

My Genes Made Me Do It!

☒ Not a day goes by that I don't read an article which floors me. One of the most recent is an article entitled "Infidelity and 12 Other Things We Blame on our Genes." I said to myself, "This is a joke, right?" Not!

The article goes on and describes various behaviors and syndromes which are somehow attributed to our genes: infidelity, overeating, overspending, smoking, bad driving, inability to remember faces, poor sense of direction, shrewishness, stuttering, laziness, bullying, carpal tunnel syndrome and the dislike of spinach and broccoli.

I'm obviously not a doctor so I'm not going to question legitimate studies about medical or physiological problems which may be genetic. What I'm not getting are the behaviors we can now excuse because of our "genes." When did "free will" disappear?

As usual, I'm wondering how many of these studies are funded with our tax dollars thanks to my favorite government agency, the National Institutes of Health. Who's paying for this nonsense?

These type of studies do nothing but allow people who behave badly to choose to escape personal responsibility and provide them with a new set of excuses instead of forcing people to own up to their actions. There are enough excuses floating around these days to justify people's behavior. The devil made me do it, my mother didn't breast feed me, my father didn't hug me, I only ate fast food, I didn't get a puppy for Christmas, I was bullied in school, my father sold my bicycle when I went to summer camp, I'm the youngest, I'm the oldest, I'm the middle child, I have brown eyes, I have blue eyes, and on and on and on. Stop whining already. It's boring. We don't need more excuses; we need people to take personal

responsibility.

In the area of law in which I've practiced over the past twenty years, child abuse and neglect, I've heard every excuse in the book to explain an adult's malevolent actions against a child. So the fact that someone can't control their anger is not his or her fault, it's because of how they were raised? Well, at some point, the vicious cycle has to stop and the adult has to face up to his own shortcomings and failures as a parent.

So, let's take a look at some of these so-called genetic problems facing people today.

When your wife catches you with a hot babe, it isn't because you have a busted moral compass. You can now blame it on your "I can't keep it in my pants" gene.

Or the reason you're seducing someone else's husband who's got lots of money isn't because you're an amoral whore, it's probably because you've got the "I'm-allergic-to-men-who-work-at-Jiffy-Lube" gene.

Or if you're like the woman I know who has two "under-the-table" jobs but is still fraudulently collecting unemployment benefits, you're not stealing and receiving welfare, it's because you've got the "I'm-entitled-to-take-free-money-from-the-taxpayers-and-get-what-I-can-from-the-government-dole" gene.

When someone is 26 years old and living in his mother's basement and playing video games 20 hours a day while sitting in a puddle of his own urine, it isn't because he's just a loser, it's because he's got the "I-think-I'll-blame-the-video-game-designer-for-my-addiction" gene.

When I see morons in Los Angeles who after drinking all day decide to destroy property throughout the city to "celebrate" a championship win, I should re-think this and say, these

people aren't idiots they must suffer from the "I-Love-the-Lakers" gene.

The fact that someone maxes out their credit cards isn't because they're out of control in their spending habits, it's probably because they have the "money-challenged" gene or "I-love-spending-money-I-don't-have Syndrome."

If you're frustrated with other people's driving, not to worry. You're no doubt suffering because of the "I'm-usually-in-a-hurry-because-I-haven't-allocated-my-time-properly" gene. You can't help yourself.

On the other hand, maybe it does all have to do with genes and not personal behavior.

Maybe the guy who doesn't act the fool this month actually has the "I-love-my-wife-and-I'm-not-going-to-risk-losing-her-by-going-for-a-quickie-at-the-office-Christmas-party" gene.

And maybe the gal who's an alcoholic isn't drinking because of her own free will but because part of her DNA makeup contains the "I'm-a-member-of-AA-for-the-past-ten-years-and-don't-make-excuses-for-being-an-alcoholic" gene.

And does the guy in the wheelchair at our nearby Walmart work because, despite his overwhelming disabilities, he wants to be a productive member of society or does he really suffer with "I-choose-to-work-in-spite-of-my-illness-because-I'm-not-a-victim Syndrome?"

We know the difference between right and wrong but we all make mistakes. We're not perfect. We're all human. We all, at some point, behave in ways we afterwards regret. But most of us deal with it and don't make excuses for our failings.

Sure, it's easier to blame someone or anything else for one's foibles. It's easy not to have a game plan in life because that requires awareness. Having options and making choices

requires personal responsibility. For some, it's easier to blame outside causes – the nuns, astrological signs, tarot readings, the weather – or just about anything else rather than take control over their own lives and circumstances. I expect that type of rationale from children. Studies like those mentioned in the article just give people additional crutches in order to escape their accountability rather than a good swift kick in the pants followed by someone saying, “grow up!”

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.