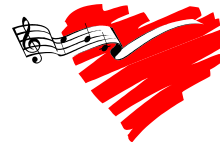




Music of my Heart

Susan Bednar-Haynes, MA, MT-BC



Inside this issue:

<i>Music of my Heart</i>	1
<i>Feature: Part I Lessons of Birth Order</i>	2
<i>Feature: Part I Lessons of Birth Order (continued)</i>	3
<i>Words from the Wise: My Uncle George</i>	4

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Over 10 years ago, I became a certified Parent Educator through the Texas Association of School Boards. Part of the certification process was a workshop on "birth order". We addressed the different characteristics and styles of each birth order and how best to parent our children given their birth order. I found this information most helpful for parenting my own children, but also understanding

my choices in life and understanding myself better because of my own birth order. Our career, partner and friendship choices, are often chosen or influenced by our birth order. For example, two first borns, or only children, working on a work project or even having a long term relationship together, may have frequent power struggles because of their strong First Born or Only Child Characteristics...i.e. both believing

their way is "right" and having difficulty working as a team player and "going with the flow".....a notion that is very difficult for the typical "black and white" first or only child. Please read the Feature of this issue to further understand this example. This is Part I of a two part Series. Including this information is to give you yet another tool to grow and enhance your life and be the best YOU, personally and professionally.

Musically yours,

Susan :)

"When it is dark enough, you can see the stars." - Charles Beard

FEATURE: Part I Lessons of Birth Order

Susan Bednar-Haynes, MA, MT-BC

Dr. Kevin Lemen wrote, "The Birth Order Book, Why You Are the Way You Are?". He defines the first born in the family as not just the first child actually born in the birth order, but also the first born of that gender. For example, if you are the first girl, yet the third child in the family, you have first born characteristics. According to Lemen, you also have first born characteristics if there are 5 or more years age difference between the same sex sibling above you.

For example, if you are a girl and were born 6 years after your sister that is the closest sister above you, you have first born characteristics, because of the age gap.

PLEASE Note: There are always EXCEPTIONS to the rule. The birth order characteristics are simply "generalities". There can be other issues involved, for example, death of a child, twins, blended families, and siblings with disabilities, all issues that impact the role we took growing up. This article will cover "most of the time" or "generally speaking" characteristics of each birth order.



Oldest children characteristics

- * Most likely to succeed
- * Most conscientious and dependable
- * Conservative
- * Critical of self
- * Perfectionist
- * Able to enjoy the company of older people
- * Link between parents and siblings
- * Seldom allowed to be just kids-firstborns' parents often push them ahead and expect the most from them
- * Often upstaged by younger children
- * Convinced their siblings will outshine them

Studies have shown the effect of birth order on personality and first borns tend to be highly motivated to achieve. Oldest and only children tend to spend more time with adults, so it's natural that they grow up faster, eager to invest themselves in responsibility.

ity. In school, firstborns tend to work harder for grades than do later-born children. They often grow to be more competitive and to have higher education and career goals. Any listing of well-known people, famous scholars, even presidents of the United States contains a high percent of firstborns.

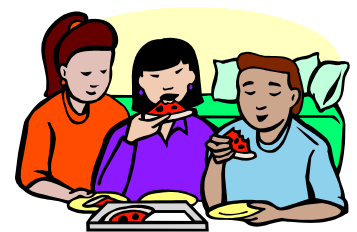


Only child Characteristics

- * Super firstborns
- * Have a tendency to be critical of self and others
- * Often lonely, especially if they grow up with few playmates
- * Sometimes have difficulty relating to peers
- * Usually get along better with people who are much older or younger

Only children may be just as perfectionist as first-born children and are

finicky as well, because they never experienced the shock of being upstaged by a younger sibling. Finding it hard to forget being raised as the center of the universe, they become pampered and spoiled and may have a lifelong problem with being self-centered. Many only children believe that they never had a childhood because so much was expected of them that they always felt like adults. They are SUPER responsible and what they say they will do, they usually do.



Middle child characteristics

- * A compromiser and negotiator
- * A silent rebel against family values
- * The one with the most friends
- * An effective team player
- * Part of the woodwork unless given a position of outright command

(continued on page 3)

"In school you get the lesson and then take the test...."

