

What Is Maturity?

(Dr. Cormac Burke)



Maturity is many things. It is the ability to base a judgment on the big picture, the long haul. It means being able to resist the urge for immediate gratification and opt for the course of action that will pay off later. One of the characteristics of the young is, "I want it now." Grown-up people can wait.

Maturity is perseverance—the ability to sweat out a project or a situation in spite of heavy opposition and discouraging setbacks, and stick with it until it is finished. The adult who is constantly changing jobs, changing friends, and changing mates is immature. He cannot stick it out because he has not grown up.

Maturity is the ability to control anger and settle differences without violence or destruction. The mature person can face unpleasantness, frustration, discomfort and defeat without collapsing or complaining. He knows he can't have everything his own way every time. He is able to defer to circumstances, to other people—and to time. He knows when to compromise and is not too proud to do it.

Maturity is humility. It is being big enough to say, "I was wrong." And, when he is right, the mature person need not experience the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so."

Maturity is the ability to live up to your responsibilities, and this means being dependable. It means keeping your word. Dependability is the hallmark of integrity. Do you mean what you say—and do you say what you mean? Unfortunately, we find people who can't be counted on. When you need them most, they are among the missing. Their lives are a chaotic maze of broken promises, former friends, unfinished business and good intentions that somehow never materialize. They are always a day late and a dollar short.

Maturity is the ability to make a decision and stand by it. Immature people spend their lives exploring endless possibilities and then do nothing. Action requires courage. Without courage, little is accomplished.

Maturity is the ability to harness your abilities and your energies and do more than is expected. The mature person refuses to settle for mediocrity. He would rather aim high and miss the mark than aim low—and make it.

Maturity is the art of living in peace with that which we cannot change the courage to change that which should be changed, no matter what it takes—and the wisdom to know the difference.

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