

Why some people make stupid choices? Genetics may hold the answer

The premise of the [Darwin Awards](#), [which are annually given to those who “improve our gene pool by removing themselves from it”,] is that common sense is heritable. In other words, we pass it on to our kids. But do we?

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Genetics influence all these things. In fact the [first law](#) of behavior genetics, says [Stuart Ritchie](#), who recently wrote a book on the scientific study of intelligence, is that “all human psychological traits are partly heritable.”

For instance, risky behavior...is partly genetic. An identical and fraternal twin study published in [Behavior Genetics](#) suggests that 60 percent of differences in men’s desire for new, unusual, and risky experiences (“sensation seeking”) is heritable.

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Because so many genes make up a given polygenic trait, however, the precise genetic equation of common sense and other characteristics is unknown...Another way genetics may affect common sense is through our environment.

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For example, a study published in [Emotion, Space, and Society](#) explains that environmental factors can “change the way DNA is folded,” thereby affecting traits such as mood regulation and impulse control.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Is Common Sense Genetic?](#)

For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP](#) on Wikipedia.