order to differentiate and analyze its components and their relationship. Moreover, the emotional re- actions and affective loadings that are often intrinsic to the experience (not abiding by most rules of logic) tend to disrupt and mislead the analytic process. Consequently, most scientific disciplines work on a principle of controlled, dispassionate observation and analysis. Emotionality is viewed as the adversary, even the enemy, of ration- ality. The scientist's affective processes are seen as irrelevant at best, and at worst, as destructive to clear thinking and theory build- ing (Mitroff 1974). Similarly, in the comprehension mode unrestrained observation of an experiential flow tends to be distrusted; as much as possible, data collection is placed in the hands of impersonal instru- ments that will selectively and systematically record those empirical events that are relevant to the conceptual formulation and exclude all others.

The dialectical nature of apprehension and comprehension, of concrete experiencing and abstract conceptualizing as distinct pro- cesses of learning and knowing, can be transcended only through some process of transformation that links the results of one to the other without doing violence to either. It is through such transformational processes that the two become complementary as modes of adaptation, rather than canceling one another out. Reflective observation and ac- tive experimentation, the focuses of the second dialectic, contribute to transformation of concrete to abstract and vice versa, each in its own way.

EXTENSIVE AND INTENSIVE TRANSFORMATIONS:
THE ACTIVE/REFLECTIVE DIALECTIC

Apprehension and comprehension (or concrete experiencing and abstract conceptualization, respectively) represent two different pro-

cesses through which one acquires knowledge of different kinds. There are also two different processes through which what is acquired is transformed and made useful for the person. These transformation processes are related to the two worlds referred to above: the exter- nal world of objects, events, and images, and the inner world of ideas, images, and meanings. This distinction parallels the Jungian concepts of extroversion and introversion. They also constitute al- ternative modes through which concrete experiences and abstract con- ceptualizations are related to one another.

The extensive mode carries one's knowledge out to the external world through active expression, through engagement with people or things in a way that has potential for influencing the course of events in that world. As a learning process, the term active experimenta- tion conveys the sense in which one's apprehension or comprehension is used empirically in the search for further discovery about the en- vironment. A hypothesis drawn from a conceptual framework is tested through some active intervention that both gives the abstract scheme life and alters the context toward providing a new concrete experience. Conversely, a hunch grown out of a momentary experi- ence may lead to action that confirms or disconfirms one's general comprehension of the situation. Apprehension leads to comprehension and vice versa through active experimentation; perhaps more impor- tant, the two ways of knowing are complementary as guides to action to coping with the behavioral complexities of life. One's capacity for extensive transformation is to be found in a potentially very wide range of verbal and nonverbal behavior. The larger one's repertoire of behavior and the more one is able to engage in them selectively with subtlety and grace, the more likely one is to adapt effectively in a wide variety of circumstances.

The second transformation process is called intensive because it involves the inner world of images and personal meanings. A con- crete experience often stimulates a process of reflection, a mulling over and thinking about the events experienced in ways that enlarge the meaning of the events and make them personally relevant. The term observation is used for this mode, not in the sense of sensory intake, but in the sense of drawing a conclusion or making an obser- vation. The process is mental (not psychophysical) and creative (not just receptive).

The ruminations of the intensive mode deal not only with here- and-now actualities but also with future possibilities, fantasies, his- torical recollections, and the like. In one's inner world, time and space are transcended. One can play with ideas and images, draw into juxtaposition things not found together in the environment, ex- trapolate beyond what is apprehended or comprehended, and formu- late new understandings. Hence, the abstract and the concrete find

a meeting ground in one's reflective processes; experiences find their place in theoretical frameworks and those frameworks give extended meaning to specific events.

Often the moments of observation are fleeting and transitory, but for those with a highly developed capacity for reflection the process may be protracted and complex. Things take on life in the mind just as much as they do in the world of action. Reflection serves adaptation through its capacity to anticipate, extrapolate, and contemplate what does not presently exist as well as what does. The psycho-analytic concept of reality testing refers to a reflective process. Whether one construes the world in abstract or concrete terms, the construing itself is an inner process of reflective observation. The construing can be superficial and stereotypic, leading to little new understanding. Alternatively, it can be deep, intensive, and creative. For example, through imagination one creates new realities as well as new meanings. Thus, one's capacity for reflective observation enables one to come to grips with the perceptual complexity of situations and distant possibilities, to establish purposes and anticipate consequences.

Again, the active and reflective modes are complementary in their contributions to adaptation, and once again, they stand in a dialectical relation in their pure forms. Deep reflection requires a stepping back from the arena of action and the flood of new stimulation. Hence, philosophers, theoreticians, and writers seek some form of sanctum sanctorum where they can think without distraction and disruption. Similarly, the activist is troubled at the possibility of being lost in thought at the choice point. The moment for action may well go by if one is daydreaming, ruminating over possibilities, or captured by inner associations. The need to be on one's toes, engaged and prepared for action is ill served by the quiet detachment of introspection. While action and reflection are both ways of transcending the concrete-abstract gap, they are such very different avenues that it is virtually impossible to be on both at the same time.

DOMINANT FUNCTIONS AND
SPECIALIZED ADAPTIVE STYLES

Figure 13.2 represents the two dialectics as orthogonal. Theoretically, one who can draw on all four modes of learning, each in its appropriate time and place and each in relation to the others, has the highest capacity for adaptation. Indeed, everyone must use each of the modes to some extent to survive. However, because of their dialectical nature, people tend to develop a preference for one end of each dimension and to overuse it to the relative exclusion of its
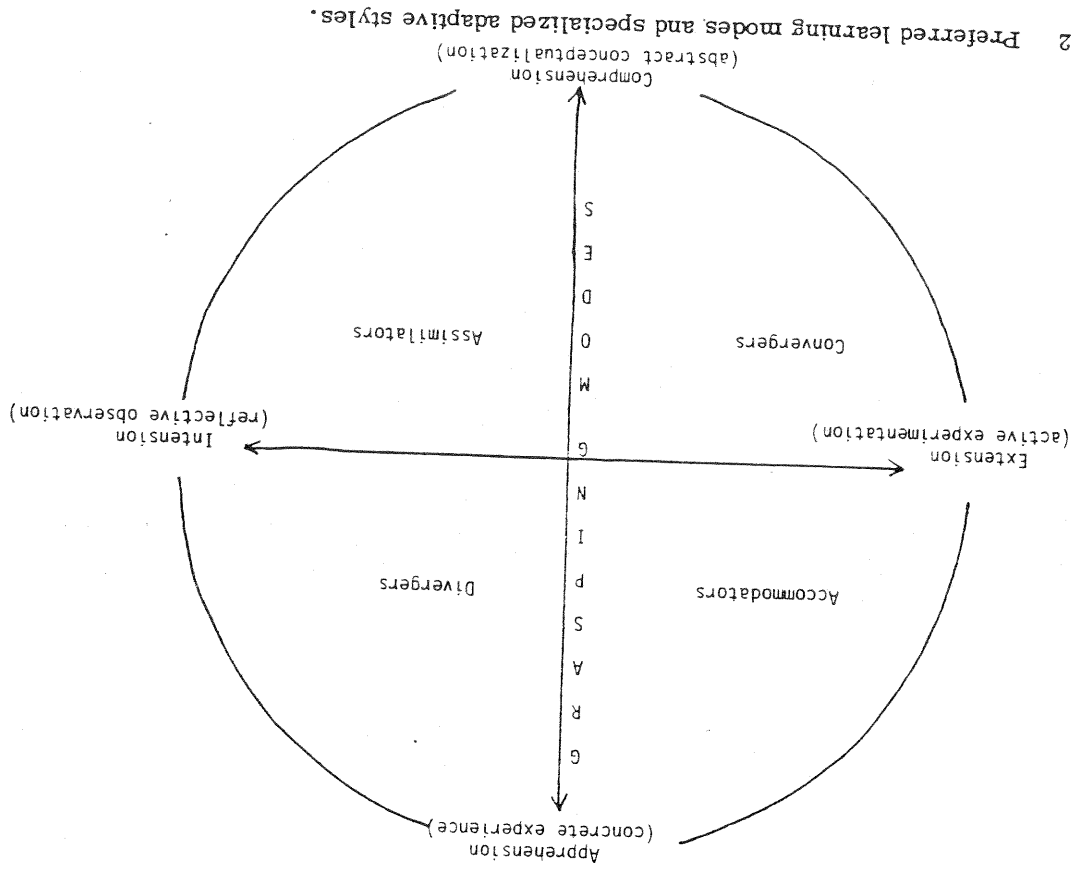

FIGURE 13.2 Preferred learning modes and specialized adaptive styles.

opposite end; the dialectical tensions are consistently resolved in a characteristic fashion. Consequently, some modes become dominant while others recede into the background. As these preferences emerge, one acquires a somewhat specialized style of learning and adaptation.

