Jerry Wu

Jerry Wu is a graduate of Waubonsee Valley High School. He is currently majoring in electrical engineering at NIU, and he plans to have a career in robotics.
The Nature of a Younger Sibling

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The person that I decided to interview is my little brother Joshua. He is fifteen years old and a sophomore at Waubonsee Valley High School. He is my only sibling and a source of constant annoyance, irritation, and headaches. He has influenced me to have an aversion towards young kids, and this aversion has in turn influenced my decision in my career choice as well. I chose a career that I would have no contact with young children at all, Engineering. I decided to interview him because I believe his influence on me will stay with me for the rest of my life. I'm not sure if I'll ever have children, but if I do then I hope that I will be able to overcome this aversion and be able to raise my children right. Hopefully after doing this interview, Josh will understand his and his friends' behaviors better and how that influences me. And maybe in that understanding, they might tone it down some.

I knock on his door and say, "Josh, open up." I hear a voice yell back, "What?" "I need to ask you some questions for my paper," I yelled back. "Ugh, fine...," I hear. I hear the click of the door unlocking, and, as I open the door, I am faced with a disaster zone. The bed is a mess with the covers half on and half on the floor; clothes everywhere; a stack of plates and bowls with half eaten food on a desk beside him; cans, cups, and bottles of partially empty drinks over almost every surface; and my brother sitting there playing his Playstation 3.

I carefully stepped into his room and sat on his bed because it was the only place that was devoid of clothes. "Ok Josh, I need to ask you these questions, and, when we're done, I'll buy you food," I told him. He looked over at me with annoyance and said, "Ok fine." I said to him, "I want truthful answers, and there will be no repercussion for anything you say." He laughed and said, "Lies!" I told him that I was starting and I wanted him to seriously think about the questions before he answered them. "Yeah yeah yeah," he said.
So, I started out by asking him my first question while he sat there looking impatient. "Do you think you've influenced me in my life?" I asked. He gave me a confused look, then started to laugh, and said, "No." So I said, "Ok then, next question. Why don't you think you've had an influence in my life? And I want you to actually think about it." He leaned back in his chair and thought about it for a good twenty seconds before he finally just shrugged and said, "I don't know." I just sat there, thinking that this was going to be a very short interview, and also wondered why he was being so unhelpful and uncooperative. I wondered why he was always like this, so I decided to pursue questions on how he thought of himself. I asked, "So how would you describe yourself?" Immediately, he replied, "Awesome!" and started to laugh, and I replied that I would like to have a serious answer from him. He agreed reluctantly, sat back in his chair and tried to think. Then he said, "I don't know how to describe myself. My school asks me this each year and I always put I don't know."

This reinforced my views of him being immature. I was getting turned off by his lack of serious responses but I continued on anyhow. "Ok, so how would you describe your friends then?" He answered right away with, "Stupid, retarded, and lazy like me!" and started to laugh. This was the exact same descriptions that I would have given about his friends. "And how would you describe me?" I asked, and he answered with, "Abusive!" I gave him an evil look. I was angry he called me abusive even though he knows that I don't really hurt him and he knows that I care about him. He laughed and said, "Ok you're kind at times, but only at certain times" and continued to laugh. I felt angry that he wasn't taking this seriously, but I kind of expected this of him. I know he can be really insensitive and selfish most of the time and think of nothing else besides himself usually. Then I asked him to describe him and his friends when they're together, and he answered, "Stupid, very idiotic, but very fun."

Next, I asked him about my attitude towards him and his friends. He said, "Very abusive!" I asked him why he would say that. He answered, "Because you hit us and call us names." I felt he was exaggerating and trying to get on my nerves again like how he always does. I hate to say it, but it was working a little bit. I don't know why his attitudes like this always get to me. I guess it might have something to do with his discipline. I was born in China and raised with a lot of discipline; I was also in the military which instilled even more..."
discipline into me. Josh on the other hand was born here in the states and has almost no discipline enforced onto him. My mother works all the time and babies him even though he is already fifteen. My father is never around because he works out of state, so there is usually no one to really tell him what to do and give him any kind of discipline. Following that last question, I asked him, "So what would be your and your friend's reactions towards me?" He answered, "For me I would try to not get hit and will call you names back. My friends would call you names back also." I asked him why he thinks I act the way that I do towards him and his friends. Immediately, he replied, "Because you think we're stupid." I followed up and asked him if I was right in my thinking and he replied, "Well maybe sometimes." I asked him if he thought I would act differently if they acted differently. He thought about it for a few seconds and answered, "Yeah, but that's not going to happen in the near future." I was a bit confused by his answer, so I asked, "What's not going to happen?" He clarified, "Us not acting differently." I asked him if he thought I acted reasonably towards him and his friends when they're hanging out. Quickly and firmly, he replied, "No, well... maybe sometimes... but no!" After answering that, he started to stare out the window spacing out. I guess he was already bored. Just looking at his body language, I could tell he didn't like these questions and probably thought they were stupid. I told him that there're only a few more questions left and to be patient with me.

I continued asking questions like "So, on a scale of one to ten, how loud would you think you and your friends get when all of you are together?" and "How do you think I would rate you?" Shrugging, he answered, "I don't know what I would rate myself but you probably would rate me at nine to nine and a half and probably twelve to fifteen for me and my friends." I wanted to know why he thought I would rate them so much higher, so I asked him and his reply was, "Well you're always yelling at us to be quiet." I followed that up with, "Do you think I'm right when I say you guys are too loud?" He thought about it for a few seconds and then said, "Well, maybe sometimes, but we can't help it. We get loud when we're having fun." I just shook my head at him and sighed. I understand kids will be kids but there is no reason for him to be the way he is all the time.

I began to get hungry and by this time he was looking really bored. I finally asked him the last question. "After answering all these questions, do you still think that you have no influence on me?" He
thought about it for a little bit then answered, "After thinking about it, I think I made you angrier in your life." I became curious about that serious answer that I finally got out of him, so I inquired, "Why do you say that?" He replied, "Well because I'm loud and usually stay that way till you lose patience and yell at me or hit me." I began to laugh at that and decided to call it a day. After we finished with all the questions, I did as promised and took him to get whatever food he wanted.

He's a good kid normally except at times he sounds and acts like a complete moron. I love him because he's my little brother, but sometimes I just want to choke him but I never do. I want him to take his life more seriously and not repeat the same mistakes that I did. There is a ten year difference between us, and I feel more like a parent figure than a brother sometimes. I want him to do well in school and actually focus on what's important. But video games and hanging out with his friends is what's important to him right now. He never listens to anyone besides his friends, he yells back when getting yelled at, and his whole attitude towards what anyone says that doesn't seem important to him is I think the fault of my parents. They're never around most of the time, and I used to get stuck with taking care of him all the time. I'll be the first to admit that I'm not very good at taking care of kids. I think all the years of taking care of him and dealing with him is what really influenced me. His influence on me might seem small to others, but it will stay with me for a very long time. My aversion towards young kids and my irritation towards stupidity are all from his influence. Hopefully after reading this, you will understand that influence a bit more and the reason why I chose to interview him.

Instructor Laura Pfau's comments: While most students chose to interview an inspiring family member or a mentor, Jerry took a different approach to this interview assignment; he was adamant about interviewing his younger brother Josh. The result is a funny yet honest portrayal of the relationship between two brothers -- who obviously mean a lot to one another, even if they don't always see eye to eye!