

Intermediate 3
Unit 5 Reading
Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur

Birth Rank

rank = where you stand

What is your birth rank? = Where do you stand in your family?

Psychologists have long been aware that birth order generally creates certain personality traits. Big brothers and sisters usually develop leadership tendencies early in life, mainly because of the responsibilities for younger siblings given to them by their parents. The danger, experts on family and child psychology report, is that if the older sibling takes that role to an extreme, he or she can become an overbearing and tyrannical adult.

be aware = know

personality = character

trait = characteristic

tend (v.) = incline

tendency (n.) = inclination

sibling = brother or sister

on = about

role = part

take sth to an extreme = go beyond the normal limits

overbearing = dictatorial

tyranny (n.) = oppression = unfair treatment of other people because of being more powerful than them

tyrannical (adj.) = oppressive = using, showing, or relating to the unfair and cruel use of power over other people in a country, group, etc.

Studies of nearly 3,000 people conducted by Walter Toman, former professor of psychology at Brandies University in Massachusetts, have found that, under normal circumstances, firstborns are usually the most strongly motivated toward achievement. This, he maintains, is mainly a result of parental expectations.



Walter Toman

conduct = do, perform, carry out

former = previous

circumstance = condition

motivated (adj.) = very enthusiastic or determined because you really want to do something

achievement = accomplishment

maintain = insist, emphasize

This and other research suggest that firstborn children generally become more conservative than their siblings because they receive most of the parental discipline. Used to caring for others, they are more likely to move toward such leadership professions as teaching and politics. Less social and flexible because they became accustomed in the very early years to acting alone, they may have difficulty making close friends.

conservative ≠ liberal

Conservative people are usually against changes.

discipline (n.) = the system of rules and punishments to control a person or oneself

used to = accustomed to, in the habit of

care = look after, take care of

profession = job, career, occupation, vocation

politics = the art and science of governing a country

flexible ≠ inflexible

By contrast, researchers say later children are more likely to be more relaxed and sociable, and less inhibited than the eldest child because their parents were more relaxed. However, later children are often less ambitious and are uncomfortable making decisions for others, and will seek work that fits such needs. This, according to researchers, may help explain why younger siblings tend to favor the creative fields such as music, art, or writing.

By contrast = In contrast = on the other hand

likely = probable

inhibited = limited

ambitious = having a strong wish to be successful, powerful, or rich

seek = look for

favor (v.) = prefer

Later children often make good salespeople because persuasion may have been the only tool they had to counteract the power of the eldest. Younger children tend to remain forever "the baby", enjoyable to be around, and inspiring compassion; but they can become overdependent on others.

persuasion = the ability to convince other people

counteract = deal with, confront

compassion = kindness

over-dependent = much too dependent

dependent (on sb/sth) ≠ independent (of sb/sth)

While birth order is clearly only one of the many factors that affect development, its impact should not be underestimated. When people understand how their birth order causes them to react, they do not find change so threatening, says Lucille Forer, a clinical psychologist in Malibu, California, who has written extensively on the subject.

development = growth

impact = influence, effect

underestimate = think of sth less than what it really is

clinical = related to treating patients

extensively = a lot

An understanding of birth order can sometimes help a marriage work. Not long ago, Dr. Forer was working with a woman who had become so domineering that her marriage was in trouble. Once she understood her tendencies, Dr. Forer said, she could begin to modify her behavior.

domineering = bossy

modify = improve; correct

Maida Webster, a family therapist and school consultant in Norwich, Connecticut, recently conducted a workshop called "Birth Order Factor". She told of a husband and wife who complained bitterly about being let down by the other. Neither, it seemed, had taken over the leadership role that each had expected the other to assume. When it was pointed out that this was probably because each had been a younger sibling, they began to comprehend the problem.

therapy = treatment

therapist = a person who treats people

psychotherapist = a psychologist who treats psychological disorders

consultant = adviser, counselor

Connecticut = a state in the USA ⇔ /kə`netikət/

bitterly = painfully, resentfully

let sb down = disappoint sb

neither = neither of them

assume = take over, adopt

point out = explain

comprehend = understand

"Is there an ideal combination for marriage?" Mrs. Webster was asked. Both at work and in personal relationships, she said, people seem to get along best when they repeat the patterns of childhood, which means that it helps to marry someone in a complementary position. In contrast, two people who were the eldest children can expect conflict.

get along with = have a good relationship with

pattern = a particular way in which something is done, is organized, or happens

complementary = different but useful or attractive when used together

conflict = fight

Point:

"Older" and "oldest" can be used for both people and things, but "elder" and "eldest" are mainly used for people, especially within familial contexts. Moreover, we commonly use "elder" and "eldest" before a noun.