Through socialization experiences in family, school, and work, one comes to resolve the conflicts between being active and reflective and between being immediate and analytical in characteristic ways. Some people develop minds that excel at assimilating disparate facts into coherent theories, yet these same people are incapable of, or uninterested in, deducing hypotheses from the theory. Others are logical geniuses but find it impossible to involve and surrender themselves to an experience. A mathematician may come to place great emphasis on abstract concepts, while a poet may value concrete experience more highly. A manager may be primarily concerned with the active application of ideas, while a naturalist may develop observational skills highly. Each person in a unique way develops a learning style that has some weak and strong points.

Previous research shows four common styles involving a pronounced dominance of one mode on each dimension, with the other mode in each case being recessive (Kolb 1976, pp. 13-15). These four styles are called the converger, the diverger, the assimilator, and the accommodator. The following is a summary of the characteristics of these types based on the authors' research and clinical observation of these adaptive patterns.

The converger's dominant learning abilities are abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The converger's greatest strength lies in the practical application of ideas, on the extensive transformation of comprehension. This adaptive style is called the converger because a person with this style seems to focus attention and analytic skills on pragmatic problems of a technical nature, to find and develop a workable solution. The converger's knowledge is organized in such a way that, through hypothetical-deductive reasoning, that knowledge can be focused on specific problems. Liam Hudson's (1966) research in this style of learning (using different measures than the LSI) shows that convergers are relatively unemotional, preferring to deal with things rather than people. They tend to have narrow interests and choose to specialize in the physical sciences. Current research shows that this learning style is characteristic of many engineers (Kolb 1976).

Divergers have the opposite learning strengths of convergers. They are best at concrete experience and reflective observation. Their greatest strength lies in their imaginative ability. They excel in the ability to view concrete situations from many perspectives and to organize many relationships into a

meaningful gestalt. The label diverger is used because a person of this type performs better in situations that call for generation of ideas (such as a brainstorming session) and alternate perspectives. Divergers are interested in people and tend to be imaginative, empathic, and emotional. They have broad cultural interests and tend to specialize in the arts. Research shows that this style is characteristic of persons with humanities and liberal arts backgrounds. Counselors, organization development consultants, and personnel managers often have this learning style.

Assimilators' dominant learning abilities are abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. Their greatest strength lies in their ability to create theoretical models. They excel in inductive reasoning; in assimilating disparate observations into an integrated explanation (Grochow 1973). Like convergers, they are less interested in people and more concerned with abstract concepts, but they are less concerned with the practical use of theories. For them it is more important that the theory be logically sound and precise; the intensive development of comprehension is their raison d'être. As a result, this learning style is more characteristic of the basic sciences and mathematics rather than the applied sciences. In organizations this adaptive style is found most often in the research and planning departments (Kolb 1976; Strasmore 1973).

Accommodators have the opposite strengths of assimilators. They are best at concrete experience and active experimentation. Their greatest strength lies in doing things, in carrying out plans and experiments and involving themselves in new experiences, and in the extensive application of apprehension. They are more likely to be risk-takers than people with the other three adaptive styles. They are called accommodators because they tend to excel in those situations where they must adapt to specific immediate circumstances. In situations where the theory or plans do not fit the facts, they will most likely discard the plan or theory. (The opposite type, the assimilator, would be more likely to disregard or reexamine the facts.) They tend to solve problems in an intuitive trial-and-error manner (Grochow 1973), relying heavily on other people for information rather than their own analytic ability (Stabell 1973). Accommodators are at ease with people but are sometimes seen as impatient and pushy. Their educational background is often in technical or practical fields such as business. In organizations, people with this learning style are found in action-oriented jobs, often in general management, marketing, or sales. Social workers, lawyers, and politicians are also apt to be accommodators.

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER-ORDER STYLES: MOVING FROM SPECIALIZATION TO INTEGRATION

The choice of one mode on each dimension facilitates the development of specialized competencies that are highly valuable in certain spheres of life and for particular contributions to society. This choice, when developed to some extreme, also involves limitations and blind spots that may hamper the person in other life pursuits. The tendency toward impersonality in assimilators and convergers, while enhancing scientific and technical problem solving, often leads to insensitivity to others and to a truncated emotional existence. Divergers' tolerance of ambiguity and capacity for holding on to many options and diverse perspectives may incapacitate them for decisive action in critical moments. Accommodators' strength in dealing pragmatically with the pressures of the moment may dull their appreciation of eternal verities and poetic nuances.

The French phrase la deformation professionnel nicely captures the tendency for those who become highly specialized in certain adaptive capacities (enhancing selected career pursuits) to become less adaptive to other circumstances and less well rounded as total persons. But there are other less specialized, more comprehensive styles that do not impose such handicaps. At a somewhat higher level of integration there is what might be called a lateral-specialized style, in which the person uses one of the basic styles in some life contexts and pursuits (for example, in career) and another basic style elsewhere (for example, in family life). An engineer, highly convergent at work, may nonetheless develop intimate relationships at home through the use, in the latter setting, of accommodative adaptive modes. Similarly, a manager may be highly active and concrete (that is, accommodative) in business pursuits, but pursue an interest in history, philosophy, or the arts in a divergent pattern, these avocational interests requiring much greater reflectiveness. In each of these cases the person regularly uses alternative modes of learning and adaptation, but avoids the dialectical tensions by dividing the world into separate spheres within which different two-mode styles function reasonably well. The shifting from one basic mode to another is based on the recognition (or assumption) that the mentality appropriate to one context is inappropriate to another. In these cases a basic adaptive style seems to go with each major role one takes in life, and the capacity to change roles allows the person to make more diverse social contributions and to seek a broader range of fulfillments than would be possible through the exclusive use of one basic style.

An even more advanced adaptive style incorporates three learning modes in the same adaptive process in which one of the dialectics

is truly transcended and integrated. For example, an architect may develop an astute capacity to merge apprehension and comprehension through extensional problem solving, that is, to be both analytical and attentive to concrete actualities in the design of an artistic and utilitarian structure. Similarly, some physicians develop an unusual ability to link their abstract conceptual knowledge of physiological processes with personal engagement in the treatment of a client. In like manner, it is not unusual for anthropologists or psychologists to range from very concrete to highly abstract through intensive reflection. The active/reflective dialectic is also sometimes transcended either through a highly developed capacity for apprehension (as in the creative actor or psychotherapist) or through broad comprehension (for example, theoretical physicists who both extend and apply their knowledge in the space program).

The most highly developed adaptive style involves the flexible use of all four learning modes in various creative combinations. Although everyone uses all four modes to some extent, it is rare to find all four developed to a high level of competence, and even more rare to find them used in an integrated, flowing manner.

The three broad phases of the life cycle and their associated developmental tasks provide increasing opportunities for the integrative development of one's style of learning and adaptation. In this as in other aspects of human growth, childhood and adolescence is viewed as a period of acquisition of an adaptive style that facilitates one's entry into the adult world. (For many professionals this phase may extend well into the twenties.) The specialization phase of early adulthood (twenties and thirties) generally is accompanied by an accentuation of one's adaptive style. Through career socialization and adjustment to specialized adult roles, convergers become even more convergent, accommodators more accommodative, and so on. These accentuation forces, stemming both from personal style and environmental press, account in large measure for the kinds of professional deformation referred to above.

