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EGOS AND PERSONAL GROWTH

“I still remember when I was young and lived with my parents, life was so simple. I studied, played, read, watched television... But later, when I went to college, I began spending more time studying and didn’t socialize so much anymore. It’s true that I graduated with honors and got a good job right away, but I wish I had gotten more out of college life. It could have been a more enriching experience... And when I joined the insurance company, I no longer had any time for myself! There was so much to do that I could only start going out with my friends again after almost a year.” Michael was revisiting his past. He did not regret his choices he made, but he felt something had been missing in his life... *“Then I met Christine and everything changed. Finding love, building a family, the birth of our children... It was an unforgettable period! But it didn’t last long: as financial pressures grew, work became once more a priority and I had to sacrifice my personal life again. The worst part is that I no longer felt good, neither at the company, nor at home. How was this possible?”*

You, too, go through **different stages** over the course of your life. At times you have to be more dedicated to work, at others you need to pay more attention to your family, and sometimes you even manage to find a few moments to take care of yourself. All these stages generate **imbalances** in your emotional, rational or behavioral patterns, thus impacting the development of your personality. But it is precisely this **dynamic adjustment** to different settings that permits your evolution from the natural personality to new adapted personalities. **Instability** is fundamental to promote your **personal growth!**

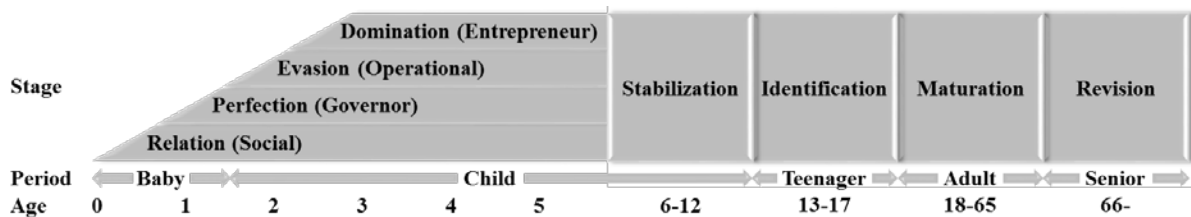
For example, Michael’s youth was relatively balanced between school, social and leisure activities, in line with his GO natural personality. But at college and at work, he started to attribute greater value to his performance in a competitive environment, and evolved to the GE adapted personality. This shift, however, generated an unconscious imbalance that was compensated by his emotional side through the development of a relationship with Christine, based on a GS or even SG adapted personality. Thus, it is understandable why returning to the comfort zone of his GO natural personality was not easy for him. At that point, everything had already changed...

Instability is fundamental to promote **personal growth**

INITIAL STAGES OF PERSONAL GROWTH

Individuals undergo a **structured set of stages** In effect, you grow as a person by undergoing a **structured set of stages** over the course of your life (Figure 9.1).¹ And what is most interesting is that you are early on exposed to the **four EGOS profiles** in a well-defined sequence: Social, Governor, Operational and Entrepreneur! It is no wonder, then, that your natural personality is practically consolidated by the time you are 6 years old...

Figure 9.1 Stages of personal growth²



Sources: Author's analysis and adapted from Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton.

During the relation stage, children predominantly develop their **feelings** At the beginning of your life, you are a baby, totally dependent on your parents and other people around you to satisfy your need for affection, nourishment, hygiene, health and safety. Since your rational and behavioral capacities are still limited, you primarily develop your **feelings**, experiencing pleasure and pain, joy and sadness. Therefore, this first stage is predominantly influenced by the **Social profile** and you try to establish an **emotional relation** with the world.³ By receiving love from others, you start to love yourself.

During the perfection stage, children predominantly develop their **thoughts** But, as you grow, you begin to understand that you are better accepted if you behave in certain ways. By learning the rules for controlling your tears, regulating your bodily functions or eating a variety of foods, you can avoid punishment for disobeying your parents or other people around you. Now you mainly develop your **thoughts**, processing information according to the instructions you are given. Thus, this second stage is predominantly influenced by the **Governor profile** and you try to live up to the world's demands for **rational perfection**.⁴ This way, you continue to receive love from others, which enhances your self-love.

During the evasion stage, children predominantly develop their **behaviors** And when you are able to move about better, you can occasionally start following your own will and do what you want: play, run, draw, watch television or simply sleep. With an added sense of autonomy, you try to flee the pressures of your parents and other people with whom you interact, and you develop **behaviors** that provide the relaxation you long for. For this reason, the third stage is predominantly influenced by the **Operational profile** and you try to achieve **behavioral evasion** from the world.⁵ It is then that you start to love yourself first, and thereby also love others more.

During the domination stage, children predominantly develop their **talents** Later on, when you begin to relate more directly to other children, at home or in nursery school, you notice that you have to fight for the attention of your parents and teachers, the possession of toys, the TV remote control, and even the privacy of your own space. By becoming aware of the competition that surrounds you, you have to affirm yourself through distinctive characteristics and develop **talents** that permit you to stand out among other children. Thus, the fourth stage is predominantly influenced by the **Entrepreneur profile** and you aim at **dominating competition** in your world.⁶ By promoting your self-love, you are also able to love others more.

