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LIFESTYLE

# Sibling order is irrelevant

*Birth order has little impact on personality, new study shows*

**W**HETHER YOU ARE a perfectionist or rebellious, it has very little to do with the birth position in your family, says a new study.

“We found no substantial effects of birth order on any of the personality dimensions we examined,” said one of the researchers Stefan Schmukle from Leipzig University in Germany.

This does not only contradict prominent psychological theories, but also goes against the intuition of many people,” Schmukle pointed out.

The question of whether a person’s position among siblings has a lasting impact on personality has occupied scientists for more than 100 years, the study said.

Scientists have shared a number of beliefs: First borns are supposedly perfectionists, for example, while middle children develop a talent for



diplomacy and last borns are expected to be rebellious.

To find out whether these differences actually exist, the researchers analysed the data of more than 20,000 grown-ups from Germany, Britain and the US.

They found that central personality traits such as extraversion, emotional stability,

agreeableness and conscientiousness are not affected by birth-order position.

Small effects of birth positions were, however, found regarding self-reported intellect.

First borns were more likely to report a rich vocabulary and less difficulty understanding abstract ideas.

“This effect on intelligence replicates very well in large samples, but it is barely meaningful on the individual level, because it is extremely small,” Schmukle explained.

The study was published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* (PNAS). IANS

# Mindfulness can cut belly fat

*A healthier lifestyle could be achieved by how aware you are of everyday emotions*



**THOSE WHO ARE** aware of each and every moment of their life have less fat around their belly than those who do not pay attention to the present, new research shows. The study of nearly 400 people found that those who exhibited more “dispositional mindfulness” were less likely to be obese.

Dispositional or everyday mindfulness is not the same as mindfulness meditation in which people make a conscious, focused practice of attending to their current state and sensations. Instead, it is more of an inherent personality trait though it can also be taught.

“This is everyday mindfulness. The majority of these people are not meditating,” said lead author Eric Loucks, assistant professor of epidemiology in Brown University.

Loucks and the team observed how 394 people in the New England Family Study (NEFS) scored on the six-point Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS).

Participants rated their agreement with 15 questions such as “I find it difficult to stay focused on what is happening in the present” and “I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.”

The researchers also measured the amount

of belly and hip fat each person had.

They also gathered measurements of body mass index (BMI) and other data on each participant’s health, lifestyle and demographics.

The analysis found that people with scores below four were 34 percent more likely to be obese than people with a score of six.

Meanwhile, people with the lower scores had, on average, a bit more than a pound of belly fat (448 grams) than people with the high score.

People are evolutionarily predisposed to stock up on calories when they are available and to rest when they get the chance.

Mindfulness can help people overcome cravings and eat a healthier diet. Similarly, it may help people override an aversion to initiating exercise.

“That’s where the mindfulness may come in. Being aware of each and every moment and how that’s related to what we do and how we feel,” Loucks noted.

“Awareness seems to be enough to have a small to medium effect. Then there is the question of what could we do to increase it,” the authors noted.

The study was published in the *International Journal of Behavioural Medicine*. IANS

## ALIGN YOUR LIFE

### *Feng Shui For Health*

**M**any people believe that there is a specific corner for improving health in a home. While some place heavy earthen pots all around their homes for improving health, some believe that the center section of their home is the earth corner, while many insist that the health corner is by the window in the bedroom. To be honest, all of the above are a simply a myth. In the practice of Feng Shui, there is no designated health corner in a home. Think about it logically – we have billions of people on this planet, all with unique dates of births and destiny. How can one designated direction be good for everyone? How can the center area of all the houses all over this planet be designated as the health corner? It just does not make sense. One solution can’t work for all.

So that brings me to my next questions, is there a health corner in a home? How can health be improved? To understand this aspect of Feng Shui you will have to first understand the Flying Star school of Feng Shui. The main basis of this school is that energy within our surroundings is dynamic and keeps moving every few years. The stars or the main elements keep flying around over a period of time. Therefore what is considered good and auspicious at one point of time will not be that good after certain period. Every 20 years the energy shifts and so does elements within your home. Having said that, the element that can cause havoc within your home and affect your health is number 2. In Flying Star school of Feng Shui this number depicts earth element and needs to be reduced or exhausted.

Once you take the compass direction of your home based on the facing, you will have to engage in Feng Shui calculations to derive in which part of your home is number 2 located. Once you identify the locations, you can then proceed to reduce it. Since Feng Shui cures are based on the productive and destructive cycles within the elements; it is recommended to use metal to destroy the element of earth. Therefore as remedy 6 Chinese coins tied in a red string are used. Number 6 denotes the element of metal, while metal coins represent the element itself.

There is no guarantee where the number 2 will be located within your home; it will all depend on the calculations. So it could be in the living room, bedroom or in the bathroom. But without calculations it is not possible to identify the health corner.

Just remember, no one corner in your home can control or improve your health your health. Balance the overall energy within your home and your health will improve automatically.

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