

Birth Order Communication

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Communication within a family is crucial for a person's well being emotionally, physically, and socially. Birth order communication can specifically determine how a person acts and feels. It is something that every person deals with regardless if you are an only child or if you have five siblings. It simply shapes who we are as a person. My overall question is: do siblings have different communication patterns based on their order of birth? More specifically, do older siblings have different communication patterns and techniques in comparison to their younger sibling(s)? ; Does gender play a role in birth order communication? ; Does birth order communication have an effect on ones personality? ; and lastly, how do siblings communicate over the years based on their ages? Birth order communication can affect a person's personality and their way of life.

The communication siblings have with one another can make or break the relationship. This communication is all related back to each individual's birth order. Communication with siblings can determine if there is a positive or negative relationship between the siblings. According to the article "Commitment and Emotional Closeness in the Sibling Relationship", it expressed that relationships that siblings have with one another can be related back to their communication patterns. By having good communication patterns with one another, the siblings' relationship can be carried on for a lifetime. An experiment was done to see if the birth order of siblings' communication patterns had any effect on their relationship over a lifetime (Rittenour, Myers, and Brann 2007). A total of 448 people were surveyed to see if in fact there was a correlation between siblings birth order communication and whether or not their relationship would be long term or not. It was found that there is a positive correlation between sibling communication and whether or not it will last a lifetime. The main reason that siblings can have such positive lifelong relationship is because of the "supportive communication" they

have received over the years from their siblings. Overall, “birth order” has had a huge effect on the relationship that siblings have with one another (Rittenour, Myers, and Brann 2007).

Without birth order communication siblings, would not have the positive relationships that they have today with one another.

In a family each child, especially the oldest and youngest child, have dramatically different communication patterns because of the order in which they were born. According to the article Child Development, “First-borns may use the same persuasive techniques on older, same-aged, and younger target persons, and these techniques may differ from the techniques used by last-borns” (Bragg, Ostrowaki, and Finley 1973). This study shows that depending on the order of birth a person has the person will choose to use different ways of communication in order to get their point across. In a study done by Glass, Neulinger, and Brim, the three individuals wanted to see if there was a difference in the communication patterns of “first” and “only” children in comparison to the “last” borns. In the study’s results it was found that “first and only” “children” have authority over the younger children (Glass, Neulinger, and Brim 1974). This study shows that there is a true relationship between birth order communication and that siblings have different ways of communicating because each individual was born in a different order. By having different communication patterns based on age, each child will have a different perspective on life giving each kid a different way of communicating.

Another aspect of birth order communication that has had a significant role in the patterns of communication would be gender. According to deTruck and Miller there is a distinct relationship between siblings in which one is the oldest and the other is the youngest (deTruck and Miller 1982). It was found in a study that there is also a correlation to which gender plays a role. If a boy was born first instead of last there would be a different communication pattern and

vise versa with the female gender (deTruck and Miller 1982). It is interesting how the patterns of communication can be very different just based on whether the boy or girl was born first. This gives them a different way of communicating, as well as a different view on life.

According to the article, “Birth Order and Sex of Sibling Effects on Self Ratings of Interpersonal Power”, it also suggested that gender and birth order are directly related with each other. The article argues that if the first-born child was a male and he had younger brother verse a younger sister that there would be distinct differences in how they feel about one another. For example if the male had a younger brother then the relationship would be “socially” a “more highly valued” relationship (Todd, Ariella, Steele 1993). Todd et al. also suggest that boys usually think that their relationship with a brother would be greater, but in fact research shows that “age difference” between brothers and sisters allows them to have even greater communication with one another. This is because of the “social advantage of men over women” (Todd, Ariella, Steele 1993). The communication between a brother and a sister is crucial for the siblings to have a positive relationship. Gender and birth order are directly related to each other and gives a unique view on life. This gives them a different way of communicating, as well as a different view on life.

The order to which siblings are born can play a role in the personality of each child. Depending on the order of birth of each individual, each person is more likely to have different communication patterns. According to Greene et al. children in a family that were born last are most likely to be the type of person that is able “to be quicker in formulating novel messages” in comparison to their older sibling(s) (Greene, Herbers, Hingson, Anderson 2011). Greene et al. also stated that the children that were “first-born” in their family are more likely to make “slower responses” in relation to their younger siblings (Greene, Herbers, Hingson, Anderson 2011).

This study truly shows that there is a distinct difference between the oldest and youngest siblings in a family and how their personalities are polar opposites just based on their birth order. In relation to an individual's personality, it is interesting to see how the personalities and communication differences and similarities can determine whether or not siblings stay in contact with one another throughout the year. In the article, "Commitment and Emotional Closeness in the Sibling Relationship" it was stated that based on the relationship that siblings have with one another and the types of communication patterns that they have developed over the years, makes them more likely to be able to stay in touch with each other (Rittenour, Myers, Brann 2007). With this being said the way the way that birth order has affected one's personality, it has made it easier for siblings to stay in contact with one another. Alder and Proctor argue that over time the communication among siblings is most likely to become greater in that as they learn more about one another they will be become closer (Alder and Proctor 2013). Sometimes the oldest child may have a more outgoing personality than the youngest child, giving each child a different personality based on birth order, which in the end will help siblings stay in touch with each other for the years to come.

An individual's communication patterns are affected by the order in which they were born into their family, giving them each different personality characteristics, and a way of life. Birth order is an important concept for people to understand because it is something that every person has to deal with. A person's first communication patterns are affected by the order of which they are born. While there is a good amount of information on birth order communication, there are still more questions and information that needs to be researched. For example, future researchers should focus their studies on communication patterns of an only child verse a child with multiple siblings. Also, a majority of the studies done on birth order

communication are on the younger generation. With only surveying a small portion of the population, the results are going to be more biased. By having the future researchers- who are planning on studying birth order communication survey more than just college students, the results that will be produced will be much more accurate.

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