

# Preface

I am delighted to write a second edition of *Emerging and Young Adulthood: Multiple Perspectives, Diverse Narratives*. The second edition is an opportunity to revisit fertile ground represented by the textured voices of the individuals who are in the midst of negotiating this challenging developmental period, as well as parents and employers. It is also an opportunity to refine observations and conclusions based on a rich, evolving literature. Emerging and young adults continue to sustain my curiosity and appreciation, and it is in this spirit that I have written the second edition of *Emerging and Young Adulthood: Multiple Perspectives, Diverse Narratives*.

I have updated each chapter to reflect the current literature, with substantial revision in certain areas, particularly Chap. 8: “Voices of Emerging and Young Adults: From the Professional to the Personal.” In addition, I have added two chapters: “The Virtual Life Alongside: Technology and the Emerging and Young Adult” (Chap. 4), and “Floundering or Experimenting: Finding a Vocational Home” (Chap. 7). The rationale for these changes is described below.

Technology permeates, or may even dominate, the lives of emerging and young adults. Because technology is a source of empowerment and community, anxiety and distraction, and a venue for demonstrating the best and worst of human nature, it seemed essential to explore its reciprocal effects.

Identifying and consolidating a career has assumed center stage in the lives of emerging and young adults. Many emerging and young adults are navigating non-linear and unconventional career paths, a process for which they may find little precedent or guidance. Following such a course, it may be difficult to identify pathways and behavioral strategies that lead to an outcome of a satisfying career, rather than one of disappointment and stagnation. Exploration and experimentation can result in uniquely successful outcomes. However, at some point they may cease to be adaptive. Chapter 7 addresses many of the concerns being raised by employers, parents, and emerging and young adults, who are questioning these routes.

Chapter 8 has been substantially revised to present a developmental framework for understanding the degree of stress emerging and young adults are

experiencing. Although this transition period is a time to experiment with values, commitments, and possible selves, it may also be a period of overwhelming choice and confusion. The highly competitive and unstable environment and the inadequate structural supports facing many emerging and young adults often lead to emotional vulnerability. Emerging and young adults find themselves psychologically at risk for a range of mental health disorders, such as major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder. Chapter 8 addresses the issues related to how social and personal development for emerging and young adults can be overshadowed by feelings of uncertainty and instability.

I wish to thank three exceptional individuals, (two of whom are emerging adults), whom it has been my pleasure to work with: Teyana Curran, Samantha Karwin, and Mark Nickels. Their outstanding research skills, keen insights, and editing abilities have truly enhanced this book. I am forever grateful and honored to know them; their “presence” and commitment to this topic is noteworthy and inspiring. I am also grateful for the support that Laura Brennan, James Gardner, and Victor Peralta provided on this project.

Finally, at the time of the first edition, my two children were either entering emerging adulthood or in the throes of navigating this challenging period. I was frequently baffled by their choices, choices that could have far-reaching implications for their futures. As I mention in the first edition of this book, when under press, I would often resort to the position that my children would profit from picking up the pace and living their lives using developmental markers familiar to me. Both “wandered” from their initial course and appear to be all the better for the journey. Thank you, Amanda and Jeremy, for being my teachers and having faith in my abilities to shift set and learn from your experiences.

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