

The Everlasting Order: How Intelligence and Personality  
Is Affected or Nullified by Birth Order

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Chapter 1: Unfriendly Confines

Jean Silver is a 24-year-old Purchase alumna, who lives in her childhood home. She's been searching for receptionist and administrative assistant roles since graduating from Purchase with degrees in two fields, journalism, and arts management.

Growing up in public housing, on 61<sup>st</sup> and West End Avenue in Manhattan, Silver had to claw her way through homework due to the confined living space that she, her mother Mildred Rey, and her sister, Cristina Ledesma, lived in.

Silver remembers sharing a room with her mother while Ledesma was attending high school. It was a way for Ledesma to get privacy while maturing into a young adult—a sacrifice that Silver had to make for her older sibling.

The bare beige white walls encircled Silver in her studies, but for the most part, it was just the place where she slept. One night, after sinking into her pink princess bedding and comforter, a thunderous shout awoke Silver. Her clock read 2 a.m., and her mother wasn't lying in bed next to her.

The arguing ensued and Silver didn't move; she could tell it was her sister and mother fighting but had little idea of what it was about. "Why are you coming home so late?" Silver could hear her mother scream, but before she knew it, crash!

"I was just so terrified," said Silver. "I didn't know what was going on, I know my sister was a pain in the ass a lot of the times, but I don't know what she did to deserve being hit, especially in the bathroom, I just wanted to make sure that it didn't happen to me at all."

Silver was 9 years old at the time and couldn't tell what happened. In one quick motion her mother opened the door and told Silver to remain in bed and go to sleep. Looking up at her mom, Silver could do nothing except nod and close her eyes.

She later learned that the crash was her sister. Ledesma fell in the shower after her mother, Rey, had hit her. Although she understood her mother's frustration, Silver didn't expect her to strike Ledesma. Despite the curiosity and concern, Silver never mentioned the incident to either of them.

The incident was part of a broader pattern—one where Ledesma continuously showed Silver how not to behave as a teenager. Ledesma was constantly disagreeing with their mother, which made these arguments routine for Silver. A massive 11-year age gap separated Silver and Ledesma, which caused a rift in their relationship. Often acting out on her own, Ledesma had trouble following her mother's rules, which put Silver in a compromising position. Constantly sneaking around, Ledesma took pride in making her own decisions.

Silver had no choice but to put up with Ledesma's transgressions because of the restricted living space. The constant worry that Rey felt from Ledesma encouraged Rey to be extra cautious when Silver was growing up.

Behind the wall of their living room was the kitchen that could only fit one to two people at a time, and next to that wall was the dining room table. Often doing homework on the living room couch and at the dining room table, Silver struggled to work in her bedroom because the only place to write was on her bed.

Several years later, the night before Silver's ACT test, Ledesma and her friends were causing havoc in the apartment, as well as in the hallway outside: smoking weed, playing music, and talking loudly. Silver strained her eyes and forehead to study.

Rey had been dealing with this kind of behavior for years and was growing increasingly frustrated. She barked at Ledesma to quiet down because of Silver's test, but this alone didn't fix all the issues at the forefront of the teenage Silver's brain. The anxiety of doing poorly, the fear

of leading a life in the same fashion as her sister, the thought of failing to pass high school and letting down her mother, would eat at her daily. By the time Silver was in high school, she had already gotten used to being quiet and staying focused on schoolwork. She reminisced about the disgusted look on her mother's face when Ledesma got her G.E.D. The notion that she had two children who wouldn't achieve beyond her own success was frightening.

"My mom also got her GED, so it was important for her that I graduated," said Silver. "In my sister's case it was disappointing, my mom had this mad facial expression, and you could tell by her condescending tone that she wasn't happy."

Rey shielded Silver from compromising situations, which made her grow up shy, and without a strong support group until she got to college. Due to Silver's position as the younger of two children, her life was circumscribed, in part, by the actions of her older sister. The older sibling often undertakes a lot of responsibility when their younger sibling is born, but not every situation develops in the same manner. Ledesma's decisions to disobey, induced Rey to restrict and take even more precautions during Silver's adolescence.

