



## **Nature Vs Nurture**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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One day I asked my friend, Paul, "Why are you so smart?" He replied "Well, both my parents are doctors so I inherited the genes and I was raised by parents who are both doctors so I had a good environment for learning."

In the 1970s there was a debate about whether genetics or environment contributed the most to one's personality. Twins separated at birth and then studied in adulthood were used as evidence that biological inheritance was more powerful than environment. Often twins who had never met were found living in the same type of house, being married to people with the same names and were even dressing alike.

Sometimes, however, there were situations which seemed to contradict this stance. For example, a child might be born with hearing even when both parents were deaf. Other attributes such as intelligence also proved not to be entirely based on genetics.

Those who believed that the environment had more influence than genetics argued that personality is malleable and could be changed through structure and education. Parenting classes and educational programs served as a testimony to this perspective.

Today we no longer participate in the "Nature versus Nurture" debate. It is not possible to determine what percentage the factors contribute to a person's personality. Some children have a horrible upbringing and grow up with resiliency. Others have a stable and loving upbringing only to be troubled and unhealthy as adults.

One theorist claims "genes load the gun but environment pulls the trigger".

When clients ask "Is there hope?" I immediately explain that I wouldn't be in this business if I didn't believe in change.

The formula for improving anything whether it is an organization, machine, system or person is to analyze the situation, identify the weaknesses and then begin planning strategies to overcome the problems.

Some clients face difficulties that are obviously biological such as deformities or inherited illnesses. Others have issues that began after birth such as abuse, addictions or relationship problems.

Psychologists are trained and experienced in healing individuals, families, groups and organizations to deal with their problems.

If there is something happening in your life that prevents you from reaching potential or coping with everyday life, you may benefit from developing a plan with a psychologist.