



INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract: Feelings of inferiority are the main part of individual psychology. Feelings of inferiority are manifested equally in children and adults. If feelings of inferiority develop from childhood, it will have a negative impact on the child's future. Considering that feelings of inferiority threaten the child's personality, scientists began to study the factors that cause it and ways to prevent it. Research has shown that birth order also plays an important role in the development of feelings of inferiority. This article examines the theory of Alfred Adler and several scholars.

Key words: Compensation, neurosis, birth order, first-born, second-born, youngest child, only child, ego, superego, Id, inkblots.

Alfred Adler's Theory of Individual Psychology posits that individuals are motivated primarily by social interests and a striving for superiority or self-improvement. Childhood



experiences, especially feelings of inferiority, drive this striving, but in a healthy individual, it manifests as a desire to contribute to the welfare of others.

Unadaptive behaviors arise when this striving becomes self-centered or when inferiority feelings are overwhelming. Adler emphasized the uniqueness of the individual and the role of social connections in shaping behavior. Adler thought that the basic psychological element of neurosis was a sense of inferiority and that individuals suffering with the symptoms of this phenomenon spent their lives trying to overcome the feelings without ever being in touch with reality. A neurotic person retreats from performing life tasks to avoid loss of self-esteem due to what the individual interprets as failure. This threat is based on a dialectic combination of inferiority feelings and striving for superiority. Retreating from performing life tasks can happen only with a poorly developed social interests, which, in turns, is usually connected with having been a pampered child. To maintain the illusion of the potential for high achievement, avoid inferiority feelings, and protect themselves from the guilt of not acting according to social interests, neurotics create excuses or symptoms. When all these factors exist, Adler considered the person neurotic. According to Adler, all infants have a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy immediately as they begin to experience the world. These early experiences, such as the need to gain the parents' attention, shape the child's unconscious, fictive goals. They give the child a need to strive towards rectifying that inferiority — a need to compensate for weakness by developing other strengths. There are several outcomes that can occur in a child's quest for compensation. First, if the child receives adequate nurturing and care, the child can accept his challenges, and learn that they can be overcome with hard work. Thus, the child develops “normally” and develops the “courage to be imperfect” The term birth order refers to the order in which the children of a family were born. Adler believed that birth order had a significant and predictable impact on a child's personality:

First-born: children have inherent advantages due to their parents recognizing them as “the larger, the stronger, the older”. This gives first-born children the traits of “a guardian of law



and order”. These children have a high amount of personal power, and they value the concept of power with reverence.

Second-born: children are constantly in the shadow of their older siblings. They are incessantly “striving for superiority under pressure,” driven by the existence of their older, more powerful sibling. If the second-born is encouraged and supported, he will be able to attain power as well, and he and the first-born will work together.

Youngest Children operate in a constant state of inferiority. They are constantly trying to prove themselves, due to their perceptions of inferiority relative to the rest of their family. According to Adler, there are two types of youngest children. The more successful type “excels every other member of the family, and becomes the family’s most capable member”. Another, more unfortunate type of youngest child does not excel because he lacks the necessary self-confidence. This child becomes evasive and avoidant towards the rest of the family.

Only Child: Only children, according to Adler, are also an unfortunate case. Due to their being the sole object of their parent’s attention, the only child becomes “dependent to a high degree, constantly waits for someone to show him the way, and searches for support at all times”. They also come to see the world as a hostile place due to their parents’ constant vigilance.

Birth order also influences a child's position in relation to their siblings, which can affect their character, adds Meri Wallace, a child and family therapist for over 20 years and author of Birth Order Blues. "Each position has unique challenges," she explains.