Silver might've lost a lot of opportunities at dating, meeting new people, and exploring the city with her friends in high school, but she still managed to sneak around sometimes. "Just hanging out with people, sometimes I would lie, say I'm by myself, and she would just blow up my phone," said Silver. "Even recently I was playing games at Dave N' Busters with my friends, and it was past midnight: my mom just started texting me and my friends were shocked."

Children who grow up with a disobedient sibling usually follow one or two directions. The most likely effect it has is deterring the other sibling away from confrontation or emotionally driven conversations. They will cower in their room instead of standing up for themselves and become desolate and shy in socially rambunctious situations. An atmosphere of

disrespect and abuse becomes normal, which can sprout as a characteristic for future relationships, both romantic and platonic.

Birth order is inescapable, and it can have a significant impact on the experiences and outcomes of someone's life. Its effects are discussed and debated, but what is undebatable is the fact that nobody chooses when they're born. It's impossible to understand your circumstances as a baby, but as you grow up there are specific qualities that can sprout and grow faster than others based on what position of the family you were born into.

### Chapter 2: What Is Birth Order?

The ever-changing variables in a person's life are tough to understand, making it hard to figure out why we act in a certain manner. In 1874, Sir Francis Galton noticed that most of the members in his academic community in England were the eldest children in their families. In the journal, "[Examining the effects of birth order on personality](#)," researchers explained that Galton was the youngest of nine children and suspected that in each family, the oldest son got special treatment from their parents. It wasn't until decades later that Alfred Adler was the first psychotherapist to establish childbirth order theory. His conclusions for each birth position are unique but his ideas have mostly served as a progenitor to researching birth order. Adler's intuition to focus on birth order has led to greater research, and since the 1950s the consensus on birth order has shifted multiple times.

Adler believed that first, middle, last-born children, and singletons had different experiences that correlated to their birth order, and in 1927 he published a book titled "Understanding Human Nature." According to a journal article, "An Analysis of Empirical Validity of Alfred Adler's Theory of Birth Order," Adler had studied human nature since the beginning of the 20th century, and although Alder preached that psychological birth order is

more important than the numerical number, most of his ideas focus on actual birth order because of the immense difficulty of gathering nuanced data based on psychological birth order.

Adler believed singletons were much more confident and self-centered than children with siblings. They tend to get frustrated quickly when they don't get their way and can desire to be more like adults—which can affect how well they relate with their peers.

A first-born child's goal is to please authority, and according to [Ali Roff Farrar](#), jealousy can be a guiding factor once the second child in the family is born. Adler believed first-born children felt superior to their younger siblings because they're born into leadership roles and learn about responsibility first. They benefit from experiencing greater independence than their siblings and are also given more attention from their parents at a young age which speeds up cognitive development.

Middle children often feel lost in the family because they aren't usually in the limelight. According to [Benita Weems](#), middle children feel left out because they don't get as much attention as the eldest, whether it's for breaking rules or gaining independence, and don't get special treatment for being the youngest. Middle children in larger families are likely to be more cooperative because another sibling shares their role and experience, albeit from a different vantage point, due to birth order.

The youngest child of the family may not experience as much cognitive development at an early age as their elder siblings because their parents have more children to look after. Youngest children can also feel inferior to the rest of their family, because they may not be taken seriously. According to Dr. Bryce Sullivan and Dr. Andrew Schwebel, younger siblings tend to hesitate, have more anxiety, and feel unaccepted. One of the main reasons why Adler's

psychology is based around the feeling of inferiority is because he was a younger brother and experienced an inferiority complex.

While researching human nature, Adler came up with a few conclusions. It's within human nature to seek social relationships, and according to Adler, without them we can easily become lost due to our weakness as an individual animal. In "Understanding Human Nature," Adler writes, "The whole animal kingdom demonstrates the fundamental law that species whose members are incapable of facing the battle for self-preservation gather new strength through herd life."

Adler pointed out that if humans never came together and acted as one through a herd-like lifestyle, then none of us would be here today. We aren't physically strong enough to live in the wild, fending off lions, tigers, and bears by ourselves; we don't adapt to our habitat as well as camels, and we don't have highly effective hearing or eyesight that is required to alert ourselves to possible predators.