"Is there any best position in birth order?" asked someone else. Mrs. Webster said no, that there were benefits and disadvantages to all. However, she went on, recognizing tendencies can enhance opportunities to make the most of positive traits and minimize negative ones.

benefit = advantage

go on = continue

recognize = identify, know

enhance = improve

make the most of = make the best use of

minimize ≠ maximize

Full Text:

Birth Rank

Psychologists have long been aware that birth order generally creates certain personality traits. Big brothers and sisters usually develop leadership tendencies early in life, mainly because of the responsibilities for younger siblings given to them by their parents. The danger, experts on family and child psychology report, is that if the older sibling takes that role to an extreme, he or she can become an overbearing and tyrannical adult.

Studies of nearly 3,000 people conducted by Walter Toman, former professor of psychology at Brandies University in Massachusetts, have found that, under normal circumstances, firstborns are usually the most strongly motivated toward achievement. This, he maintains, is mainly a result of parental expectations.

This and other research suggest that firstborn children generally become more conservative than their siblings because they receive most of the parental discipline. Used to caring for others, they are more likely to move toward such leadership professions as teaching and politics. Less social and flexible because they became accustomed in the very early years to acting alone, they may have difficulty making close friends.

By contrast, researchers say later children are more likely to be more relaxed and sociable, and less inhibited than the eldest child because their parents were more relaxed. However, later children are often less ambitious and are uncomfortable making decisions for others, and will seek work that fits such needs. This, according to researchers, may help explain why younger siblings tend to favor the creative fields such as music, art, or writing.

Later children often make good salespeople because persuasion may have been the only tool they had to counteract the power of the eldest. Younger children tend to remain forever "the baby", enjoyable to be around, and inspiring compassion; but they can become overdependent on others.

While birth order is clearly only one of the many factors that affect development, its impact should not be underestimated. When people understand how their birth order causes them to react, they do not find change so threatening, says Lucille Forer, a clinical psychologist in Malibu, California, who has written extensively on the subject.

An understanding of birth order can sometimes help a marriage work. Not long ago, Dr. Forer was working with a woman who had become so domineering that her marriage was in trouble. Once she understood her tendencies, Dr. Forer said, she could begin to modify her behavior.

Maida Webster, a family therapist and school consultant in Norwich, Connecticut, recently conducted a workshop called "Birth Order Factor". She told of a husband and wife who complained bitterly about being let down by the other. Neither, it seemed, had taken over the leadership role that each had expected the other to assume. When it was pointed out that this was probably because each had been a younger sibling, they began to comprehend the problem.

"Is there an ideal combination for marriage?" Mrs. Webster was asked. Both at work and in personal relationships, she said, people seem to get along best when they repeat the patterns of childhood, which means that it helps to marry someone in a complementary position. In contrast, two people who were the eldest children can expect conflict.

"Is there any best position in birth order?" asked someone else. Mrs. Webster said no, that there were benefits and disadvantages to all. However, she went on, recognizing tendencies can enhance opportunities to make the most of positive traits and minimize negative ones.

Sample Summary:

Birth order is believed to influence personality traits. Older siblings often become leaders due to early responsibilities, but they can also become domineering adults if they take it too far. Research suggests firstborns are usually ambitious due to high parental expectations and tend to be conservative, disciplined, and drawn to leadership roles like teaching or politics. They might struggle with social interactions and making friends because they're used to independence from a young age. In contrast, younger siblings are typically more relaxed, sociable, and creative, as they grow up with less pressure and discipline. They may not be as ambitious and prefer jobs that don't require leading others, often excelling in creative fields or sales. Understanding one's birth order can help in personal growth and relationships, as it influences how individuals react to change and interact with others. For instance, in marriages, partners who complement each other's birth order positions tend to get along better, while two firstborns might face conflicts. Recognizing and working with these birth order tendencies can help people maximize their strengths and address their weaknesses.

Sample Summary (Simple Version):

Birth order can affect personality. Older siblings often become leaders because they have responsibilities early in life, but they can also become too bossy. Firstborns are usually ambitious because of high parental expectations. They are often conservative, disciplined, and like leadership roles, such as teaching or politics. They might find it hard to make friends because they are used to being independent. Younger siblings are usually more relaxed, sociable, and creative, as they face less pressure and discipline. They may not be as ambitious and often prefer jobs that don't require leading others, excelling in creative fields or sales. Understanding birth order can help with personal growth and relationships. For example, in marriages, partners with different birth order positions get along better, while two firstborns might have conflicts. Recognizing and working with birth order tendencies can help people use their strengths and deal with weaknesses.

Source:

[Intermediate 3 \(anglophone.ir\)](http://intermediate3(anglophone.ir))