

Life is a genetic lottery — but that's a far cry from saying our traits are determined or fixed

People are often uncomfortable or [anxious about genetics](#).

“They think genetics means our outcomes are determined and that it doesn't matter what we change about our social environments, our lives will be the same. And that's not true,” says [Kathryn Paige Harden](#) early in our conversation.

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“When people hear that educational achievement is ‘genetic’ or ‘influenced by genes,’ it's easy to jump to the conclusion that there is nothing that can be done to change it, and if nothing can be done, then I'm off the hook, I'm not responsible,” says Harden.

And the argument goes that society isn't responsible either. So, who is?

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Genetic responsibility, as it's known, is still a sticky issue.

“Parents are not really responsible for the genetic limitations of their children,” says [John Evans](#), author of *The Human Gene Editing Debate*, “unless they knew they both had sickle cell disease and decided to have a baby anyway.”

But he says that the “spread of gene editing makes parents more responsible for the qualities of their children because you COULD have changed X, Y and Z, with Z being some fairly mild effect such as needing glasses, for instance.”

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)