Acting within a herd has evolutionary impacts, and these have cultivated the society that we are living in today. [According to an article on the website Northwestern Medicine](#), "As humans, the relationships we form with other people are vital to our mental and emotional well-being and even our survival."

Developing and maintaining relationships has become the most important aspect of living. As [Dr. Sheehan D. Fisher](#), an associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, advised in the article, "Focus on having a network of social support."

Since we can safely conclude that social relationships are major factors in our lives, we can recognize that they would play a major role in our development. This is where birth order

comes into effect. Adler argued that our circumstances and experiences vary, based on where we are born within our family.

Adler's studies provide a baseline for understanding different aspects of yourself that you might not have noticed previously. When it comes to birth order theory, psychologists and sociologists today aren't referring to his conclusions as one might expect. A medically reviewed article proposed the question, "What is Adlerian Theory?" Described as a holistic approach, the article emphasizes important nuances within Adler's studies that help patients identify characteristics about themselves. Adler's goals during therapy were to help patients recognize the environmental impacts they had at a young age. With the knowledge of why you act a certain way, it is easier to calculate what to do to build a healthier mind. Although Adler's birth order theory is far from ideal, it can provide people a means of understanding themselves, as well as a path forward.

According to [WebMD](#), parents are usually far more worried about messing things up with their eldest child, and will do everything in their power to make sure they receive enough attention. [Jocelyn Voo](#) wrote in August 2022, "They (first-born children) often have an intense [fear of failure](#), so nothing they accomplish feels good enough."

Children born in the middle of their siblings are most likely to compromise. Voo writes: "The middle child is often a people-pleaser due to the lack of attention they get compared to older siblings and younger siblings."

This scenario for the middle child can distort their own identity; if they aren't the youngest or the eldest, then what are they? Dr. Michelle Maidenberg is a therapist/social worker and frequent blogger on Psychology Today. "Middle kids are in a difficult position in a family



because they think they're not valued," says Dr. Maidenberg. "It's easy for them to be left out and get lost in the shuffle."

In Silver's case, her family dynamic is much different—her sister's lack of responsibility led to her mother having a much harsher set of rules when Silver got older. Silver never got to live an adolescence similar to many youngest children.

### Chapter 3: The Inception of Ideas

Despite Francis Galton questioning his observation about his academic community, birth order theory didn't officially begin until Alfred Adler hypothesized about personality differences and intellectual differences between siblings in 1928.

Adler was born in Austria in 1870, two years after his older brother Sigmund Adler. The beginning of his life was agonizing at times; Adler grew up with rickets, a disease caused by Vitamin D deficiency that affects the bones.

The softening of his bones caused by this disease hindered Adler's motor skills, causing him to lag far behind the capacity of Sigmund, with whom he would compete his entire childhood. In 1874, Alfred's younger brother, 1-year-old, Rudolf, who shared a bed with him, died from [diphtheria](#). At age 5, Adler would suffer from a serious case of pneumonia that nearly killed him.

His biographer and family friend, British novelist Phyllis Bottome, recalled Adler saying, "The doctor, who had suddenly been called in, told my father that there was no point in going to the trouble of looking after me as there was no hope of my living. At once a frightful terror came over me and a few days later when I was well, I decided definitely to become a doctor so that I should have a better defense against the danger of death."

Death always seemed to be in close contact with Adler, as he was struck by horse-drawn carriages twice while growing up – luckily, he didn't sustain any serious injuries. These close calls with death terrified Adler and prompted him to take a serious approach toward becoming a doctor.

Adler began his studies at the University of Vienna Medical school in 1888, gaining his doctorate in 1895. His first doctorial occupation was as an ophthalmologist but would eventually switch to general practice and work in a less affluent part of Vienna from where he grew up. The job was located near an amusement park and circus, in which the performers would inspire Adler to develop his thoughts on inferiority and compensation.

In 1902, Adler met Sigmund Freud, whom he'd have meetings with every Wednesday night with Rudolf Reitler and Wilhelm Stekel at Freud's home in Berggasse 19. This small gathering grew, and the conversations led to the creation of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1908.

