

Alfred Alder

1870 (Austria) – 1937 (England)

- Born the 2nd of 7 children to a Jewish couple.
Dad was a grain merchant
- Age 3, younger brother died in the bed next to his.
- Maintained rivalry with older brother throughout childhood Rivalry was because he felt mom preferred older brother.
- Feelings of inferiority sourced from:
 - ↳ perception of mom's preference
 - ↳ Before age 4, developed rickets (bowed legs, weak bones) which prevented him from walking until 4.
 - ↳ At age 4, overheard doctor tell dad that Alfred would not live much longer.
- Fear of death. Led to decision to become a physician
- 1897, married a fellow university student Raisa Epstein. (Wife was Russian; intellectual and militant socialist)
 - ↳ four children, including two daughters who become physicians/psychologists. One moved to Moscow in 1933, arrested in 1937, and died in Stalinist gulag in 1942.
- World War I – served as a doctor for the Austrian-Hungarian Empire army
- 1921 onward, frequent lecturer in Europe and the United States
 - ↳ Professor
- Early-1930s, most of his clinics had been closed due to Jewish heritage (in spite of conversion to Christianity)
 - ↳ Moved to the United States.
- 1937, died while visiting Scotland for a lecture tour
 - ↳ Remains went missing (cremated, but never collected by family at the time) and were found only in 2007!



Adler's theory suggested that every person has a sense of inferiority.

- ↳ From childhood, people work toward overcoming this inferiority by "striving for superiority."
- ↳ Adler believed that this drive was the motivating force behind human behaviors, emotions, and thoughts.

Adlerian theory is a holistic approach to psychology that emphasizes the importance of overcoming feelings of inferiority and gaining a sense of belonging in order to achieve success and happiness

In 1917, Adler believed that he had established a connection between homosexuality and an inferiority complex towards one's own gender. This point of view differed from Freud's theory (Freud believed that homosexuality is rooted in narcissism and Oedipal responses)

- ↳ There is evidence that Adler may have moved towards abandoning the hypothesis, as in the 1930s he seemed to be unconcerned with two people of the same gender being together

He did NOT stress childhood experiences as impactful on later personality.

He developed birth order theory (due to relationships and society and how parents treat you, not explicitly childhood experiences)

The order in which a child is born shapes their development and personality. Adler also claimed that family, community, and social aspects play a major role in shaping a child's personality

↳ Adler considered **firstborns** to be neurotic, because they don't have to share their parents for years and are essentially dethroned once a sibling comes along. He also considered oldest children dutiful and sometimes conservative

↳ The oldest child would receive a lot of attention early on, until they are “dethroned” when a second child is born. This is a feeling of loss. First born are susceptible to depression in later life “because of the weight of their mother’s expectations.”

↳ Adler's theory was that **middle children**, due to their place in the family birth order, generally feel overshadowed. Since the first child is more likely to receive more responsibilities, and the youngest child is more likely to be pampered, this leaves the middle child with no clear role or status within the family.

↳ Alfred Adler believed the **second-born** children (in some families the middle child), grows up sharing the attention from the caregivers with the first born. Adler believed that since the second-born children grow up sharing the attention, those children in general, are more likely to cooperate and have emotional stability.