During the midlife transition, one is faced with (and under favorable conditions, comes to grips with) the limitations of one's specialized style. At this time some back away from the disquieting tensions associated with change and retrench in the continued use of a familiar (even if suboptimal) style. Others (perhaps more fortunate) engage in an extension of their adaptive style toward an incorporation of heretofore nondominant modes of learning and adaptation. For them, the quest is toward integration of experience and adaptation in middle and late adulthood.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ON THE SPECIALIZATION-INTEGRATION HYPOTHESIS

The authors' research program on learning and adult development is beginning to produce some interesting evidence on the importance of specialization in early adulthood and on the quest for balance and integration in the midlife transition. While this work is still very much in process and much statistical analysis needs to be done to document precisely the rich and varied lives being studied, there are at this point some noteworthy patterns to be reported. The evidence to date gives some substantiation to the general integration hypothesis and suggests the particular issues and approaches to coping with them that differ depending on one's basic adaptive style.

The first study is an intensive, longitudinal investigation of midlife transitions of men and women, ages 35–50. Data collection began with an extensive life-history interview delving into education, career, family, significant relationships, past and present transitions, course of stress and methods for dealing with it, and aspirations for the future. Those who seemed to be undergoing or entertaining a significant personal transition were asked to complete a battery of personality inventories including Kolb's Learning Style Inventory, a new instrument called the Adaptive Style Inventory based on the same conceptual model, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Loevinger Sentence Completion Measure of Ego Development, and the Social Readjustment Scale (a measure of cumulative stress from significant life experiences).

They were then invited to participate in an intensive three-day self-assessment workshop that contained modules on past developmental phases and experiences, life structures and significant relationships, identity and experiences of self, career issues and orientations, stress and coping, and the like. Participants are then tracked over a 12-to-18-month period after which they will engage in a second workshop. To date 66 professional and managerial men and women have been through the initial workshop.

The second study—a survey of 494 professional men and women (primarily in management, the science-based professions, and human services) ranging in age from 24 to 63—focuses on major life issues and developmental tasks in different phases of adult life. Data include educational and career history, learning and adaptive style, critical skills involved in work, and the personal importance at this point in life of 24 developmental tasks.

There is some overlap in the samples from the two studies. All but a few are presently working professionally, although a substantial number have made or are considering dramatic changes in their career direction.

PERSONAL INVESTMENTS IN MAJOR LIFE PURSUITS

As one part of the first study, the participants were asked to indicate the relative proportion of their time and energy that they invested in four areas of life: career, family, self, and interpersonal relationships. They indicated the distribution of investments as it is now in their lives, as they recall it being in their mid to late twenties, and as they would ideally like it to be. Figure 13.3 presents the results by age for men and women separately.

Perhaps the first thing to note is the close similarity in ideal distribution for men and women (they are all professionals or managers). Career is seen as worthy of about 30 percent of their total effort, and family, self, and relationships as deserving just under a quarter of their psychic energy. Moreover, the standard deviation is smaller for the ideal ratings than for the present or retrospective ratings. There is a substantial consensus within this midlife group on the ideal distribution of personal investment, and the ideal is something close to a balance.

Men start their adult lives with a major investment in career, largely at the expense of self and interpersonal relations. According to their recollections, they put in two to two-and-a-half times the effort to launch a career as they did to developing and maintaining self or relationships. Those now in their thirties are still highly specialized on career, although they tend to see themselves and friendships as something more closely approximating their ideal. It is the family that is slighted during this period.

In the early forties—the time most closely associated with the midlife transition—there is a sharp reversal for men. Investment in career has dropped to a moderate level, calling for no more energy than personal relationships. The self has emerged as the dominant concern, having been previously relatively ignored except as it related to career development. In the past transition period there is a return to career and the emergence of family as a major investment. For some, this latter finding reflects an effort to renew an old marriage as the children leave home. For a number of others it represents an investment in a new marriage to replace an old one eroded through time and neglect.

The pattern for women is substantially different. They look back on their twenties as having been just as highly specialized (in terms of relative investments) as the men, but the specialization is in family at the expense of all the other areas. The self and one's development as a total person suffered particularly, according to their retrospective views. Those now in their thirties are investing more in career than in family, although the latter still demands considerable attention.

The midlife transition for women is much less a turning inward to self (as it is for men) but, rather, a major reaching outward for career development and achievement. Having denied themselves self-actualization through career, their priorities in the early forties are not unlike men in their twenties and thirties, though not as extreme. In the posttransition period, family returns as the major investment, with career as a close second. Paradoxically, women idealize the development of self as worthy of more investment of time and energy than they are ever able to devote to it. The demands, first of family and then of career, continually overshadow attention to self and personal friendships, although this may be changing.
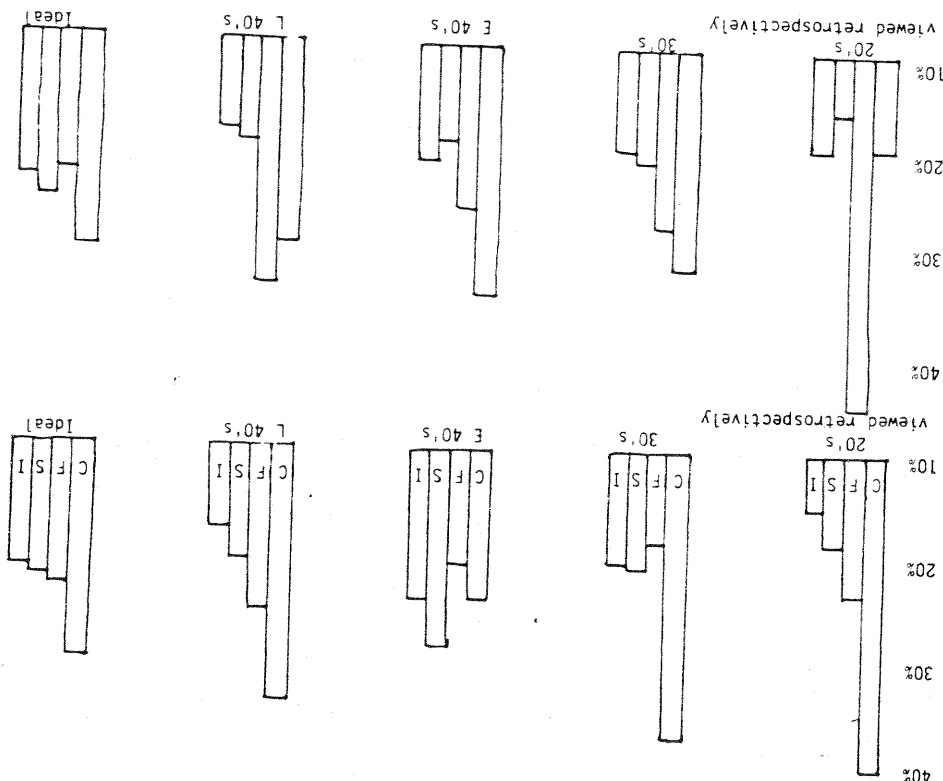
The conclusions to be drawn from this are as follows: the twenties and thirties are a time of specialization; the movement is toward balance, toward the golden mean revered not just in Greek philosophy but by Americans in midlife; and the midlife transition is a time of addressing the imbalances and attending to the underdeveloped sides of life (self and relationships for men, career for women).

An additional finding from the first study has to do with the shift from outer to inner directedness in midlife. In midlife men and women alike report having been substantially role bound in early adulthood. That is, they saw themselves as entering preestablished roles, as accepting them as givens, and as being overly preoccupied with fulfilling the expectations of others. Moreover, both groups were highly impressed with the power others had and with how little they had themselves. Consequently, they were relatively dependent and looked to others for the initiative in many situations. They also turned to others for basic confirmation of their personal competence and worth. Women particularly saw themselves as passive, dependent, and role bound.

This outer-directed pattern is highly adaptive because in entering the adult world and starting a career, a family (or other living arrangement), and a new life-style, there is much to learn about how the world works and about what it takes to be a success in life. For dreams of achievement and fulfillment to become realities, one has to know the world not just in abstract terms but in terms of the particular social and organizational dynamics that they will face and that will provide the opportunities and constraints for various kinds of satisfaction and self-actualization.