Adler was the first President of the coalition but would depart from Freud in 1911 because of his disagreement with Freud on the importance of the social realm. Freud believed the mind was composed of three parts the id, the ego, and the superego, in which all three are influenced by thoughts, unconscious memories, and urges. Although he and Adler shared in the belief that a patient's experiences during childhood deserved recognition, Adler disagreed with Freud's assertion that people reacted in line with their sexual and aggressive urges. Rather, he believed that the inferiority complex that we develop as children were the driving forces for human desire.

Adler believed that our surroundings when we were growing up played a serious role in our psychological development. He then formed the Society of Individual Psychology in 1912.

After serving in the Austrian army during World War I, Adler would set up multiple child guidance clinics throughout the country. His theories centralized the importance of the social realm and focused on the impact that parents and siblings had on future psychological issues.

The Nazis began closing Adler's clinics in 1932, he fled from Vienna, and the clinics were completely closed by 1934. He immigrated to the United States and became a visiting professor at the Long Island College of Medicine. In 1937 he went on a lecture tour and suffered a fatal heart attack, in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Over the years, Adlerian theory has been called into question, and numerous psychologists have conducted studies to test birth order effects. Dr. Brent W. Roberts and Dr. Rodica Ioana Damian conducted a [study](#) in 2015 and were published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). A sample of 377,000 high school students in the United States was experimented on to test the correlation between birth order and personality traits. The results were damning: only .02% of the sample showed a correlation between the two. Another experiment was done on this sample group, which measured birth order and intelligence, which resulted in a .04% correlation. "The largest, most methodologically sophisticated studies in existence show little or no functional relation between birth order and personality. Newer data will have to provide evidence for much larger effects in equally large samples to counter the weight of the evidence."

Dr. Julia Rohrer, Dr. Boris Egloff, and Dr. Stefan C. Schmukle completed a [study](#) in 2015 that produced similar results, and in the past two decades there has been a ton of research being published that nullify birth order effects.

Adler's theories have led to others like Dr. Frank J. Sulloway to come up with their own theories on birth order. Sulloway earned his Ph.D. in History of Science at Harvard in 1978 and

was a recipient of the MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant in 1984 for his research on birth order. His ideas were heavily influenced by Charles Darwin, and in 1996 he concluded in his book “Born to Rebel” that there were obvious correlations between personality and birth order. His book, although controversial, was a massive success and was recognized as a revolutionary study at the time.

Dr. Sulloway is currently working on a study that involves the same variables. He started in 2000 and has samples from 550,000 people, which 90% of the sample is made up of residents from the U.S, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The study has 20 different moderator effects, which include family size, nationality, and social class. He then divided the results into 10 groups and accounted for acquiescence. This is when a subject agrees or disagrees with a questionnaire regardless of the content. For example, acquiescing could be answering a scaled question in a yes or no manner, or true or false manner, rather than using the scale completely, which disrupts the reliability of the scale. Another way to acquiesce is if the question is asking on a one to five scale how introverted is the subject? The subject may answer with a four or five. The next question asks how extroverted the subject is? And then they answer with a four or five. This interaction is impossible because you can't be the same amount of introverted as extroverted. In Dr. Sulloway's experience, the groups that contained no acquiescence had between 5 to 10 times larger effects than the groups that did acquiesce.

Dr. Sulloway has had an issue with how researchers in the past two decades have calculated their data. In an email to me, Sulloway created an equation where the correlation of personality and birth order is .03. After attenuating the data and accounting for reliability, the new correlation in groups that didn't acquiesce was .125 and for groups that acquiesced the most, it was .051. In the email he wrote, “The true collective effect size from such a study of birth

order effects among student participants who did not acquiescence is likely around .125 (plus or minus some error in our calculation, depending largely on the sample size of the study)—which is equivalent to a medicine that would increase survival from a deadly disease from 43.75% to 56.25%, or an increase of 28.6% over the base rate.”

