

Introduction later
voted out over
disagreements with
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Introduction” Alfred Adler, the founding father of Individual Psychology was one of the first theorists to suggest that birth order influences personality” (Gustafson, 2010). As what is expected of the oldest is different than the middle or youngest child. Adler started with this idea on birth order and others have continued down this path of research. “ Having lived through WWI, Serving as a physician, with the Austrian Army at the Russian front, and then in a children’s hospital” (Adler, 2014). He was in a unique position to study people specifically children in the aftermath of war.

Biography portion” Alfred Adler (1870 -1937) was born in Penzing, Austria, the 2nd son of a Jewish grain merchant. In poor health as a child, he did not walk until age four because of rickets; at age five Adler developed pneumonia and was a close call for him, “(Adler, 2014). This was only a few of his childhood struggles. “ In 1895 he received his medical degree from the University of Vienna” (Schultz, 2011, p330). “ He specialized in ophthalmology and practiced general medicine. When he became interested in psychiatry in 1902, he joined Sigmund Freud’s weekly discussion group on psychoanalysis, one of four charter members” (Schultz, 2011, p330). He was the first president of Freud’s Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, but was later voted out over disagreements with Freud’s single minded focus on the male sex organ or the lack one depending on client’s gender.

“ In 1911, Adler split with Freud to form his own group, several other members of the Freudian school left with him, due to this breakup he is considered the first proponent of psychoanalysis” (Schultz, 2011, p330). The following year, in 1912, he published *The Neurotic Constitution*, where he coined the term “ Individual psychology” “ He proposed the concept of social

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interest, defined as an innate potential to cooperate with others to achieve personal and societal goals. Our social interest develops in infancy through learning experiences” (Schultz, 2011, p330). Focused on conscious not the unconscious, Adler believed we are more strongly affected by our plans for the future. Striving for goals or anticipating coming events can influence present behavior” (Schultz, 2011, p331). “ He proposed a generalized feeling of Inferiority as a motivating force in behavior, for example; a child who stutters may, through conscientious speech therapy, become a great orator; a child with weak limbs may, through intensive exercise, excel as an athlete or dancer” (Schultz, 2011, p331).

“ In examining his patients’ childhood years, Adler became interested in the relationship between personality and birth order. He found that the oldest, middle, and youngest children, because of their positions in the family, have varying social experiences that result in different attitudes toward life and different ways of coping” (Schultz, 2011, p332).”

Adler (as cited in Ansbacher Ansbacher, 1956) stressed the golden rule of Individual Psychology: Everything can be different” (Watts, 2010). “ Similarly, birth-order personality implications are not one size fits all” (Watts, 2010). “ Instead, they are important tools that, when coupled with such other developmental issues as gender, family values, ethnicity, and community values, help provide an environmental context to a client’s subjective understanding of the world” (Watts, 2010). “ Additional factors such as death or impairment of a sibling, blended families, a large age gap between siblings, and differential familial and cultural norms may influence

expectations of siblings differentially" (Watts, 2010). Unfortunately that is too large of a body of research to cover in the paper.

Psychologist work description The First born is the default leader in the eyes of the parents which translates into the mindset of the children in the family. Which in turn influences the development of the child's by changing what is expected of them," They are stereotypically thought to be serious, conscientious, directive, goal oriented, aggressive, rule conscious, responsible, jealous, high achieving, competitive, and high in self-esteem" (Alfred, nd). "A Firstborn's can have feelings of a fear of being dethroned may make them less likely to engage in risky behavior," (Alfred, nd). Any siblings added to the family changes the dynamic and priorities of the parents, for the Firstborn it means sharing the attention with any other and how they cope with that feel having an effect on them.

"Firstborns try to please their parents by acting as surrogate parents for their siblings, a behavior that can increase conscientiousness" (Rohrer, 2015). "The middle children often have the sense of not belonging. They feel they have to fight to receive attention from others because they feel many times they're invisible at times to the rest of the world" (Alfred, nd). "They tend to have fewer pictures in of them in the house, compared to firstborns. The middle child can feel insecure this in turn can affect their relationships throughout their life" (Alfred, nd).

"Not surprisingly, Adler stressed that second-born children make the best counselors; as he was one himself. Not only do they have the opportunity to observe and profit from mistakes the first-born children make, but they also

can learn compassion for others by themselves initially being in a “second place-act two slot” coming into the world” (Ansbacher, 1992).” One study of 700 brothers who played major league baseball found that younger brothers were 10 times more likely to steal bases than their older brothers and were also superior in overall batting success. This and other studies also showed that younger siblings were far more likely to participate in high-risk activities such as skydiving (Sulloway & Zweigenhaft, 2010)” (Schultz, 2011, p332). “ Adler (as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher) emphasized the importance of psychological birth order, it’s not when they are born, but what are they born into and the way in which the kids interpret it,” (Ansbacher, , 1956, p.

377). “ An only child may experience difficulties in adjusting to the world outside the family, where he or she is not the center of attention” (Schultz, 2011, p332). Only children are stereotypically seen as spoiled and the center of attention, not always. They share some traits with both youngest and oldest as there is no competition for affection from family and care givers. Though the “ Research does not support Adler’s view that only children are more selfish and have difficulty adjusting to the real world” (Schultz, 2011, p332). Humans are in part a product of our environment that we’re raised in and adding to the family is a chance in the environment, we must cope and change to move forward.

While birth order does not define us, it can impact us. Psychology is about the greater understanding of human behavior. Every psychologist has their contribution to give, not everyone gets their fair share of credit as Alfred

Adler was shorted a few times; “ Although many of Adler’s ideas have
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become widely accepted, his public acclaim declined after his death and he has received relatively little credit for his contributions. Many concepts have been plagiarized. For example, the London Times obituary for Sigmund Freud, gave Freud credit for term 'inferiority complex'.

When Carl Jung died, The New York Times reported that Jung had coined the term! Neither paper mentioned Adler" (Schultz, 2011, p334). Still, he's remembered as one of the big modern influences on psychology with William James, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.