Consider this line of reasoning.

1. Richard Dawkins (*The Selfish Gene*) compared genes to memes (his word). The former are tangible packets of information passed down from generation to generation while the latter are *intangible* packets of information passed down from generation to generation.
2. Alice Miller (*The Drama of the Gifted Child*) described how every child gets two "gifts", a set of genes and a set of beliefs passed on by their caregivers. Passed on while these babies/toddlers are defenseless.
3. William Glasser (*Choice Theory*) noted three parental assumptions/memes/beliefs that all parents worldwide share:
    a. I know what's right for my child.
    b. I have a right/responsibility to teach my child what's right for them.
    c. I have a right/responsibility to punish my child if they don't do what's right for them.
4. Richard Brodie (*The Virus of the Mind: The New Science of Memes*) applied a "mental linear accelerator" (my term) to break "memes" into three "quarks":
    a. Distinction memes: good versus bad
    b. Strategy memes: if X, then Y
    c. Association memes: New York State, France, Mercedes, etc.
5. My "mental linear accelerator" breaks memes into four "quarks":
    a. Values
    b. Assumptions
    c. Beliefs
    d. Expectations
    e. All about *the way the world is or should be*. VABEs for short.
6. Ed Schein (MIT in personal conversation) described first, physical artifacts like Meso-American pyramids, second, invisible rituals performed there, and third, **why** did they (make human sacrifices) do what they did?
7. I adapted this reasoning to human behavior generally in *Level Three Leadership* to describe
    a. Level One as what people say and do, what one can capture on film.
    b. Level Two Conscious Thought—we think, we know we think, and we choose to reveal at Level One everything we think—although sometimes we "leak" what we're thinking with a sigh, frown or a shrug.
    c. Level Three is our semi-conscious VABEs. The memes we've been taught since birth. And hence the perpetuation of the world's religions and tribal cultures.

8. Daniel Kahneman (*Thinking, Fast and Slow*) (including his work with Amos Tversky) noted that most people, the vast majority of people trust their beliefs OVER reliable evidence.
9. David Eller (*Natural Atheism*) asserts that we are all born atheist and are taught by our caregivers what we should believe about the gods.
10. Melanie Klein (*Love, Guilt and Reparation*) describes the natural process by which we all have love and aggression in our relationships, love our caregivers, then push their acceptable boundaries, feel bad about that, and finally come to a reconciliation with them by making amends as best we can.
11. Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (*The Evolving Self*) describes how a person can become more than a simple product of one's caregivers' guidance and direction. I think his question therein is the #1 question in life: **"Will you ever be anything more than a vessel transmitting the genes and memes of previous generations on to the next?"**
12. Carl Rogers (*On Becoming a Person*) asserts that psychological maturity (adulthood) is something we all can achieve, that the ability is within us.
13. In my opinion, "adult" means someone who has identified and examined carefully their inherited genes and memes and chosen which to keep, which to lose, and which to add to their repertoire as a functioning person.