As one gains more mastery over the environment and more competence in the tasks involved in work or family or relationships, the power of others is less impressive. Both men and women become more independent, less passive, and more reliant on their own powers. They also are much more adept at finding both the standards and the resources for self-validation. While neither men nor women (in general) have reached a point where they are carving out their own

FIGURE 13.3 Distribution of personal investment in career, family, self, and interpersonal relations by age and sex (percent of total investment of time and energy).

roles to fit themselves, they have become much less dominated by a need to fulfill the expectations of others.

Women started adulthood with a more outer-directed stance than men. By midlife they are nearly equally inner directed on all the dimensions identified above. Much of the movement toward inner directedness can be attributed to the adaptive success of outer directedness; that is, the attention to the environment and to functioning effectively and appropriately within it results both in the acquisition of a range of competencies for successful self-direction and in bringing the adult world down to size.

Another part of the movement toward inner directedness derives from the failure of outer directedness as a general adaptive stance. While the latter tunes one in to the dynamics, the requirements, and the opportunities in the environment, it belittles and blinds one to one's own internal dynamics. If one completely accepts the role and the public image of the successful engineer, or manager, social worker, or scientist, and takes that on as one's identity, it inevitably will be false in some regards no matter how successfully one enacts the role. No role system, no institution, no organization takes into account the full complexity of a human being. Various personal needs, feelings, fears, and aspirations are of necessity overlooked if not actively thwarted. One cannot be a role without doing some violence to oneself, no matter how good one is at it. Consequently, in midlife there is a demand from within to throw off the outer world of institutions and expectations and to attend more directly to one's own nature and possibilities.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS AND THE ADULT LIFE CYCLE

In the second study of professional men and women an instrument was used (the Life Issues Inventory) that tapped the importance to the person (at a particular point in life) of 24 developmental tasks that have been identified in the adult development literature as especially significant at one or another phase of adulthood. The following seven clusters of items emerged:

Career: financial aspirations and attaining success in one's chosen line of work;

Competence: learning specialized knowledge, skills, and expertise;

Career development: a combined index incorporating career and competence;

Family life: having a rewarding marriage and family life, including raising children;

Personal well-being: coping with stress, dealing with change, maintaining physical health and well-being;

Self-awareness: getting in touch with feelings, changing goals, and activities to fit oneself, becoming one's own person; and

Generativity: attaining a broad perspective and making a contribution to society, to community affairs, and to the next generation.

While these indexes do not include all the developmental tasks people undertake at various points in life, they represent major areas of concern for most professionals. Figure 13.4 presents the mean importance of four clusters of life issues (career development, family life, personal well-being, and generativity) for three phases of adult life: early adulthood (ages 24-40), the midlife transition (ages 41-45), and the posttransition period of the late forties and fifties.

Career development is the dominant issue of early adulthood. Making an appropriate career choice, acquiring requisite professional education, adjusting to a professional role, and developing competence for long-term success are the pressing concerns of professionals in their twenties. While many strive to hold their options open during an extended period of acquisition, the focus is on finding and preparing for a professional career.

Formal learning becomes less important in the thirties, but gaining competence through experience and recognition through dedicated work are major pursuits. The settling down period (as Levinson and others refer to the thirties) shows some drop in concerns about career development, not because it is unimportant or less demanding of time and energy, but because it is less problematic. Important choices seem to have been made and investment of effort toward achievement is targeted and channeled. Most professionals in their thirties have entered their chosen field, have been socialized into relevant organizational and role relationships, and are following a program for advancement and recognition—a success formula most often shaped by others in the field.

In the midlife transition, career development drops in importance for most professionals while they turn their attention to family and self. For a substantial minority, however, their career is in crisis at this time and is the area of deepest concern. Many find that their heavy investment in dreams of success have not paid off, that their careers have plateaued and they are no longer moving onward and upward, and even where they have obtained substantial recognition in the eyes of the world they are not experiencing the rewards and joys of success they anticipated so strongly. Many pull back from the intensive drive—the rat race—to reconsider their career directions and at least contemplate changing jobs, location, or even fields.

Those professional women who have dedicated much of their early adulthood to raising children go through a major transition in

In the posttransition period of the late forties and fifties, career continues to be quite important, but not the dominating factor. Those who do change careers tend to throw themselves into a new and often exciting phase of developing competence, and experience a sense of professional and personal renewal at least for a time. Others continue to practice their professions with relative confidence and contentment, leaving behind the often frenetic soul-searching of the midlife transition. Some fall to come to terms with the inevitable partial, or even major, failure of their career dreams and go through a period (sometimes lasting to retirement) of career stagnation and disgruntlement with self and/or the field.

Family life is only of moderate concern for most professionals in early adulthood. Marriage generally occurs in the twenties, and needs for intimacy and for a home independent of family of origin become acute. First children are often born before one reaches the thirties, placing strenuous new demands on mothers if not fathers. Nonetheless, in spite of the joys and cares invested in family, this is only a secondary concern for most professionals in their twenties. Developing a satisfying family life is all too often treated as a task to be done with the left hand, while the "more important" work of launching a career receives central attention. More than a few young professionals—men and women alike—view family and children as an important goal in life, but also as a source of distraction and constraint from career development, which they experience with resentment as much as joy.

Later in the thirties family life becomes a more pressing concern, peaking as the dominant issue in the midlife transition. For some professionals this occurs because career is reasonably well in hand and they can now turn more attention to the fulfillments family has to offer. For others the concern grows out of the strains and difficulties in their families, which inevitably arise but have been allowed to fester through neglect by those overly devoted to career building.

Beyond these two situational factors, which are pressing enough in themselves, are two internally induced factors that tend to make family life the most pressing issue during the midlife transition. The first is the shift from outer to inner directedness discussed above. The early adult quest for professional identity and achievement often leads one to view oneself in functional terms—what am I good at and what am I good for? The raison d'être for living becomes the utilization of one's talents and competencies in the service of future goals and objectives. One falls into a pattern of delayed living while striving to meet the demands and expectations of significant others in the quest to get ahead.

In midlife as one becomes more fully one's own person, the expectations of others have less influence. No longer content with
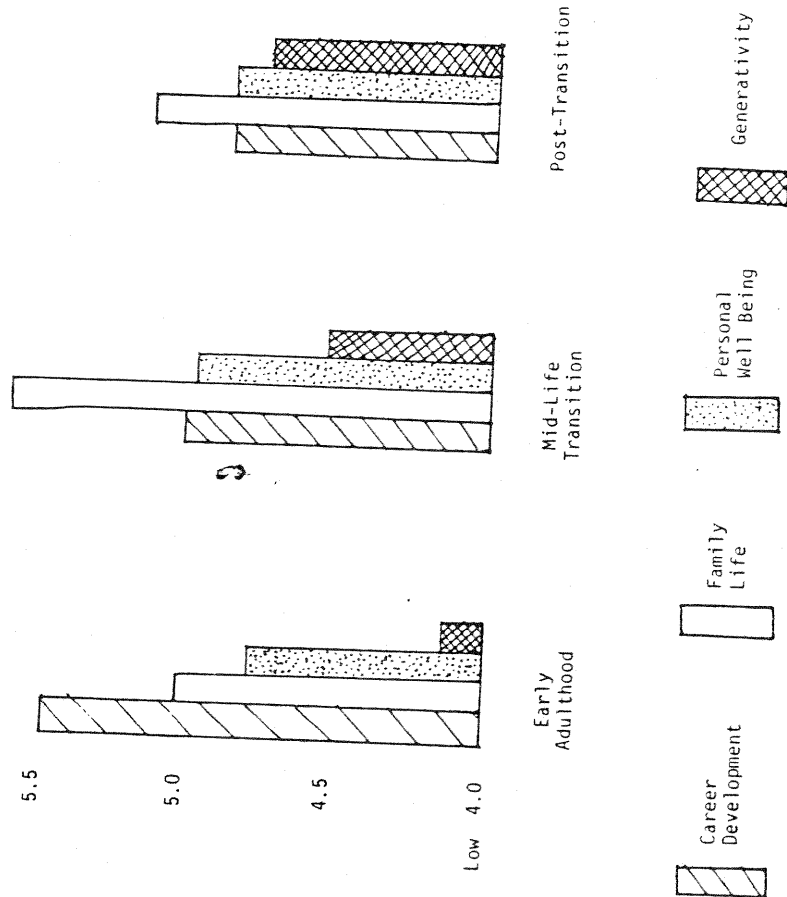

FIGURE 13.4   Importance of major developmental tasks by phases of adulthood.

the late thirties and early forties. Many return to graduate programs at this time and face both the return to student status and the challenge of developing competencies that may have never been acquired or at least have atrophied through lack of exercise. Perhaps more important, many go through an identity crisis as they seek new orientations to self in the professional world. New modes of coping and adaptation, and new styles of relating to colleagues and supervisors are frequently required. While these experiences generally are exhilarating, they also tend to be disorienting and stressful, at least temporarily.

viewing self in functional-utilitarian terms, there is increased interest in the here and now. Among the things desired is a more authentic involvement in the everyday warmth and joy family life is supposed to offer but only rarely has been experienced. If the marriage is strong and spouse and children receptive, renewed attention to family brings these rewards and the attention is reinforced. Where relationships have deteriorated through emotional distance or heated conflict, midlife professionals often turn elsewhere for more intimate and satisfying experiences.

