

Video: Looking back at groundbreaking twins research—and its impact on genetics

"I have looked at the data, and I'm collecting the data, and I'm still absolutely astounded. I still haven't settled down and absorbed this kind of a finding yet. How long is it going to take me?"

These words were uttered by Dr. Thomas J. Bouchard, research director of the Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart (MISTRA), during a conversation with the Danish professor of psychiatry, Niels Juel-Nielsen, in May 1981. Bouchard was trying to come to terms with the revolutionary implications of his own research into identical and fraternal twins reared apart.

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An archived recording of their remarkable exchange was rediscovered in 2011 by the twin researcher Dr. Nancy L. Segal. In her 2012 book *Born Together—Reared Apart*, Segal writes that Bouchard's incredulity reveals the degree to which his new findings contradicted his own assumptions and the prevailing wisdom about the importance of environment in shaping a person's traits, prospects, and outcomes. The scholars' amazement is palpable as they discuss the exciting and groundbreaking conclusions suggested by Bouchard's new data.

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Twin studies have uncovered the enormous importance of genetics. They have laid to rest the notion that parents are omnipotent sculptors, and a child is a piece of clay. They have hammered another nail into the coffin of the Freudian guilt complex, where everything that goes wrong in an individual's life may be attributable to poor parenting.

Read full, original post: [A Striking Similarity: The Revolutionary Findings of Twin Studies](#)