

Birth order influences personality

By Sheryl A. Machita

Have you ever wondered why one of your roommates takes college so seriously and is always studying, while your other roommate thinks his biggest problem is finding out where next weekend's party is?

Everyone is interested in finding out why people are the way they are.

Although genetic inheritance or astrology might aid some people in understanding themselves, research shows that birth order—the position a child holds within the family—affects personality.

According to Dr. Sandra Prince-Embury, assistant professor in psychology at Capitol Campus: "I think that in understanding birth order they can understand and accept some of the natural grain of themselves and others, so that they can work with the effects of birth order as opposed to trying to work against them."

So, by being aware of the effects of birth order, you can better deal with the people around you—roommates, parents, professors, and bosses.

The study of birth order on personal achievement is not new. Over half a century ago, Dr. Alfred Adler, physician, psychiatrist, and psychologist, was first to realize the importance that family position has on a person's development.

According to Dr. Lucille Forer, co-author of *The Birth Order Factor*, "One grows to associate those possibilities in feelings, behavior, and attitudes with one's role or place in the family. These roles form the basis for personality development and the basis for adult behavior patterns—the why of birth order effects."

For example, an only child is usually self-confident because there is no competition in the family. An only child is likely to be dominant, verbal, and a perfectionist, as well.

Famous only children include Leonardo Da Vinci, Sammy Davis Jr., Albert Einstein, and Indira Gandhi.

As parents are more strict with the first-borns, this birth order position tends to produce serious, self-sufficient, and achievement-oriented individuals. Henry Ford, Katherine Hepburn, Gloria Steinem, Pablo Picasso, and George Washington are in this position.

A second-or-middle-child is likely to be diplomatic, friendly,

may be influenced by birth order.

Forer says that first-borns prefer working with ideas, while later-borns are more interested in practical pursuits involving interaction.

One study found that a large percentage of scholars and university professors were first-borns, and 52 percent of U. S. Presidents were first-borns.

"...an only child is usually self-confident because there is no competition in the family. An only child is likely to be dominant, verbal, and a perfectionist, as well."

and a good negotiator, because the position forces the individual to learn how to manipulate other siblings. Well-known second-borns are Richard Nixon, John Kennedy, Susan B. Anthony, and Joan Baez.

And then there is the baby of the family. The youngest develops strong expectations that there will always be someone around to take care of him or her. For this reason, the youngest is usually carefree, fun-loving, and lighthearted. Include here: Ted Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson, Beverly Sills, and Gertrude Stein.

Do Capitol Campus students follow this norm?

In an informal survey of 40 Capitol Campus students, a majority described themselves in terms typical of their birth order.

Four out of six only children surveyed agreed that they were verbal, dominant, and perfectionists.

Eight out of ten first-borns felt they were serious, independent, self-sufficient, and achievement-oriented.

Deviating more were the youngest with only three out of eleven agreeing that they were fun, carefree, and lighthearted. And second-or-middle-borns with six out of thirteen saying they were diplomatic, friendly, and good negotiators.

More extensive research shows that career choice

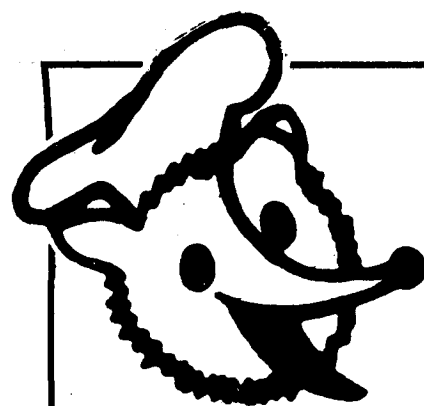
ture, and chemistry fields, while later-borns are more likely to be in the creative arts.

In the campus survey, most of the students were majoring in fields that matched their birth order positions.

For those interested in learning more about birth order, Prince-Embury (a first-born) recommends Dr. Walter Toman's Book, *Family Constellation*, which examines hundreds of birth order case studies.

Dr. Joseph Dreiss, assistant professor in psychology at Capitol Campus (a second-born) says, "Researchers have never found one main factor that accounts for a person's personality."

"Remember that nothing absolute or irreversible results from your birth position," says Forer. "Your development may or may not conform to that experienced by others with the same birth position. Through understanding birth order as one of many factors which have formed you, it is possible to change your viewpoint, attitudes, and life-style."



Fox's Markets

Visit Fox's Famous Deli

**Tender Aged Western Beef
Lunch Meats and Cheese Fresh Sliced to Order**

You'll find what you're looking for at Fox's

**Full variety in all departments
Plus our famous In-store Bakery**

You get goodies hot from our oven

**Middletown
101 South Union Street
944-7486**

Hershey
731 Cherry Drive

Union Deposit
Union Deposit Mall
564-5996

Hours:

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Thursday and Friday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.**



**harrisburg
reproductive
health
services**

Birth Control Pregnancy Testing
VD Screening Abortion
Counseling

100 Chestnut Street, Suite 106, Harrisburg, PA 17101 (717) 232-9794