The second internal force toward increased concerns about marriage and family is related to the above, though with different roots. As many reach 40, they begin to be concerned with time running out. While in the twenties there seemed to be time enough in life to eventually fulfill all one's hopes and aspirations, it now becomes apparent that this is a myth. Especially if one has fallen into a specialized routine, one begins to recognize that life is apt to offer only more of the same until one is too old to have some of the pleasures and fulfillments that have been denied in the name of career. Many engage in a subtle—or not so subtle—effort to reconfirm their youthfulness. Getting back in shape through jogging, exercise, diet, and sports is one such effort. Another common effort, though less well recognized and understood, is manifested in an increased concern for appearance and attractiveness, which is especially important in a youth-oriented culture. Sexuality becomes more important, even urgent, in contrast to its relative quiescence in the thirties. Given fortunate circumstances, new experimentation and excitement is found in marriage. But in marriages that have become dull and routine or distressed with disappointment and conflict, extramarital affairs (adding further to the strain) or divorce and remarriage are commonplace about this time.

The emergence of family life as a critical, and often the critical, issue in the midlife transition is often overdetermined, as can be seen from the discussion above. It is no accident that so many professionals in the sample view marriage and family as the flipside of career, complementary to it in the ideal, but in a state of dialectical (and sometimes antagonistic) tension. Generally, the more one has specialized in and devoted oneself to career development in early adulthood, the more pressing family and intimate relations become in midlife. Many professional women find the obverse to be equally true: exclusive dedication to family responsibilities in early adulthood leads to intensive concerns for career development in midlife. On the whole, family life continues as the most pressing concern in the posttransition period, but generally without the urgency and stress associated with it during the midlife transition.

Throughout the discussion above are references to the self and to a sense of personal well-being. In the twenties the issues involved

in breaking from family of origin, establishing a separate existence, choosing a career, and developing and testing one's competence are all sources of stress as well as of growth. Changes are frequent, relationships and commitments are made and broken, new situations are faced and dealt with, and ambiguity is common if not rampant. Consequently, concerns about one's personal well-being tend to be quite important, though not as intense as those for career development or even for family development.

Life settles down during the thirties for most professionals. While the race to get ahead may be challenging and intense, routines become established for handling many situations in and out of career. Coping methods, on the whole, become more reliable, if not too effective in the long run. One finds one's place and a more or less adequate way to be in it. Gains in professional competence and personal strength are realized. Therefore, concerns about personal well-being decline in the thirties.

During the midlife transition these concerns become urgent again, even more pressing than they were in the twenties. The increased investment in the family and the troubles experienced around it take on a personal quality they often lacked in early adulthood. Possibilities of career change are also addressed in personal terms. The nature and meaning of one's life and how it is being lived are called into question, and much that was taken for granted becomes unsettled —and unsettling. Many back away from the busyness of life and work to engage in periodic and sometimes prolonged reflection and introspection. Certainly, everyone does not experience a midlife crisis, but almost all face some stressful and disquieting moments. In any event, coping with stress and change become important personal agendas at this time.

In a sense, the midlife transition is predominantly a time of turning inward and working on the self, in spite of the frenetic activity and unexpected (if not inexplicable) behavior in some people at this time. The growing number who make fairly dramatic changes in career, family, and life-style notwithstanding, the midlife transition fundamentally involves coming to terms with who one is and taking responsibility for one's life course. These may be addressed through deep reflection or active experimentation, through long internal analysis and problem solving.

Any and all of these can be productive in coming to grips with how one has been living and in finding more fulfilling and self-responsible ways of living. Many people experience the uneasiness, confusion, and tension of these various midlife issues but fail to address them in productive ways. The time may be ripe for some important personal work, but that work is not always pursued and few people seem to accomplish it well. Although some find remarkable self-

renewal and many gain a more basic acceptance of self and one's lot in life, a mix of partial gain and defensive retreat seems to be more like the norm.

In the posttransition period concerns about personal well-being are still prominent—as important as career, in fact. At least three different forms are found in these concerns, forms associated with somewhat different developmental tasks. First, for a substantial number of people, the preoccupations of the midlife transition continue well into the late forties and early fifties. Those factors discussed above as sources of stress still hold for this group. Second, those who make significant life structural changes (such as new job or career, or new marriage) are concerned about consolidating and managing those changes. Third, most people as they grow older are troubled to some extent by possible loss of energy and ill health. Some experience heart attacks, periods of illness, major operations, and the like, but even those who do not recognize the escalating potential and face it with increasing concern.

Generativity is the term given to the fourth index represented in Figure 13.4. Its components include gaining an understanding of the big picture and making a contribution to society, community affairs, and the next generation. There is little interest in these issues for most people in early adulthood. Even in those professions such as social work and education that are oriented toward social contributions, these concerns are quite modest; other issues overshadow them by far.

During the midlife transition generativity becomes somewhat more important as one questions the ultimate relevance and value of one's work. The search for a broader perspective on oneself and one's place in the world also becomes more critical during the transition.

It is only in the posttransition period, however, that generativity becomes a major developmental task. The mentoring role may well have begun in the thirties with somewhat limited meaning. In the middle and late forties, as one moves out of self-preoccupation, this role is accepted and even pursued with a sense of personal and professional purpose. One can view this, as well as contributions to community and society, as an effort to have an impact on the field and the world beyond the span of one's career, of gaining some sort of immortality in the face of ever-increasing certainty about one's eventual death. But these efforts also provide an active outlet for the more philosophical orientation one acquires as one works through the problems of living and working. Becoming a senior member of the organization, the professional field, and the community, even if a position of power has not been attained, opens opportunities for guiding and helping other younger members. Once the scramble for suc-

cess has been laid aside, there also tends to be more time to devote to social and community needs.

As interesting and important as the details of adult development are, a more general conclusion can be drawn from Figure 13.4. In the early adult profile, one issue (career development) stands out as extremely important. Family and personal well-being are also somewhat important, but no other tasks even come close to the centrality of career for professionals during the early years. This speaks of specialization in two senses of the term: first, in the general sense of focusing energy and attention on one aspect of life, to the relative exclusion of other areas, and second, in the more particular sense that career development for most professionals involves the acquisition and utilization of highly specialized areas of competence.

In the midlife transition, the declining importance of career development indicates not a loss of the specialized competence, but a partial decathexis of career coupled with increased concern about other areas of life that have received less attention. The transition profile is hardly less unbalanced than that of early adulthood, but the overemphasized areas (family and self) and the growth that often derives from working on them, counterbalance the dominant strength of the early adult profile.

A more balanced profile is formed among those in the posttransition period. Family still stands forth as the most significant area, but only marginally so. Career, self, and generativity each receive considerable attention.

APPREHENSION VERSUS COMPREHENSION: CONTRASTING PROCESSES OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A major conclusion drawn from the analysis above is that during the midlife transition one begins to work on the underdeveloped sides of life. This proposition can be examined more closely by comparing developmental patterns for professionals with different basic adaptive styles.