Therefore, during the first 2–3 years of your life (relation and perfection stages), the development of your natural personality is primarily based on the **love you receive from others**, while in the next 2–3 years (evasion and domination stages), your growth is mostly supported by **self-love**. But, since these four initial stages take place in a **cumulative** manner, you continue to receive love from people around you while simultaneously promoting your own self-love.

In fact, the transition to each new stage does not imply that the influence from preceding stages is lost. The new stage simply gains **prevalence** in your natural personality's development and previous stages shift to a **supporting** role in your personal growth. For instance, abolishing the pacifier and introducing different types of food represent the gradual adoption of rules typical of the perfection stage (associated with a predominant influence of the Governor profile), but various displays of affection from the previous stage of relation remain, such as hugs and kisses (associated with influence of the Social profile). Later, the beginning of nursery school, at around 3–4 years of age, usually signals the beginning of your transition to the domination stage (associated with predominant influence of the Entrepreneur profile), even though you continue to experience many of the feelings, thoughts and behaviors common to the previous stages of relation, perfection and evasion. At the beginning of your life, your natural personality is therefore under **continuous formation** through the cumulative absorption and internalization of influences from the Social, Governor, Operational and Entrepreneur profiles.

Obviously, this developmental process is grounded in your genetic base (biology – nature) and in your interaction with your surroundings (psychology – nurture). From the start, your **biological nature** is reflected in your reticular formation (filtering of sensory information), limbic system (emotional regulation) and cerebral cortex (processing and aggregating of information received).⁷ If, for example, your auditory filter is particularly sensitive, it is likely that early on your temporal lobe (primary receptive area for auditory input in the cerebral cortex) assumed a more active role in processing information, thereby promoting the development of the Social profile.⁸ In this case, the relation stage must have been more significant during your growth than the other stages.

However, if your somatosensory filter (including taste, touch and smell) is particularly sensitive, it is likely that early on your parietal lobe (primary receptive area for somatosensory input in the cerebral cortex) assumed a more active role in processing information, thereby favoring the development of the Operational profile.⁹ In this case, the evasion stage must have been more significant in your development than the other stages.

For its part, from a **psychological** standpoint, what most shapes your natural personality is the potential **ambivalence** engendered in your relationship with your parents or other people around you during some of the four initial stages of your development.¹⁰ For instance, if your parents were always extremely disciplinary in reprimanding your less appropriate behavior and did not allow you to play freely with your toys, it is probable that during your perfection stage (associated with a predominant influence of the Governor profile) you acquired strong feelings of parental ambivalence that impacted your development and heightened the Governor profile's impact on your natural personality.

At the beginning of life, the individual's personality is under **continuous formation** through the cumulative absorption and internalization of influences from the Social, Governor, Operational and Entrepreneur profiles

From a **psychological** standpoint, what most shapes an individual's natural personality is the potential **ambivalence** engendered in the relationship with parents

The specific type of parents' **negative intervention** determines **the growth stage** in which feelings of ambivalence are most intense, possibly even triggering unconscious **fixations**

The specific type of **negative intervention** (limitation, punishment, pressure or rejection) from your parents or other people around you therefore determines the **growth stage** in which your feelings of ambivalence are more intense, possibly even triggering unconscious **fixations**.¹¹ For example, if your parents placed you in nursery school at a very young age, where you first had to fight for the teacher's attention, then later for the toys, it is likely that your domination stage (associated with a predominant influence of the Entrepreneur profile) started earlier and was more intense than the other stages. Strong feelings of ambivalence about your parents or teachers rooted in this period of your life may thus have generated a fixation during the domination stage, increasing the weight of the Entrepreneur profile in your natural personality. And for the rest of your life, you will keep fighting against perceived limitations in your environment, attempting to dominate the successive difficulties that you will face. But, in essence, you are really still trying to resolve the fixation that arose in nursery school...

Inversely, if your parents and everyone around you dealt with you **always in a positive manner**, giving the affection you desired when you behaved or adopting a pedagogical attitude when you misbehaved, you must have felt loved and may not have developed any ambivalence. In this case, the **positive interventions** from your parents and other people around you did not shape your natural personality; rather, they merely facilitated its **consolidation** over time.

For instance, if early on you developed an OG natural personality, reserved and insecure, and your parents always protected you from typical childhood difficulties because they thought you could not surmount them, they will have contributed to strengthening the Operational profile in you, thereby consolidating, but not changing, your OG natural personality. And even if your parents frequently put you to play with your siblings, cousins or friends in a pleasant setting, you will have managed to learn how to socialize with other children, thus becoming accustomed to taking on the OS adapted personality whenever necessary, but your OG natural personality will have remained unaltered.

On the other hand, if your parents **overly spoiled** you during the relation stage, gave you **too many rewards** during the perfection stage, allowed you to have **too much freedom** during the evasion stage or **excessively facilitated** you during the domination stage, you may have perceived all these measures in a very positive manner. But when you had to deal with other people (teachers, uncles and aunts, cousins, etc.), who treated you without such favors, it is likely that you perceived them negatively simply because they were less loving towards you than your parents. In this case, it is very probable that your parents' exceedingly pleasing attitude helped promote **feelings of ambivalence towards other people**, which may have occasioned unconscious fixations in some stage of your growth process and impacted on the formation of your natural personality.