*(Continued from page 2)***FEATURE: Part I Lessons of Birth Order**

Susan Bednar-Haynes, MA, MT-BC

- * Frequently bypassed and upstaged by older or younger siblings
- * Often eager to carve out a unique spot in the family, whether positive or negative
- * Likely to be compelled to move away from the family to establish a secure spot among their peers

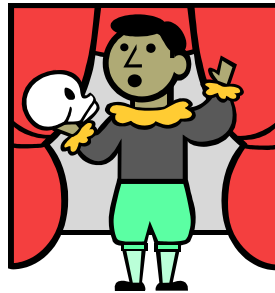
Middle children are the hardest to nail down, but in general, are seen as the victims of benign neglect—the ones with the fewest pictures in the family photo album.

To cope with the lack of attention, they become rebellious and secretive, relying on friends for the companionship that somehow eluded them within the family.

Because they never got their parents all to themselves, they learned compromise. By the time the middle child is out of childhood, he or she is already a seasoned diplomat.

A good description of middle children is balanced. Middle children are good mediators and have super cooperation skills. They don't have their parents all to themselves or get their own way. Therefore, they learn to negoti-

ate and compromise. Middle children often make excellent managers and leaders because of these skills.

**Youngest child characteristics**

- * Compelled to make a contribution to the world
- * Showoffs who enjoy the limelight
- * Both a charmer and a rebel
- * Often the family clown
- * Creative
- * Often stuck doubting the validity of their perceptions because they were often laughed at or not taken seriously
- * Likely to be compelled to do what the older children haven't

By the time the youngest children are born, their parents have exhausted their expectations on all the siblings ahead of them and are content to pamper the youngest without condition.

Last-born children are often described as clowns, cutups, and mascots. The youngest children are typically outgoing and great at motivating other people. They are also affectionate, uncomplicated, and sometimes a little absent-minded. Studies show that babies of the family gravitate toward vocations that are people oriented. Good sales people are often last-born children.

Late or last-born children are more sociable, agreeable, and open to novelty and innovation. They also are more inclined to identify with the underdog and to challenge the established order.

Resources

Bombeck, Erma. "Motherhood, the Second Oldest Profession." New York: Dell Publishing, 1983

Leman, Kevin. *The Birth Order Book*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1985.

Texas Association of School Boards, *Parenting Handbook*, 1998

**?s then to ponder:**

Do the descriptions fit your idea of yourself according to your Birth Order?

How might this information help you in your work role or working with others?

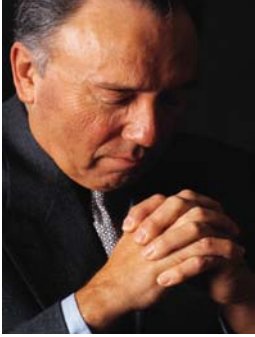
How can this be useful information in your closest personal relationships?

Please send any ?s you may have so that they can be answered in the next issue.

In Our Next Issue:

Part II will address parenting, career and relationship issues related to the various birth orders. Susan Bednar-Haynes currently teaches Birth Order seminars and workshops for educators, corporations and health care facilities. Please contact her for details.

... In life you take the test and then get the lesson." -- Unknown Source



I wanted to share with my readers a phrase that my Uncle George uses as a life guiding principle. He has had many losses in his life and is a model to us all with how to live and accept life's joys and challenges. I never knew my Uncle George, that well as a child, but am forever thankful that he has been in my life and taught me life's lessons through his own living. I asked him to send me a few words explaining his quote to me and I hope this helps you as well. He wrote me a letter in the mail with the following words:

"Life is constantly adjusting to things you never expected to happen."

He continues to explain: "This could be adjusting to: Death of a spouse, child, family member, friend or other loved ones, also a divorce, job loss or promotion, an illness, many health issues, some severe and tragic, family problems, and even disasters of nature (Katrina) etc. How do we adjust and is it difficult at times and never ending as it seems? I hope to practice what I preach! I'm not the first it happened to and there are many, many, worse off than me.... family and others. Some so tragic beyond life size! I suggest we pray not only for ourselves, but others also; family and throughout the world. Have faith in God and pray for the best, but also seek His help in adjusting to whatever may be put upon you! Have faith in God! No matter what we seek, do or endure on this earth, it is nothing to His eternal promise! As I said, adjusting can be difficult, but if we don't adjust we could end up with mental (breakdown) or even physical problems. Even children have to learn to adjust to some extent; failing a test, not making the team, unable to have what others may have etc."

Take care,

Uncle George

Our next issue will explore these notions even further.

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