Firstborn Personality Traits. Simply by being a first child, the oldest sibling will naturally be raised with a mixture of instinct and trial-and-error. This often causes parents to become by-the-book caregivers who are extremely attentive, stringent with rules, and overly neurotic about the little things. This parenting style, in turn, may cause the child to become a perfectionist, always striving to please their parents. Firstborns tend to bask in their parents' presence, which may explain why they sometimes act like mini-adults. They're



also prone to being diligent and wanting to excel at everything they do. As the leader of the pack, firstborns often tend to be:

Reliable

Conscientious

Structured

Cautious

Controlling, Achievers.

Middle Child Personality Traits

When a second child comes along, parents might raise them with less of an iron fist due to their previous experience. They might also be less attentive since there are other children in their lives. Therefore, the middle child is often a people-pleaser due to the lack of attention they get compared to older siblings and younger siblings. The middle child often feels left out and a sense of, "Well, I'm not the oldest. I'm not the youngest. Who am I?" says Wallace. This sort of hierarchical floundering leads middle children to make their mark among their peers since parental attention is usually devoted to the beloved firstborn or baby of the family. What's more, "middle children are the toughest to pin down because they play off their older sibling," says Dr. Leman.

In general, middle children tend to possess the following birth order personality traits:

People-pleasers

Somewhat rebellious

Thrives on friendships

Has a large social circle

Peacemaker

Youngest Child Personality Traits



Youngest children tend to be the most free-spirited due to their parents' increasingly laissez-faire attitude toward parenting the second (or third, or fourth, or fifth) time around. As a result, the baby of the family tends to have the following birth order traits:

Fun-loving

Uncomplicated

Manipulative

Outgoing

Attention-seeking

Self-centered

Only Child Personality Traits

Being an only child is a unique position. Without any siblings to compete with, the only child monopolizes their parents' attention and resources—not just for a short time like a firstborn, but forever. In effect, this makes an only child something like a "super-firstborn." In addition, only children have the privilege (and the burden) of having all their parents' support and expectations on their shoulders. Thus, only children tend to be:

Mature for their age

Perfectionists

Conscientious

Diligent

Leaders

In my opinion, awareness of how birth order tends to influence personality can help you become a better parent. So, if you notice your oldest being too hard on themselves or your middle is feeling neglected offer up some encouragement and extra attention. In addition, As with all psychodynamic approaches to human psychology, Adlerian



individual psychology receives criticism for being unscientific and difficult to prove empirically. Specifically, its focus on the unconscious fictive goal makes it arguable that Adlerian psychology is unfalsifiable. Though Adler's theories are difficult to definitively prove, recent neuroscience has provided some support. A recent study summarizing modern neuroscientific evidence, and how it relates to Adlerian psychology, agreed with a statement made by Maslow in 1970: “Adler becomes more and more correct year by year. As the facts come in, they give stronger and stronger support to his image of man” In regards to Adlerian therapy, the modern-day attitude is that while the practice is simple and easy for the layman to understand, it is flawed because it is not empirically based.

Adler's form of counseling is criticized for its lack of depth, notably, its lack of a foundation that deals with issues not related to concepts such as birth order and early recollections

Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler

Alfred Adler's theory of individual psychology created a big difference between Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. While Freud focused on only the internal processes that affect a person's psychology, Adler was adamant that to fully understand a person, a psychologist must also consider other internal and external factors.

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory states that human personalities evolve through a series of phases: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. According to Freud, these phases are developed by the unconscious mind's inner struggles; he theorized that there are three levels of consciousness: consciousness, preconsciousness, and unconsciousness.

Conclusion. To be human means to feel inferior. Every child is actually inferior in the face of life and could not exist at all without a considerable measure of social interest on the part of those close to him. At the beginning of every psychological life there is a more or less deep inferiority feeling. To be a human being means to possess a feeling of inferiority which constantly presses toward its own conquest. The inferiority feeling dominates the psychological life and can easily be understood from the feeling of imperfection and of incompleteness and from the incessant striving of man and mankind. Inferiority feelings are



not in themselves abnormal. They are the cause of all improvements in the position of mankind.

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