**PSYC 333 – Study Notes**

**Chapter 16**: Emotional and Social Development in Middle Adulthood – Stability and Change in Self-Concept & Personality

***Does the self concept stabilize in Middle Adulthood?***

During middle-adulthood, adults tend to have a more stable life. They have a job, children, a home and sometimes even grandchildren. Usually by this age, adults feel like they have found their place in the world and have a better idea of their self-concept. Self-concept is defined as a construct of someone’s beliefs about themselves. During this period of life, adults tend to have a more stable lifestyle and have less time for self-exploration. Middle-aged people tend to start realizing their own mortality and start finding ways of being both young and old. They start evaluating their life and comparing where they are in life to where they want to be. Adults in midlife tend to be more self-accepting of their good and bad qualities. They are less concerned about others’ expectations or evaluations of them and more about how happy and content they are with themselves and where they are in life. They also become more capable of managing a wide-array of tasks with more ease and effectiveness. Adults tend to become more comfortable with themselves, more independent, assertive, and committed. It has been shown in many studies that men tend to report an increase in feminine traits and an increase in masculine traits in women. Their gender identity becomes more androgynous, which is associated with advanced moral reasoning and psychosocial maturity. During this stage of life, there is an increase of agreeableness and conscientiousness, a decrease in neuroticism and extroversion and openness tend to stay the same.

**Possible selves**: Future-oriented representations of what one hopes to become and is afraid of becoming.

**Generativity**: Involves reaching out to others in way that give to and guide the next generation

**Stagnation**: Refers to the failure to find a way to contribute. They may feel disconnected or uninvolved with their community and with society as a whole.

**Parental Imperative Theory**: Holds that identification with traditional gender roles is maintained during the active parenting years to help ensure the survival of children. After children reach adulthood, parents are free to express the “other-gender” side of their personalities.

**“Big Five” Personality Traits**: Neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.