

Sibling Position and Family Projection Process

Adult Formation: In Relationship
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Sibling Position

This describes the tendency of the oldest, middle, and youngest children to assume specific roles within the family due to differences in expectation, parental discipline, and other factors.

Because people who are in the same sibling position tend to have common characteristics, sibling position and the associated personality traits can impact all kinds of relationships, but especially when it comes to romantic couples. As a result, a lot of the work around Sibling Position has to do with people from different (or the same) positions marrying.

There are 12 Sibling Positions, and each position has some overarching similarities in their personalities. However, the personalities are only idealized representations. The significance lies more in the revelation of expected tendencies than in specific details about each family member. Variations from these tendencies in a particular family member may provide some insight into his or her development.

Family Projection Process

The transmission of a parent's anxiety, relationship difficulties, and emotional concerns to the child within the emotional triangle. There is a three-step cycle of this process:

1. The parent focuses extra attention on a child out of fear that there is something wrong with the child
2. The parent finds something in the child's actions or behavior that they perceive as confirming their fear
3. The parent then treats the child as if there is something truly wrong with them

The parents may first focus anxiety or worry onto the child and, when the child reacts to this by experiencing worry or anxiety in turn, may either try to "fix" these concerns or seek professional help

In projection the major mechanism is the dissolving of boundaries between self and other, assuming one knows who the other is, and further what the child or group needs or should have. Projection is the greatest threat to the future development of the child or the social group.

Projection does not just happen between parents and children. It can also happen between a romantic couple or between people who are of different generations (like an older coworker and a younger coworker)

Often, as we are faced with people who fit into the role (in other words "remind us of") a child or parent in our current family or family of origin, we will automatically fall into the projection process—either as the parent or the child.