

Management and the life stages

As a manager it is useful for you to be aware of the concept of life stages. Where a person happens to be in his or her life cycle at a particular time affects his or her work performance. The broad categories are as follows:

- 20s This is the period of career identification. The person begins to climb the ladder in his or her chosen career, gaining experience and, if necessary, taking further courses and examinations.
- 30s This is a key competitive, energetic and creative period as the person develops his or her track record. It is also a questioning period. Am I in the right career? What can I do to improve my professional development?
- 40s This is the period of the mid-life crisis. There is an increasing awareness of a time squeeze, the inevitability of death, a lesser time remaining, and the gap between aspirations and achievements. The person is more aware of premature deaths, hospitalisation and marriage break-ups. He/she might ask questions such as: What is this life all about now that I am doing what I am “supposed” to be doing? Is what I am the only way and the right way? Is there still time to change? Am I too competitive/too ambitious? What are my values? Should I change my job? (Many people change their job for the last time in their forties.) How is my marriage progressing? Do I spend enough time with my spouse and children?
- 50s Having survived the mid-life crisis there is now an “acceptance of life” and an increasing dedication to more permanent and central personal values. Life is restructured in terms of time left to live rather than time since birth. A longing for simplicity and the simple life can emerge, an acceptance of what I have and the course I have taken.
- 60s + The person is coming towards retirement. The secret of retirement is, however, to retire from a career to something else.