In childhood, **reaction to pain** is much more structuring than **reception of pleasure**

Therefore, while positive interventions tend to facilitate the consolidation of your natural personality or the gradual development of your adapted personalities, negative interventions, due to their much deeper **emotional impact**, can generate ambivalence that determines the **evolutionary direction of your natural personality**. In childhood, **reaction to pain** is thus much more structuring than **reception of pleasure!**

ADVANCED STAGES OF PERSONAL GROWTH

Once the initial critical stages have been surpassed, you continue to develop your **natural personality**, benefitting from the **stabilization** of genetic and environmental influences that most marked you until 6 years of age.¹² For example, if you were born more genetically predisposed towards the Governor profile, and the domination stage (associated with a predominant influence of the Entrepreneur profile) had a significant impact on your childhood, it is likely that you developed a GE or even an EG natural personality at around 4–5 years old.¹³ Hence, from age 6 onwards, already in the stabilization stage, you will have continued to consolidate your GE or EG personality within family life or at school, manifesting your specific characteristics with increasing consistency. Your natural personality becomes **internalized**.

During this relatively calm period, you take the opportunity to explore some **adapted personalities**, especially outside the home. In fact, without your parents' commanding presence, you feel more at ease to respond to the requests of your teachers and friends, temporarily assuming characteristics that are different from your natural personality. These exploratory adaptations are very important because they start affording you the necessary **flexibility** to one day become a more complete adult.

For instance, even if you developed a natural GE or EG personality starting at 4–5 years old, during the stabilization stage you may have occasionally assumed GS, GO, EO or ES adapted personalities at school, and possibly even adapted personalities that were more distinct from your natural personality, such as SG, SE, OE or OG when playing with friends. At the same time that you continued to consolidate your natural personality, you were also experimenting with other characteristics that could help you better adapt to different settings in your childhood.

Next begins the complex stage of **identification**, associated with the period of **adolescence**.¹⁴ The hormonal explosion typical of puberty awakens in you new social stimuli and sexual impulses that lead you to question your convictions and priorities, and to revisit childhood fixations. This personal insecurity then promotes the search for **role models** outside of traditional settings, such as, for example, popular schoolmates or famous singers and actors. You try, in a fanciful way, to assume adapted personalities identical to those of your idols, in an attempt to develop new characteristics by association or imitation. But the inconsistency of these efforts generates inevitable conflicts with the more stable pattern of your natural personality, and may even lead to an **identity crisis**.¹⁵

Hormonal stabilization at the end of puberty tends to facilitate the recovery of a **positive identification** with your natural personality, even if issues from the past were not fully resolved. In this case, you are still nevertheless enriched by the diversity of experiences accumulated through your adapted personalities in adolescence.

However, if you continue to feel disconnected from the family or school setting in which you were raised, you may develop a **negative identification** with your own natural personality, and begin seeking alternatives to help you relieve the **pain of fixations** rooted in childhood. If your parents did not duly appreciate you as a child, you may choose to no longer live up to their expectations and deliberately assume an adapted personality different from, or even contrary to, parental aspirations.

Exploratory adaptations are very important because they start affording the child the necessary **flexibility** to one day become a more complete adult

The inevitable conflicts between the adolescents' adapted personalities and their natural personalities may lead to **identity crisis**

For example, if you and a friend developed SG natural personalities in childhood, it is possible that you both rebelled against some of your own characteristics in adolescence, such as the concern for other people or a sense of fulfilling your duty. Therefore, you may have tried to adopt more creative, carefree and individualistic postures, inspired in the OE or OS personalities of the music stars you both so admired. But the internal conflict between your adapted and natural personalities may have provoked an identity crisis that may have even led you to question your true temperament.

As you neared the end of puberty, you may have started feeling comfortable again with the characteristics of your SG natural personality, while also having managed to take on the SE and SO personalities with some ease, thanks to your experiences in adolescence. However, your friend may not have been able to reconcile with his SG natural personality, in part because his father always pressured him to be less sensitive and more determined. For this reason, your friend may have developed a fixation during the evasion stage of childhood and ended up rebelling against his father's wishes during adolescence by going into the arts and trying to assume a friendly, creative and relaxed OS adapted personality.

The wealth of experiences during adulthood promotes the **maturation** of an individual's natural personality and adapted personalities

Already in **adulthood**, you may undergo a great variety of personal experiences, such as dating, marriage, divorce, and the birth and rearing of your children and grandchildren, while simultaneously advancing your professional career with several recruitments, transfers, promotions or layoffs. This wealth of experiences promotes the **maturation** of your natural personality and your adapted personalities, since it requires great capacity for adapting to the multiple demands from the world around you.¹⁶

When dealing with these demands of adulthood, you may reveal yourself to be a more **flexible** person, complementing your natural personality with a wide range of adapted personalities, or a more **rigid** person, almost always focused on your natural personality and a very small set of adapted personalities.¹⁷ And your adaptation abilities may even **vary** from setting to setting, as well as throughout your life.