A particularly interesting contrast is found when those styles that rely on apprehension as a basic mode of learning and knowing (being sensitive to and in tune with the concrete actualities of the here and now) are compared with those that rely on comprehension (utilizing abstract conceptualizations and systematic analysis). The first and most important contrast lies in the kinds of professional fields these two groups tend to enter.

The comprehensional styles mode of grasping reality is shared by convergers and assimilators. They are generally attracted to the

sciences and science-based professions. Mathematicians, physicists, biologists, and economists tend to adhere to the assimilative adaptive style and to be interested in systematic understanding and the generation of knowledge for its own sake. Engineers, technicians, and accountants tend to be convergers and are more concerned about the utilization of knowledge for problem solving.

Both in professional education and initial work experiences, the comprehension orientation is shown in a capacity for complex analysis based on theory and the manipulation of abstract symbols, including mathematics, and a distinct preference for well-structured situations and for working in a rational, logical, orderly manner with a relatively low tolerance for ambiguity. The comprehension orientation tends to be unemotional, impersonal in relationships, and role rather than person oriented.

Accommodators and divergers share an apprehension mode of knowing, apprehensions that tend to be more interested in people than in things. They are drawn toward the humanities and social sciences and toward the applied fields that call for frequent engagement with other people. Managers, social workers, educators, and people in marketing and sales tend to be accommodators, while psychologists, historians, writers, and artists tend to be divergers.

In professional education and work, apprehension involves a heightened capacity for handling affective complexity, ambiguity, and (for many) group and organizational dynamics. Interpersonal relationships and social influence tend to be very important, and living up to the expectations of others is especially critical in early adulthood. Apprehension as a way of knowing relies more on intuition and involvement in situations than on disciplined logical thought.

Apprehension and comprehension both contribute to professional growth and development, but in quite different ways and toward different realms of competence. This accounts in large measure for the rather close association between adaptive style and career choice, and also for the tendency toward reinforcement and accentuation of adaptive style when the choice is well matched (see Wolfe and Kolb [1979] for a more complete treatment of adaptive style and career choice).

Figure 13.5 presents separate profiles for the individuals who were oriented toward apprehension and comprehension on four major developmental tasks in the three phases of adult development. Career development, family life, and personal well-being are the same indexes as presented in Figure 13.4. The fourth index, self-awareness, incorporates getting in touch with feelings, changing goals, and activities to fit oneself, and becoming one's own person. (Generativity has been omitted because, while those with an apprehension orientation are marginally more concerned with it at each point in time, the
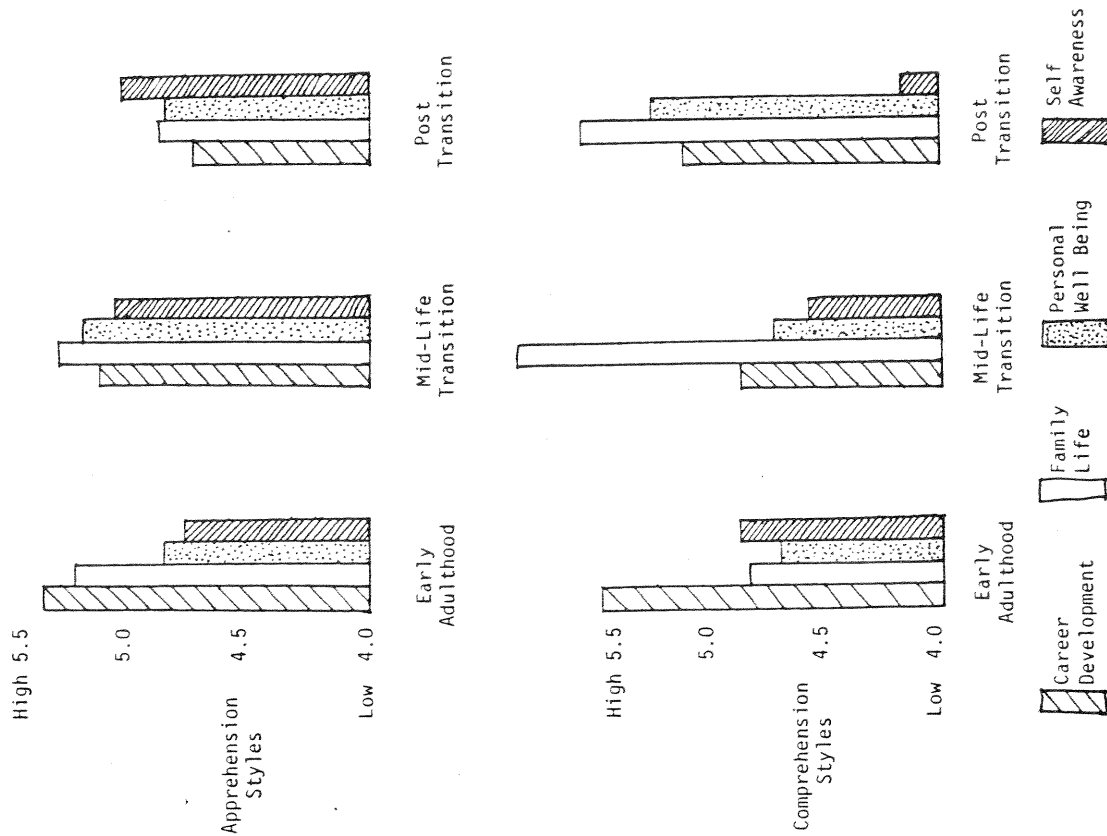

FIGURE 13.5   Importance of major developmental tasks by phases of adulthood for apprehension and comprehension adaptive styles.

curves are parallel; both groups increase at the same rate from early adulthood to midlife transition to posttransition.)

The apprehension profile in early adulthood stresses both career development and family life. This is in keeping with the affective, interpersonal orientation associated with this way of knowing. The development of professional competence also serves family life. This is not to say that they meet all their families' needs; they are as caught up in career building as anyone else at this stage. Nonetheless, it implies that family has not been too severely neglected and consequently family issues are not overriding during the midlife transition.

The midlife transition tends to be a personal crisis for those with an apprehension orientation. Having been preoccupied with living up to the expectations of others at work and at home, they now turn inward to self. Becoming one's own person and being in touch with one's own (rather than others') feelings are especially critical. The stresses of trying to do it all, to be effective and impactful in career, responsible and responsive at home, and now to take care of oneself, are experienced intensely. It is among this group that one finds the strongest fantasies of tossing it all away and starting a new, usually simpler, life elsewhere in a new field and perhaps with a new mate. Some make rather dramatic changes in career or life-style at this time, but nearly all move more toward a sense of personal centeredness. Consequently, in the posttransition period self-awareness and personal well-being are every bit as important as career and family, if not more so. Concerns for the latter two issues decline markedly.

The comprehension pattern is quite different. Career specialization is especially strong in early adulthood. The development and utilization of technical competence is the major concern and others are relatively brushed aside. What concern there is with self-awareness has little to do with feelings; matching goals and activities to personal interests, and becoming one's own person is the issue, and this is in the service of becoming an autonomous professional. Family life tends to be relatively unimportant. Moreover, a comprehension's approach to the family, especially during this period, tends to be quite conventional and sex-role stereotyped.

The midlife transition shows a marked reversal for individuals oriented toward comprehension. A substantial decathexis of career development coincides with a major preoccupation with family life. The erosion of the family through boredom and neglect has made this the trouble spot. Family conflicts are apt to be intense and one's development—detached, unemotional, impersonal—has ill-equipped one for dealing with the problems. The crisis is experienced in the home, not in the self. Consequently, self-awareness and per-

sonal well-being are relatively unimportant. The developmental agenda in the midlife transition is toward becoming a social being, a decidedly underdeveloped area for those who approach reality through comprehension.

The posttransitional period shows a continued centrality of the family. Having discovered not only how little one has been giving, but also how much one has been missing, those with a comprehension orientation are now acutely concerned with establishing and maintaining a vital relationship within the marriage and with finding a belated personal connection with children who are about to or have left home. The increased concern with personal well-being at this time reflects both the stresses of dealing with these changes in personal and home life and with physical deterioration and distress that have accrued through suppression and neglect.

