

Does age matter for personality psychologists?

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By now, it has been well documented that personality characteristics, such as Big Five traits, goals, values, self-esteem, emotional and cognitive abilities, can and do change over the lifespan. Apart from mean-level changes and changes in rank-order, much less is known whether personality processes change alike or generalize across the lifespan. This talk addresses the questions (a) whether personality effects on intra-or interpersonal outcomes observed in samples of young adults differ in children or older adults, and (b) which biological, environmental and/or social conditions might explain when personality effects change over the life span. During the talk, I will present theoretical perspectives and empirical findings on conditions whether and when age moderates personality effects. I will conclude with implications for specific areas of personality psychology.

Keywords: age differences, personality processes, contextual changes, lifespan psychology