Whenever adults deal with people or situations directly or indirectly **relatable to childhood fixations**, they tend to become more rigid

In effect, whenever you deal with people or situations directly or indirectly **relatable to childhood fixations**, you tend to become more rigid and, as a defense, lock yourself in your natural personality or in close adapted personalities.¹⁸ Inversely, when you deal with people or situations **unrelatable to your childhood fixations**, you become more flexible, thus more easily exhibiting other adapted personalities.

For example, if you were born with stronger Operational tendencies, but your mother was always very overbearing and disciplinarian, it is possible that your feelings of ambivalence towards her generated a fixation during the perfection stage, thereby contributing to the development of your OG natural personality. In adulthood, you may then experience considerable difficulty punishing your kids or disciplining your subordinates at work, even if the circumstances justify corrective action, and you unconsciously adopt a passive, detached attitude, typical of your OG natural personality. On the other hand, in circumstances that are emotionally unrelatable to your childhood fixation, you are able to sometimes assume characteristics of adapted personalities farther from your natural personality, even managing to be assertive or conciliatory, if necessary.

But it is precisely in **adulthood** that you have the means to better understand and overcome ambivalence rooted in childhood, thereby resolving your unconscious fixations. In fact, if at the end of adolescence you managed to recover a **positive identification** with your natural personality, you may analyze with an **adult maturity** your structural pattern of feelings, thoughts and behaviors to identify the **origins of the ambivalence** that affected you since you were young. Only this way will you find the best solutions for dealing with your fixations, directly with the person who triggered them, or indirectly with the help of a therapist, spouse or friend, and attain the **inner peace** that you long for.

Conversely, if at the end of adolescence you developed a **negative identification** with your own natural personality, it will be very difficult for you to recognize your true essence and to identify, with the appropriate **adult attitude**, the root of your ambivalence. To alleviate your emotional pain, you will then seek refuge in an **adapted personality**, without ever managing to resolve the childhood fixations associated with your natural personality.

For instance, if you entered adulthood reconciled with your ES natural personality, it is more likely that you will be able to one day achieve the detachment necessary for recognizing the childhood ambivalence borne of your father's recurrent emotional rejections because you were not as obedient as he wished, which generated a fixation in you right from the relation stage, reinforcing your Social profile. In this case, you may decide to speak with your father about your childhood resentment or, alternately, share with another person (therapist, spouse or friend) the feelings of ambivalence related to your father, so that you can overcome your fixation.

However, if at the end of adolescence you developed a negative identification with your ES natural personality, it will not be easy for you to deal with the source of your childhood ambivalence in a mature way, and you may even occasionally assume a GE adapted personality to subject your children to the same type of control that your father tried to impose on you. Because you did not recognize and resolve your fixation, you will forever be resentful of your father and run the risk of generating the same feelings in those around you.

After overcoming your fixations, it will be much easier for you to develop the **flexibility** necessary for dealing with different settings in your life, enriching your natural personality with a wide range of adapted personalities. Otherwise, during your adult life you may become **imprisoned** by the ambivalence rooted in childhood, turning you into a very rigid and defensive person.

Finally, once you reach old age, you undertake a **revision** of the main events in your life and come to terms with your personality, no longer seeking to resolve issues from the past.¹⁹ If you managed to overcome your fixations during adulthood, you will probably face the last years of your life with dignity and pride for your professional and personal accomplishments. If not, you may experience dissatisfaction and even regret about your life, as well as despair at the prospect of death.

Your evolution throughout all the stages of personal growth is therefore determined by your **biological and psychological capacity** for dealing with the world around you. And the better you understand and accept yourself, the easier it will be for you to transform into an increasingly complete person!

In **adulthood**, people have the means to better understand and overcome ambivalence rooted in childhood, thereby resolving their unconscious fixations

If people do not overcome their fixations, during their adult lives they may become **imprisoned** by the ambivalence rooted in childhood

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENDERS

Obviously, the development of your personality over time is also influenced by your gender. In fact, structural differences between **males and females** are evident since the very first years of life, rendering it important to understand the joint impact that genetics (biology – nature) and interaction with the environment (psychology – nurture) has on the distinct configuration of men and women.

From a biological standpoint, it is interesting to note that the degree of similarity **between male and female genetic codes** is greater than 99%.²⁰ In reality, almost all people are created from the same basis of 46 chromosomes, of which 23 come from the mother and 23 from the father.²¹ If the twenty-third pair of chromosomes is XX a girl is born and if it is XY a boy is born. Curiously, in the first 8 weeks after conception, the fetus is still relatively sexless, bearing the necessary potential to develop either male or female genitalia.