In the later years, those with a comprehension orientation experience a return to concerns about career development. Having turned away from it for a time, what one is doing in career becomes an issue again. Many with this style take on new responsibilities (often managerial) at this time, and the mentoring role becomes important. As a result there is a renewed investment in learning and in the development of new competencies that can be applied in one's career and also at home and in the community.

Finally, Figure 13.5 shows a continuing decline in concerns about self-awareness, dropping to a very low level in the posttransition period. Inasmuch as this tends to be an underdeveloped area at the outset, this finding runs contrary to the specialization-integration hypothesis. The authors view this as a particularly strong professional deformation toward the comprehension orientation that is not only not counterbalanced in midlife, but may even become more intense. Having devoted their early adulthood to relatively selfish—albeit one-sided—pursuits, their turning attention to the welfare of others (family, community, and younger members of the profession) leaves little room for further development of their own affective sides.

EXTENSIONALITY VERSUS INTENSIONALITY:
ADAPTATION TO SELF AND SOCIAL ROLE

The authors will now carry forth their analysis of the effects of adaptive style on specialization and integration by comparing those styles that differ on the extensionality-intensionality dimension. The converger and accommodator share an orientation toward extension. They both live in a world of action, sharing an emphasis on problem solving, decision making, and task accomplishment. While they dif-

fer in their comfort and competence in working with things versus people (convergers prefer the former, accommodators the latter), they both are engaged in their own kind of behavioral complexity and they both start their careers with a strong interest in having an impact on the world. If they had their way (according to their youthful dreams) they would be movers and shakers in the physical and social-organizational worlds, respectively. In fact, for many with an extension orientation to transforming knowledge, the concept of success in career includes the eventual attainment of a position of leadership or management. Consequently, they tend to be attuned to organizational hierarchies and to the responsibilities, authority, and prerequisites of position and role.

In contrast, those with a dominant intensional orientation live primarily in an inner world of ideas and personal meanings, of images and understandings. Although they differ in their comfort and competence regarding symbolic versus affective complexity (assimilators prefer the former, divergers the latter), they share an interest in knowledge, insight, and creativity. Authority of the mind is more important than authority of organizational or group roles. Success in career is associated more with making original, creative contributions to the field and receiving recognition for personal brilliance than with attaining positions of power and influence.

The relative importance of major developmental tasks is presented in Figure 13.6 for those with extensional and intensional orientations. Because of the interest here with role adaptation versus personal development, two new composite indexes are introduced. The career and family scales have been combined into a kind of rough index of role orientation. This is not to obscure the fact that career and family take on different importance at different stages, as already has been seen. Indeed, both extensionals and intensionals are more concerned with career in early adulthood and with family in midlife and beyond. The combined index has been created to underscore the extent to which people focus on external conditions, be they at home or at work.

The second composite index, self-orientation, combines three scales: personal well-being, self-awareness, and competence development. Once again, the purpose is not to neglect the important differences among these but, rather, to focus on their common element —the development and maintenance of one's self.

The extensional pattern begins with the expected preoccupation with role issues. Career and family both are highly important in early adulthood in contrast to somewhat lesser concerns about self. They, especially the accommodators among them, are deeply invested in discharging family responsibilities as well as with taking on the career challenges and getting ahead. Being a successful professional and being a good spouse and parent have nearly equal importance.
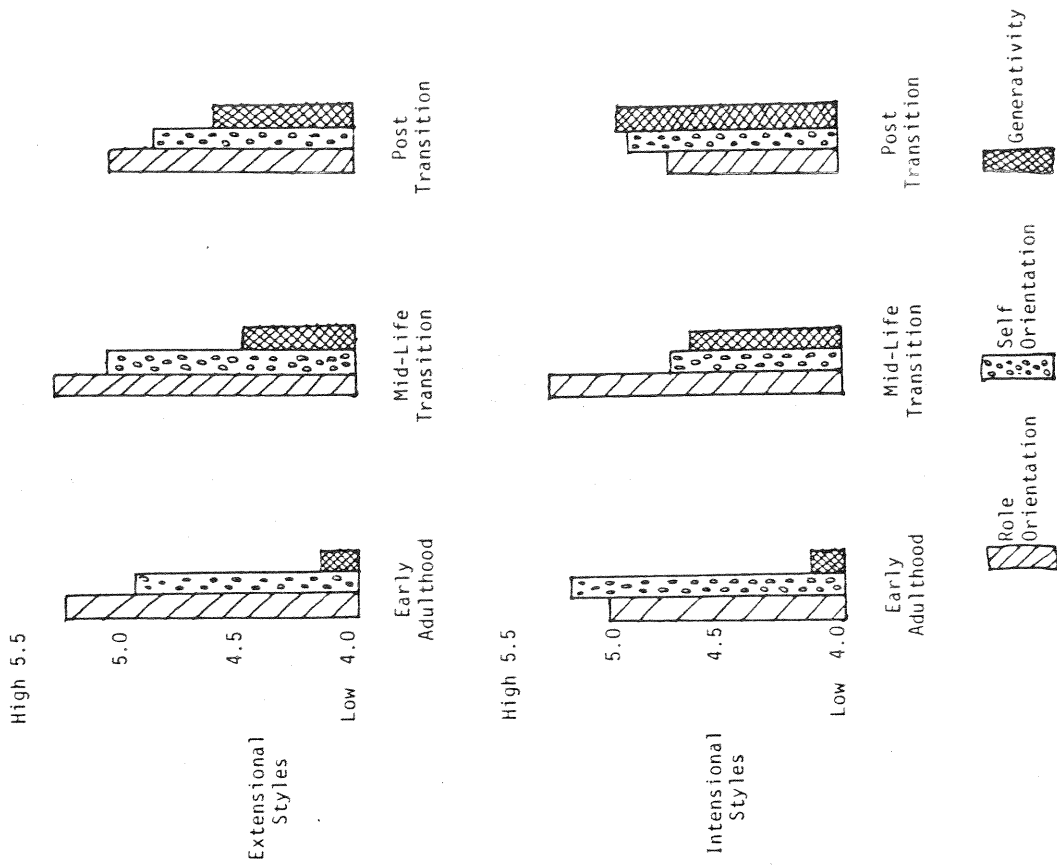

FIGURE 13.6 Importance of role orientation, self-orientation, and generativity by phases of adulthood for extensional and intensional adaptive styles.

group (as with the other group) but not as pressing as for those who are extension oriented. Family life is awarded much less importance than self.

The personal concerns differ somewhat for divergers from those of their assimilator counterparts. The former are less clear about what they want to be and do in life. Their interests tend to be diverse and unstable. Their personal preoccupation reflects an extended search for themselves and for a personally meaningful path to follow. Assimilators are equally high in concerns for self, but this tends to be associated with the stress involved in preparing for and entering highly complex and challenging scientific and technical fields. Hence, the concentration is on developing competence. Even the more astute among them have their moments of questioning whether they will be bright enough and creative enough to make a real contribution to the field.

In the midlife transition, self-oriented concerns decrease markedly and role-related issues become more important. Family life in particular is quite pressing at this time, largely because it has been so neglected previously. Family problems are particularly intense for those who have been most into themselves or who have devoted themselves almost exclusively to developing and exercising their specialized competencies. Inasmuch as intensives tend to withdraw and pull further inward in the face of conflict or stress, the early signs of marital difficulty are apt to be overlooked. Therefore, it is often only when those problems are nearly beyond repair that they come into full awareness.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that all the turning from career and success goals and personal concerns toward family is based on family stress. As one becomes established professionally and gains (literal or de facto) tenure in one's field, career pressures and competence testing ease off. There is now more time for enjoyment of family and other interests. Generativity also becomes more important at this time.

The posttransition profile for intensions is quite the opposite of that for extensions and is a substantial reversal from their own transitional experience. While they maintain a substantial balance, generativity has become the leading issue. Their propensity for reflectiveness takes on a more philosophical spirit in the middle years as they strive to place themselves and their work in the larger scheme of things. Moreover, generativity serves as a counterbalance to the relative selfishness of early career. Intensives, more than the others, spent more of their early adulthood taking in, that is, learning, acquiring expertise, and gaining autonomy. Less of their attention was directed toward delivering the goods than tended to be the case for extensions. Middle adulthood is the time for giving. Men-

Their self-orientation in early adulthood is very largely a function of their investment in developing professional competence. Personal growth is important to the extent that it enables one to take on more challenging assignments and to get ahead in career. Self-awareness is only moderately important at this time, and the more stressful reflective index of personal well-being is still less so.

