

7 things we get wrong about heredity

Many people have misconceptions about heredity—how we are connected to our ancestors and how our inheritance from them shapes us. Rather than dispelling those misconceptions, our growing fascination with our DNA may only intensify them.

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Misconception #1: Finding a Special Ancestor Makes You Special

...And if you could get in a time machine and travel back a few thousand years, you could find someone who was a common ancestor of all living people on Earth.

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Misconception #3: Ancestry Tests Are as Reliable as Medical Tests

...It's easy to conclude that ancestry reports are as reliable as stepping on a scale at the doctor's office to get your height and weight measured.

That is a mistake, and one that can cause a lot of heartbreak.

Misconception #4: There's a Gene for Every Trait You Inherit

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There are some traits that are determined by a single gene. Whether [Gregor] Mendel's peas were smooth or wrinkled was determined by a gene called SBEI. Whether people develop sickle cell anemia or not comes down to a single gene called HBB. But many traits do not follow this so-called Mendelian pattern—even ones that we may have been told in school are Mendelian.

Read full, original post: [Seven Big Misconceptions About Heredity](#)