Distinct hormones develop in the **male fetus** a strong capacity for **visual visualization, muscle movement and individual aggressiveness** and, in the **female fetus**, a strong capacity for **communication, emotional memory and social adaptation**

If the fetus is **male (XY)**, starting from the eighth week of gestation, a significant amount of hormones, particularly testosterone, will begin to secrete throughout the body, first forming the sexual organs and then configuring the brain circuits in order to develop a strong capacity for **spatial visualization, muscle movement and individual aggressiveness**. On the other hand, if the fetus is **female (XX)**, it begins to secrete other kinds of hormones, particularly estrogen, first forming sexual organs and then configuring the brain circuits in order to develop a strong capacity for **communication, emotional memory and social adaptation**. The production of distinct hormones continues throughout life, thereby impacting the differentiated growth of both genders (Tables 9.1–9.2).²²

For genetic reasons, **men** also more rapidly develop the **right hemisphere** of the brain (integrative, intuitive, visual and contextual), while **women** more rapidly develop the **left hemisphere** of the brain (analytical, logical, verbal and literal). However, thanks to estrogen, women are able to establish more connections between the two hemispheres, resulting in a greater capacity for **multitasking**, such as, for example, to simultaneously watch television, talk on the phone and look after a child. In comparison, men do not have as many connections between the two hemispheres and are therefore more **focused**, concentrating on a single activity at a time, such as just watching television, for example.

Another relevant distinction between genders is the **location and dimension of brain circuits** associated with **specific functions**

Another relevant distinction between genders is the **location and dimension of the brain circuits** associated with **specific functions**. For example, language functions are located in the left frontal hemisphere in women, as well as in a smaller region of the right hemisphere, giving them better communication skills than men, whose language functions are more diffusely located in only the left hemisphere. On the other hand, spatial functions (visual depth) are located in at least four areas of the frontal hemisphere in men, giving them better spatial acuity than women, who do not have a brain region specifically dedicated to these functions. And while emotion in men is located only in the right hemisphere and can be exercised in an independent manner, in women it operates in a more extensive region that includes both hemispheres, and can act in harmony with other functions, allowing them to manifest feelings while they work or read a book, for example, tasks in which men tend to show few emotions.²³

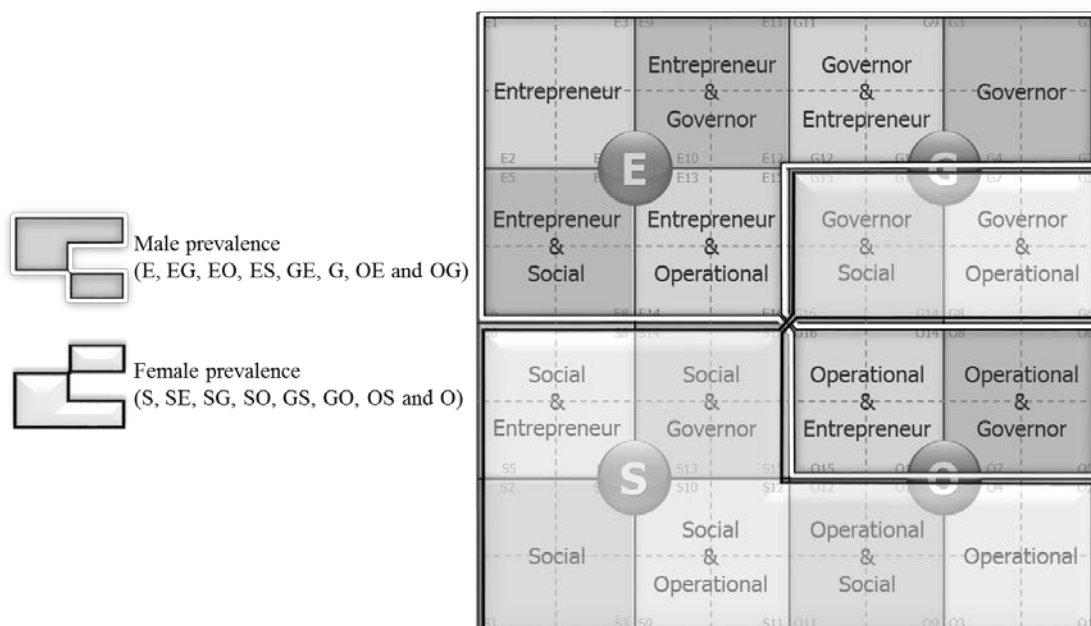
It is possible that these structural differences originated in the distinct roles that both genders played over hundreds of thousands of years during **prehistory**; while men may have mainly developed the skills needed for hunting animals and defending the tribe, women may have mostly developed the skills needed to take care of the family and home.²⁴ Natural selection and evolution would then help explain the greater statistical incidence of the **Entrepreneur profile in men**, and the greater statistical frequency of the **Social profile in women**.²⁵

However, this genetic influence can be **reinforced or contradicted** by interactions with the environment. In fact, boys' traditional education and upbringing tends to enhance an Entrepreneur inclination, emphasizing individual affirmation through competitive sports (wrestling, football, etc.) and devaluing emotivity, while girls' traditional education and upbringing tends to enhance a Social inclination, valuing social integration through cooperative games (dolls, playing house, etc.) and devaluing aggressiveness.²⁶ On the other hand, throughout **modern history**, the increasing organization of families and societies has induced both genders to adhere to behavioral norms and rules in order to adapt to the complexity of home and school life, thereby promoting the sustained development of the **Governor and Operational profiles in boys as well as girls**.