Those with an extension orientation face the midlife transition with even a slightly higher concern about their roles in life, although the shift in emphasis is toward stronger family concerns. Some of this concern centers on exploring the possibility of changing roles, such as new career directions or at least jobs, and changes in family structure. But there is even more increase in the self-orientation index. Concern with developing competence has dropped, but self-awareness and especially personal well-being have increased in importance substantially. To some degree this reflects concerns about the stresses that have accumulated in pursuing a busy life, and fears of time running out rear their head. But more important, it indicates a pronounced turning inward self-absorption. The continual attention to external pressures and conditions coupled with a kind of self-denial has become too much to tolerate, and the internal press for some kind of readjustment has become a force to be reckoned with.

In keeping with the extension style of adaptation, the first efforts at coping are usually to look for what can be altered in the situation. One begins to think that perhaps a new organization or a different line of work will be less frustrating and more satisfying. Or perhaps a new lover will be less demanding and more attentive to one's needs. Seeking a solution in the outer world and trying out various possibilities sometimes proves quite adequate, but few escape the intense moments of questioning and doubt. Some basic changes in personal priorities are usually required, and this calls for deep reflection. Some move from outer directedness to centeredness is essential.

In the posttransition period, those with an extension orientation express fewer concerns about either self or role, although the latter continues to be stronger. Family life continues to be quite important, but less stressful. Interest in learning and the developing of new competencies in line with new priorities also are prominent. In this period people come out of their inner journey and are less concerned with their own well-being. Having, for the most part, successfully negotiated some changes in self and circumstance, they can settle down and turn their attention once again to their now generally more comfortable roles in family and career.

The lower part of Figure 13.6, portraying the intensional style of adaptation, shows something of the reverse pattern. Self-orientation in early adulthood is somewhat stronger than role orientation. Career aspirations are the most important considerations for this

Toward the Incorporation of the Shadow Self

Jung's (1923) treatment of psychological types is predicated on the tendency for individuals to rely more heavily on certain psychological functions than on others in their dealings with self and world. Some functions become dominant and control perception, awareness, and behavior, while others go underused and underdeveloped. Jung gives to the latter the term shadow self. This basic notion is also central to one's treatment of adaptive styles.

Jung also introduced the concept of a midlife transition. According to Jung, as one approaches age 40 the nondominant functions and the potential satisfactions associated with them, that is, the shadow self, press for expression. Personal growth, as defined by Jung, is the process of incorporating all the functions and using them appropriately in the pursuit of various life tasks.

Several of the results reported above bear on this issue. For example, in Figure 13.5 one finds that it is those people whose adaptive styles are least oriented to interpersonal relations and emotional closeness (the comprehension styles) who report, in the midlife transition and posttransition periods, that developing a good family life is the most important issue they face. Similarly, those whose dominant style is intension oriented, and therefore tend to be most concerned about self, increase their attention to role-oriented issues in midlife, while the more role-oriented people (those with extension styles) show increase in their concerns about self-oriented issues in midlife. These findings and others make clear that the midlife transition is a time for grappling with sides of life that have been suppressed in earlier years. Those issues that are best addressed by the nondominant adaptive processes come into sharper awareness in the early forties and take their place on one's personal agenda.

The authors have only begun their analysis of the development of higher-order styles, but the early findings there are promising as well. For example, social workers in their early forties rely equally on all four adaptive modes, whereas those in other ages rely most heavily on the apprehension and extension modes. While further analysis is needed, it appears that as people advance through the adult stages, their adaptive styles become broader; more use is made of all four modes, particularly of the intension orientation.

Toward Harmonious Life Structure

For a great many people, the strongest sense of a lack of integration derives from the inherent conflicts and disjointed nature of their life structures. Competing demands of various contexts (for

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toring becomes an important professional function, and service to community and society takes on significant personal meaning.

Those who are intension oriented are still concerned in the posttransition years with their own welfare. They still experience and cope with stress. They still attend to learning and developing new understandings and insights. Like others, they experience growing concerns about physical health. But neither self- nor role-oriented concerns are as important, or plaguing, as previously. Many of them have been put to rest.

ON THE QUEST FOR INTEGRATION IN MIDLIFE

The concept of personal integration is complex and elusive; its accomplishment in one's own life is even more so. There are four different, but related, elements of integration, each of which is implicated in the psychosocial happenings of the midlife transition.

Toward Balance of Life Investments

A well-lived life has many parts and each receives its proper time and attention, but more important, they are held in balance. The Eastern religious concept of yin and yang—opposites, but together forming a perfect circle—conveys this notion. The Greek emphasis on the golden mean, on the importance of not deviating too far toward any extreme, carries it as well. The specialization of early adulthood concentrates time and energy on one or two limited areas and restricts involvement in others. Career development takes the lion's share, with family taking a (sometimes close, sometimes distant) second place. As was found in Figure 13.3, men and women in midlife pose as ideal a relative balance of investments among career, family, relationships, and self, but report a decidedly lopsided pattern in the early years. By midlife they show a better balance, but not yet ideal. The second study showed a similar one-sided concern with career development in early adulthood, but more nearly equal concerns with that and family, self, and generativity in the later years (see Figure 13.4). During the midlife transition, the emphasis shifts somewhat away from career and more toward family and self. Family, in particular, takes on great importance at that time because it is a center of both responsibility and potential fulfillment that has all too often received less attention than is its due in the middle years. Figures 13.5 and 13.6 give further evidence that people in midlife begin to address those issues that have been formerly suppressed.

example, home versus work) often not only call for different kinds of adaptation in each, but in concert make one feel divided against oneself. The more obvious conflicts can be managed to some extent by isolating the contexts. Thus, many professionals refuse to bring clients or tenuous colleagues into the home. But isolation seldom brings a sense of wholeness.

Most people in midlife seem to experience a tension between complexity of life structure and its multiple offerings versus the desire for a simple, flowing life. The oft-repeated fantasy of throwing it all away and buying a farm or retiring to Tahiti or opening a craft shop comes from being fed up with managing (or mismanaging) a life that is too busy, too taxing, too conflictual to even realize the enjoyments that are offered. How can one be one person and still be involved in everything? On the other hand, those who have been hemmed in by a unidimensional focus feel like they are in a rut. They are seeking new excitements and outlets. To be only one thing is to be nothing—nothing other than bored. As one particularly mature and capable woman put it, "I'm interested in lots of things and I'm involved in lots of settings, but I want to be the same person in all of them."

Toward Personal Centeredness

It was reported earlier that people tend to be outer directed in early adulthood, and that that is adaptive for many developmental tasks of the early years. But the excessive attending to other's needs, to organizational requirements, and to all the "shoulds" and "oughts" of society results in a loss of sense of self. In midlife the urge is strong to shut out the external pressures and attend to one's own needs and purposes. Indeed, one cannot take full responsibility for oneself if these issues are fully denied. A fully functioning person operates out from a center within the self. Knowing one's stake in the situation and choosing one's direction is essential to a sense of integration. It also tends to make one more responsive to others. The transition toward inner directedness is one of the major signs of growth in midlife.

As the authors now view the situation, a great deal of energy, activity, and reflection is directed toward integration during the midlife transition. Paradoxically, this often takes one toward another kind of imbalance for a time. It is often temporarily disruptive to harmony in life structure; very often one feels anything but centered and in control of things. Nonetheless, it is these experiences that eventually move one toward integration.

As has been seen, the quest for integration often leads in many directions. Moreover, this quest seems to be quite productive for

many people. Professionals in the posttransition period demonstrate higher levels of all four kinds of integration than do those in the earlier stages. Yet they, too, have their imbalances, their shadow sides, their conflicts and discords, and their preoccupations with external demands and requirements. They, like the others, continue to search for meaning, fulfillment, and wholeness in their lives. Personal integration, and the sense of integrity that accompanies it, is not a state to be achieved once and for all but, rather, a process to be pursued throughout life.

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