The [full two emails](#) that Sulloway sent me explain other ways to calculate the data for what he deems the most reliable correlation. His disagreement with how active psychologists are obtaining their numbers hasn't gone over too well with his contemporaries. In an interview with me, Dr. Roberts said, “Sulloway himself is working hard on a similarly sized data set, he's using every statistical trick in the book to support his findings.”

#### Chapter 4: If the Glove Doesn't Fit...

Although 40-year-old Michel Issa takes care of his mother and has been living as an adult for years, his siblings would reach out for daily updates until recently. Dressed in vibrant colors, with a huge smile complimenting his distinctively friendly aura, Issa is the youngest of six. His brother Jefferson Issa, who is the second youngest in the family, doesn't get the same treatment, which has led Issa to believe it's because he's the youngest of the family. Issa was a surprise baby, which made him a lot younger than his siblings. His eldest sister, Luana, gave birth to a son the same year as Issa and moved from their hometown of Santo André, Brazil, to New York within Issa's first few years.

Since he was a boy, he was expected to be manly and tough just like his older brother, but Issa was different. He was a drama kid with an expressive attitude towards the arts. He's also gay. Issa's sexuality was frowned upon in the area he grew up in, which made it very hard for him to come out to his family. He still remembers the hints his parents would drop about their unacceptance of homosexuality.

“When something about gay people would show on TV, my parents would make comments that they wouldn’t welcome somebody in their family who was gay, and I obviously would hear that and reflect,” said Issa.

Around the age of 12, Issa’s parents signed him up for capoeira, a Brazilian martial art disguised as a dance. Disappointed and unenthusiastic, Issa walked his way towards the capoeira gym, and *bam!* Right next to capoeira was a theater class. After the first martial-art session, Issa snuck to the theater class and spoke to the directors to see if he could switch spots. Luckily, they allowed him, and after that he snuck to the theater class every day.

Despite hiding his sexuality and interests, Issa had kept theater in his life throughout his adolescence. When you’re born last, there’s a standard that the rest of the family expects you to meet. Issa said, “I used to feel a lot of pressure. They would all say, ‘He’s the smartest one, he’s the last chance, we all fucked up.’ ”

From 14-18 years old, Issa went to school for mechanics in Brazil. He absolutely hated it but was too worried that his family would devalue him if he expressed other interests. “They wanted me to follow a career path that they appreciated,” said Issa. “I did whatever they wanted me to do, learned whatever they wanted me to learn.”

Issa’s siblings had very high expectations of him, he said; they all seemed to fail at one point and weren’t in the position that they had dreamed of. Being the youngest, Issa was the last chance to bring glory to the family. His sisters inspired him and had a lot of love for their youngest brother but sometimes he wanted space.

“I wish I had been released a little earlier, but at the same time I appreciate the things that happened to me that were unique,” said Issa. “Even though I wanted to be more independent, I feel like having them around was also a good thing.”

A few years after moving to the U.S at 18, he and his older brother started their own manufacturing business in mechanics. Despite appreciating the lessons, Issa described the eight years working as a mechanic as the worst time of his life. Luckily, he had a position within HB Studios, a drama school in New York City, and would help with their projects despite not having a formal degree.

He still wanted to be the brother and son his family expected him to be. This added weight often falls on the first-born child, but because of his upbringing, Issa chased the standards that his family had put on him.

This attitude would continue into his 30s, until Issa had finally had enough. Three years ago, when Issa started smoking pot, his mother approached him accusingly with a baggy of his weed. Early in the morning, nearly out of the door for work, and here comes Issa's mother asking him if he's taking his life seriously.

She was worried about the possibility of him moving onto other drugs, predominately cocaine, which is one of the most popular recreational drugs in South America. Issa said, "Imagine a 38-year-old having to report to his mom about having a little bit of weed in his coat."

He recently graduated from SUNY Purchase in May 2022, as a playwriting and screenwriting major.

Fortunately for Issa he's finally found a place in life where he enjoys work and is strongly connected to his family. During the mornings he works as an online ESL teacher for students in Brazil, and during the day he waits tables. Eager for more opportunities to teach, Issa is considering getting a degree in education.