For evolutionary reasons, **nuclear personalities**, of biological origin, may therefore accentuate mostly characteristics of the Entrepreneur and Social profiles, but the personal growth process also promotes characteristics of the Governor and Operational profiles in the **natural personalities**.²⁷ Thus, gender distribution in the EGOS Map reveals a **male prevalence** in all personalities with an incidence of the Entrepreneur profile, and a **female prevalence** in all personalities with an incidence of the Social profile, which results in a very balanced distribution of men and women in the Governor and Operational profiles (Map 9.1).

Nuclear personalities may accentuate mostly characteristics of the Entrepreneur and Social profiles, but the personal growth process also promotes characteristics of the Governor and Operational profiles in the **natural personalities**

Map 9.1 Male and female prevalence in the EGOS Map



Source: Author's analysis.

Table 9.1 Male hormonal development

Period		Hormonal development	Male characteristics	Implications
Fetus		The pair of XY chromosomes triggers the production of testosterone and MIS (Mullerian Inhibiting Substance) eight weeks after conception	Formation of sexual organs and brain circuits for long-range vision and spatial ability in motion	–
Childhood		Continued production of MIS; high production of testosterone in the first year and decreased production until twelve years of age	Continued development of circuits for sexual impulses, exploratory behavior and masculine muscle movements	Interest in winning games, movement, chasing objects and playing aggressively with other boys (not with girls)
Adolescence		Level of testosterone multiplies twenty-fold along with an increase in vasopressin; low production of MIS	Development of circuits for focusing visual sexual attention on female figures; perception of male faces as hostile; changes in the sense of smell for pheromones; changes in the auditory perception; changes in circuits for sleep cycle	Interest in turf, hierarchy and social interaction; girls' bodies, sexual fantasies and masturbation; going to sleep and waking up later; detachment from mothers (not from fathers) and challenging of authority
Adulthood	Single	Testosterone continues high, activating circuits for procreation, sex, hierarchy and turf	Changes in visual circuits to spot voluptuous, fertile females and potentially aggressive males; high libido and sexual tension	Interest in finding sexual partners; focus on work, money and career development
	Fatherhood	During the mother's pregnancy and after the baby's birth, levels of prolactin increase and testosterone decreases	Circuits for sexual impulses are repressed; auditory circuits are enhanced to hear baby's cries; development of father–baby synchronicity; occasionally, sympathetic pregnancy (<i>couvade</i> syndrome)	Interest in protecting mother and baby, earning a living and supporting the family
Middle age		Gradual decrease in levels of testosterone and vasopressin	Continued concentration on sex, turf and attractive women	Interest in raising the children, power and status at work; less interest in sex
Old age		Gradual decrease of testosterone levels, which at age 85 is half the level it was at age 20; increased levels of oxytocin	Can continue to reproduce; continued concentration on attractive women	Interest in remaining healthy and improving well-being, marriage and family life; greater emotional openness and marital closeness

Source: Adapted from Brizendine, Louann (2011). *The Male Brain*, Three Rivers Press.

Table 9.2 Female hormonal development

Period		Hormonal development	Female characteristics	Implications
Fetus		The pair of XX chromosomes enables a continuous hormonal development without interference from testosterone	Formation of sexual organs and brain circuits for communication, emotional memory, social adaptation and anger control	–
Childhood		High production of estrogen between 6 and 24 months of age, followed by a pause	Stimulation of emotional and verbal circuits	Interest in playing with other girls (not with boys)
Adolescence		Estrogen, progesterone and testosterone increase and launch the menstrual cycles	Increased sensitivity and development of verbal, emotional, sexual and stress circuits	Interest in sexual attraction and desperate loves; detachment from fathers (not from mothers); girls' brains develop two years earlier than boys'
Adulthood	Single	Estrogen, progesterone and testosterone change every day of the month	Maturation of circuits for decision making and emotional control	Interest in finding a mate, love and a professional career
	Pregnancy	Great increase in levels of progesterone and estrogen	Suppression of stress circuits; temporary shrinkage of the brain; hormones from fetus and placenta overrun the body and the brain	Interest in own physical well-being to compensate for fatigue, nausea and hunger without harming the fetus; surviving at work; planning maternity leave
	Breastfeeding	Production of oxytocin and prolactin	Continued suppression of stress circuits, emotional and sexual circuits overrun by baby care	Attention to battling fatigue and to producing milk
	Childrearing	Production of oxytocin; estrogen, progesterone and testosterone cycles return	Increased activity of stress circuits, concerns and emotional bonds	Interest in the well-being, development and rearing of the child; less interest in sex; handling increased stress and workload
Middle age		Irregular estrogen, progesterone and testosterone cycles associated with perimenopause	Irregular sexual appetite, difficulties sleeping, more fatigue, worries, irritability and temperamental outbursts	Interest in surviving day to day, and dealing with emotional and physical highs and lows
Old age	Menopause	Decreased estrogen and progesterone	Decline of brain circuits fueled by estrogen and progesterone	Concern with health and a better life; willingness to take on new challenges
	Postmenopause	Decreased but constant production of estrogen and testosterone; decreased oxytocin	Less reaction to stress and emotions, more tranquility	Interest in own projects; less interest in taking care of others

Source: Adapted from Brizendine, Louann (2007). *The Female Brain*, Three Rivers Press.

