

Don't forget parents share genes with their offspring

The following is an excerpt.

In 2002 I read [The Blank Slate](#). With all due respect to Steven Pinker one of the most fascinating aspects of this book was actually a review of the work of another psychologist, [Judith Richard Harris](#). Harris' own views are explicated crisply in [The Nurture Assumption](#). In it she reviews and expands on a major insight from behavior genetics: **over the long term parental influence seems to be a relatively marginal predictor in terms of many behavioral traits.** To be explicit, one can imagine a personality trait which varies in the population. The variation of genes may explain 40% of the variation of the trait. The variation in parental child-rearing techniques, "shared home environment," may explain 10% of the variation of the trait. The remaining 50% of the variation may be "non-shared environment." That basically means we don't have a definitive explanation of what the 50% remainder is, though Harris posits that this consists to a great extent of peer groups.*

However you quibble with the details of Harris' line of reasoning, **the key takeaway is that people often neglect that parents and offspring share genes when considering the influence parents have upon their children.**

Read the full post here: Don't forget parents share genes with their offspring