Nora Baier is a 20-year-old studio composition major in the Music Conservatory at SUNY Purchase. She has one sister, Rocky, who is four years older. Growing up in Phoenix,

Baier lived with Rocky, her father, Neil, and her mother, Mara. She and her sister's lives in high school couldn't have been more different, which led to the two of them having unique relationships with their parents. Rocky is highly motivated academically, while Nora tried her hardest to put in as little effort as possible. For the most part Nora was doing fine, but Rocky's overachieving attitude set their parents expectations for Nora miles high.

Rocky Baier, a 4.0 GPA student who graduated from the University of Arizona as a journalism major, interned at a newspaper in Israel for two years after graduation. Nora recalls her parents' joyous faces when Rocky made the cover of the newspaper. She already knew that she and her sister were very different, but Nora's passion for music was all she needed to set herself up for success.

Dr. Laura Botzet, a German psychiatrist who has written multiple scholarly articles about birth order, said in an interview with me, "There's a study from Scandinavia that says first-borns take on a traditional role, like the medical field, or engineering, and the later-borns are more likely to study art."

Rocky excelled academically, Nora excelled creatively. Rocky wasn't a partier, barely finishing her Mike's Hard Lemonade at high school parties, and Nora was caught smoking weed at school when she was 14.

"They pulled me out of school, they picked me up during sixth period, and my dad was like, 'You have the car ride home to tell us what's going on,' and lectured me for like two hours," said Baier. She knew her parents loved her, but the constant comparisons she and her parents placed on her would eat at her during high school. After graduating high school during the pandemic, Baier would drop out of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff in her first semester. "I had just had a manic episode, I was rebuilding my life, and I needed to be back



home at that time,” said Baier. “My mom goes, if you’re not in school, you don’t have a job, and you’re not pushing your music, what are you doing? You’re wasting away!”

Baier worked at a restaurant from January to July in 2021 and moved out of her parents’ house in August of the same year. She began going to community college that August and got a job at SoJo’s, a local donut shop in Mesa, Arizona. Later that year in 2022, Baier would be accepted into Purchase and move to New York. Luckily, Baier has found herself through music as a singer/songwriter, and her creative talents are beginning to sparkle. After she released her EP “Departure,” this past August, Nora’s father called her up and told her how much he believes in her music, stating that he forgot how amazingly talented she is.

On a burning August day in 2022, running around the Brooklyn streets, huffing, and puffing on a cigarette in a bathrobe, was Shelton Jones. Who was he running from? Camille Jones, his 32-year-old sister. Jones is a 19-year-old journalism major at SUNY Purchase, who grew up as the youngest in a family with three older sisters.

It was a routine morning, but for Jones, his worst nightmare would come true. His sister knew he smoked. Instead of running him into the ground, his sister was honest. Jones recalled what she said: “I don’t know why you ran. I used to smoke cigarettes, too. You should stop, but you’re 19 now – you’re your own person.”

His eccentric presentation could rub his siblings and mother the wrong way, but Jones wasn’t the type of person to quit being himself. Fashioned in ripped clothing that shows off his legs, Jones was fulfilled revealing the confidence he had in his body. His sisters lived more reserved lives during their adolescence, but Jones wasn’t going to let that change him.

Jones’ youngest sister, Natasha, is 12 years older than he is, which makes his relationship with her less sibling-to-sibling and more sibling-to-elder. Gliding by Natasha in their apartment,

Jones had to walk through her room to get to the secret door that led to his room. This routine was done day after day, so it was no coincidence that Jones and Natasha fought.

Jones and his sister's constant bickering started from the very beginning. Jones overtook Natasha's title as the baby in the family and relished in his position. Spoiled, smart, confident with sass, Jones isn't the kind of person to bow down, even to his older sisters.

It seems like an impossible task, but Jones and Natasha continued this routine while not speaking to one another for an entire year. Constantly disrupting one another's peace, the two had a falling out while Jones was in high school.

"I basically told her straight up, even though you're my sister, we don't have to speak," said Jones. "I could tell that really hurt her, and my mother tried to get us to talk, but she didn't even think we would ever be able to reconcile because Natasha felt disrespected."