A greater male or female prevalence in a given quadrant of the EGOS Map does not imply that there aren't people of **both genders** with those same personality traits

Obviously, a greater male or female prevalence in a given quadrant of the EGOS Map does not imply that there aren't people of **both genders** with those same personality traits. For example, despite the EG personality being more common in men, there are also many women who assume this more "masculine" pattern of feelings, thoughts and behaviors in their natural or adapted personalities. In this case, women tend to integrate the dominant traits of the EG personality (rational approach, organizational capacity, perfectionism, etc.) with their own female genetic characteristics (communication skills, emotional memory, multitasking, etc.), thereby exhibiting some behavioral differences from EG men.

Likewise, despite the SO personality being more common in women, there are also many men who assume this more "feminine" pattern of feelings, thoughts and behaviors in their natural or adapted personalities. In this case, men tend to integrate the dominant traits of the SO personality (idealism, harmonious approach, practical ingenuity, etc.) with their male genetic characteristics (spatial visualization, muscle movement, focus on a single task, etc.), thereby exhibiting some behavioral difference from SO women. To successfully adapt to different settings in your life, you can position yourself **in your own way** in any part of the EGOS Map, regardless of the statistical frequency of your gender in that quadrant.²⁸

Thus, you **evolve** over time integrating **multiple biological and psychological influences** in order to form the natural personality and the adapted personalities that enable you to deal with the world around you. And as you gain experience, you understand increasingly better your comfort and discomfort zones, **your current capabilities and limitations**. But do not resign yourself to what life has already given you, do not settle on what you already are. Continue to evolve so you can reach your true potential and become an even more complete person!

To sustain **future growth**, people should not be afraid to face **fixations from the past**

And to sustain your **future growth**, do not be afraid to face the **fixations from your past**. By resolving your childhood ambivalence, you will finally be able to restore inner peace and find new development perspectives, in both your personal and professional settings. You only have one life. **Live it fully!**

"It's funny, but I don't have many memories of my parents when I was a child. I remember that my father worked a lot and was always very strict about my grades; he used to say that he didn't want me to have a hard life like his. I'm just sorry that he could never play with me..." Michael was sad without really knowing why. *"My mother was more loving, she liked hugging and kissing me, but I didn't feel at ease with so much affection. I know I hurt her feelings, but I had to run away from her..."* Tears started to roll down Michael's face. *"I'm sorry, mommy, I love you!"* In order to escape the emotional pain, Michael turned his thoughts to Christine. *"She is so sweet, too. I'm glad we got married. With her I can be myself, say what I feel. It's true that sometimes she gets sad because I am so introverted, but I know that she doesn't stop loving me. She reminds me a little of my mother..."* Suddenly, Michael was surprised at the association. *"Come to think of it, it seems that my leader, Frank, also has some things in common with my father... That's not possible! It must be a coincidence!"* Doubt had taken root and Michael could not stop thinking about the matter. *"Do I have unresolved issues with my parents that are affecting my personal and professional life? Is my past still shaping my present? Can I then build a different future? I have to find out the truth!"*

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- ¹ Naturally, in different cultures, growth stages can correspond to distinct age brackets.
- ² The stages of personal growth proposed by the author in the present text are mostly adapted from the psychosocial development theory by the Danish–German–American psychologist Erik Erikson, as well as from the psychosexual development theory by the Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud. The main structural differences vis-à-vis these two approaches are the following:
- a) Inclusion of a fourth stage during childhood in light of the growing number of children who start school before they are 6 years old (in nursery school or preschool). As a result, some of the concepts associated with school life applied by Erikson and Freud for ages 6 through puberty are adapted, in this text, to preschool life, for the period of 3–6 years of age.
 - b) Integration of the early adulthood stage with the adult stage (differentiated in Erikson’s psychosocial development theory) in light of the increasing time diffusion in the patterns of intimacy, mating, procreation and professional accomplishment throughout all of adult life in modern societies.
- For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton, and Freud, Sigmund (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Basic Books.
- ³ The relation stage corresponds globally to the infant stage in Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory and to the oral stage in Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton, and Freud, Sigmund (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Basic Books.
- ⁴ The perfection stage corresponds globally to the toddler stage in Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory and to the anal stage in Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton and Freud, Sigmund (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Basic Books.
- ⁵ The evasion stage corresponds globally to the preschooler stage in Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory and to the initial part of the phallic stage in Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton, and Freud, Sigmund (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Basic Books.
- ⁶ The domination stage corresponds globally to the school-age stage of Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory and to the final part of the phallic stage, associated with resolving the Oedipal complex (for boys) or the Electra complex (for girls), in Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton, and Freud, Sigmund (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Basic Books.
- ⁷ See more details on the reticular formation, the limbic system and the cerebral cortex in Chapter 1 – Who Am I?
- ⁸ See more details on the exploratory association between auditory sensitivity and the Social profile in Chapter 3 – Who Are We?
- ⁹ See more details on the exploratory association between somatosensory sensitivity and the Operational profile in Chapter 3 – Who Are We?
- ¹⁰ As explained in Chapter 3 – Who Are We?, as a consequence of negative parental interventions (limitation, punishment, pressure or rejection), children develop unconscious feelings of ambivalence towards their parents and, reflexively, also towards themselves. This ambivalent tension between love and hate later repeats itself in relationships with others close to them, such as siblings or friends, affecting the way children love others and themselves. Once children have perceived this ambivalence, they must quickly resolve their internal emotional conflict, and the responses they adopt (domination to deal with limitation; perfection to deal with punishment; evasion to deal with pressure; and relation to deal with rejection) will

