

# Nature vs nurture

Psychology



You got your blue eyes from your mother and your tall body figure from your father. But where did you get your well-mannered, sweet personality and talent for swimming? Did you learn those from your parents or was it predetermined by your genes? While it is clear that physical characteristics are hereditary, the genetic waters get a bit more murky when it comes to an individual's behavior, intelligence, and personality. Ultimately, the old argument of Nature vs. Nurture has never really been won.

We do not know yet how much of what is determined by our DNA and how much our life experience, but we do know that they both play a part. Nature refers to individuals innate qualities (nativism). In other words, nature is your genes. The physical and personality traits determined by your genes stay the same irrespective of where you were born and raised. Nurture refers to personal experiences (empiricism or behaviorism). In other words it refers to your childhood or how you were brought up.

If you were a happy kid and well-looked after as a child, you will have a better personality than if you were raised by your parents who neglected you, abused or didn't pay attention to you. Scientists have known for years that traits such as eye color are determined by specific genes encoded in each human cell. "The Nature Theory" takes a step further to say that more abstract traits such as intelligence; personality, aggression, and sexual orientation are also encoded in our DNA. Many fear arguments are being used to excuse criminal acts for example; also, some think for nature theory is the existence of a "gay gene".

Not ignoring those genetic tendencies may exist, supporters of the nurture theory believe they just don't matter that our behavioral aspects originate

only from the environmental factors of our up-bringing. This theory could be backed up by B. F. Skinner. The notable behaviorist proved that human behavior could be conditioned as much as the same way as animals. If environment didn't play a part in determining an individual's trait, the identical twins should, theoretically, be exactly the same in all respects, even if separated at birth.

But there are a number of studies show that they are never the exactly alike, even though they are remarkably similar in most respects. So, was the way we behave engrained in us before we were born? Or has it developed over time in response to our response? Researchers on all sides of the nature vs. nurture debate agree that the link between a gene and a behavior is not the same. While a gene may increase the likelihood that you will behave in a particular way, it does make people do things. This means that we still get to choose who we'll be when we grow up.