Describing his middle sister Camille as a father figure, Jones can share things with her without feeling out of place, but even she was shocked when Jones announced to the family that he wanted to pursue pornography instead of college. "My family is kind of known in my neighborhood," he said, "and they basically told me this is not how we represent ourselves." Eventually Jones understood the concern and decided to go to college but continue making pornographic content on OnlyFans.

He had always been the odd one out in his age range, and he attributed that to growing up around much older siblings. Becoming friends with seniors as a freshman in high school, Jones decided to skip 11<sup>th</sup> grade and graduate a year early. "Being around older people and having an older mindset makes you unintentionally rush through life," said Shelton. "I appreciate my situation because it's made me who I am, and I'll always love my siblings no matter how much they piss me off."

Chapter 5: Open-Ended Finish

Dr. Roberts, one of the co-authors of the 2015 study challenging Adler's theories, believes that because of their latest study, it doesn't make sense to believe that birth order plays a major factor in personality or intelligence. "Birth order theorists had articulated a lot of potential compounds," said Roberts in an interview. "When you look at family size, if you're middle-born but you're middle of ten against middle of three it's completely different."

Roberts went on to say that there are little differences in IQ between siblings, but if there were to be one correlation with birth order, that would be it. The progression of births usually equates to a decrease in one IQ point, which means first borns typically have a higher IQ than middle and last borns. The problem that arises here, is the difference in socioeconomic status (SES). "High SES families have fewer kids, and it's also a precursor to higher IQ, so if your sample is a bunch of college kids, your findings might be biased."

The most valuable part of any research are the facts, and although there were much more results in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that supported the notion that birth order played a major role in personality, the past 10 years have attempted to clarify that empirically, this isn't true. Botzet said, "Research agrees that there is nothing there (personality wise). What we can focus on is intelligence and entertainment, and even that isn't conclusive."

If the recent studies weren't published, then Sulloway would've already stopped researching birth order. There's plenty weighing on Sulloway's findings in his new study because it could provide the world with a new revolutionary study, claiming that the effects are even more significant than we once thought. There are a ton of anecdotal perspectives and empirical perspectives that must be considered before coming to a concrete conclusion about birth order, but it seems like the debate will continue for some time.

### Source List

**Nora Baier:** Baier is 20 years old and has a sister who is older by 4 years but due to their unusual dynamic her and her family make jokes about how their relationship is backwards due to Nora's mature nature. She is currently a junior at SUNY Purchase and admits that she feels a bit older than she is at times.

Phone: (480) 773-4580 email: [nora.baier@purchase.edu](mailto:nora.baier@purchase.edu)

**Dr. Laura Botzet:** German psychiatrist, commanded a major study on birth order effects. Email [botzet@uni-goettingen.de](mailto:botzet@uni-goettingen.de)

**Michel Issa:** Issa is 40 years old, and the youngest of six siblings. His eldest sister is fourteen years older than he is which makes his situation very interesting, because even though he is a 40-year-old man his siblings are still very protective over him.

**Shelton Jones:** 19-year-old junior at SUNY Purchase, has three older sisters. The age gap between him and his sisters is very large, his youngest sister is currently 29 years old. He and his youngest sister have had problems in the past. Coming out as pansexual was hard, but Shelton has had strong support from his family. Email: [shelton.jones@purchase.edu](mailto:shelton.jones@purchase.edu)

**Dr. Brent Roberts:** American psychiatrist, completed research on one of the biggest samples for birth order effects. Email: [bwrobrts@illinois.edu](mailto:bwrobrts@illinois.edu)

**Jean Silver:** 24 years old and has a sister who is 11 years older than she is. Jean feels like her parents tried to shelter her because her sister made a lot of mistakes before she even had the opportunity to. This has resulted in Jean being a little less outgoing than she wishes, which has cost her opportunities and experiences she might've been more eager to chase if her parents hadn't held her back.

**Dr. Frank J. Sulloway:** Birth order theorist and professor at University of California Berkeley. Has published numerous books and studies about the effects of birth order. Email: [sulloway@berkeley.edu](mailto:sulloway@berkeley.edu)

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