determinately influence the unconscious choice of the dominant profile that they will assume in their natural personality throughout life.

- ¹¹ “Fixation” is a term created by the Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud as part of his psychosexual development theory, which originally meant a developmental conflict not resolved in a given psychosexual stage. Currently, the term “fixation” has a broader connotation, signifying a conflict, block or excessive involvement with a given stage of personality development. See, for example, Fadiman, James and Frager, Robert (2002). *Personality and Personal Growth*, 5th edition, Prentice Hall.
- ¹² The stabilization stage corresponds globally to the school-age stage in Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory and to the latent stage in Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton, and Freud, Sigmund (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Basic Books.
- ¹³ In this case, if the weight of the biological Governor base prevails over the influence of the Entrepreneur profile during the domination stage, the natural personality will be GE. On the other hand, if the influence of the Entrepreneur profile during the domination stage prevails over the weight of the biological Governor base, the natural personality will be EG. Personality is therefore always determined by the specific interaction between each person’s genetics and relationship with the environment. Accordingly, this case could never result in an OS natural personality, for example. For more details, see Chapter 1 – Who Am I?
- ¹⁴ The identification stage corresponds globally to the adolescent stage of Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory and to the genital stage of Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton, and Freud, Sigmund (1962). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Basic Books.
- ¹⁵ “Identity crisis” is an expression created by the Danish–German–American psychologist Erik Erikson as part of his psychosocial development theory, consisting of the loss of identification with the continuity of one’s personality during the stage of adolescence. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton.
- ¹⁶ The maturation stage corresponds globally to the young adult and middle-aged adult stages in Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton.
- ¹⁷ See more details on the impact of rigidity on your personality in Chapters 10.1 – EGOS and Interaction, and 11.2 – EGOS and Energy.
- ¹⁸ Obviously, childhood fixations only generate emotional pain if they have not yet been resolved. In the present text, references to childhood fixations always assume that they have not been meanwhile resolved.
- ¹⁹ The revision stage corresponds globally to the old age stage in Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory. For more details, see Erikson, Erik H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*, Norton.
- ²⁰ Brizendine, Louann (2007). *The Female Brain*, Three Rivers Press.
- ²¹ One of the exceptions to the usual pattern of 46 chromosomes is the trisomy on chromosome 21, also known as Down syndrome, a genetic condition caused by an extra 21st chromosome, partial or complete.
- ²² For more details, see, for example, Brizendine, Louann (2007). *The Female Brain*, Three Rivers Press and Brizendine, Louann (2011). *The Male Brain*, Three Rivers Press.
- ²³ For more details, see, for example, Carter, Rita; Aldridge, Susan; Page, Martyn and Parker, Steve (2009). *The Human Brain Book*, DK Adult.
- ²⁴ Based on the theory of natural selection and evolution by English naturalist Charles Darwin, and the laws of genetics by the Austrian botanist Gregor Mendel, evolutionary psychology argues that the brain’s mechanisms, such as vision, hearing,

memory or motor control, evolved by natural selection over time for the purpose of benefitting the survival and propagation of the species. For more details, see, for example, Barkow, Jerome H.; Cosmides, Leda and Tooby, John (editors) (1995). *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, Oxford University Press.

²⁵ See more details on gender distribution in the EGOS Map in Chapter 6 – EGOS Map.

²⁶ The combination of each gender's genetic bias with the personal growth stages of childhood provides a possible explanation for why girls develop earlier than boys. Since children normally go through the relation stage first (associated with the predominant influence of the Social profile), girls immediately start to benefit from the alignment between their greater genetic propensity towards the Social profile and the emotional interaction with the parents, thereby allowing them to consolidate their natural personalities sooner. On the other hand, boys' greater genetic propensity towards the Entrepreneur profile is only aligned with a competitive environment at home or in school during the domination stage (associated with the predominant influence of the Entrepreneur profile) between 3 and 6 years of age, and therefore the consolidation of boys' natural personalities tends to occur later.

²⁷ See more details on the distinction between nuclear personality and natural personality in Chapter 1 – Who Am I?

²⁸ Obviously, assuming a natural or adapted personality in a quadrant of the EGOS Map that has a statistical prevalence of the opposite gender does not imply nor reflect any type of sexual preference or orientation.