



Nature versus Nurture Revisited

By Michael Gravelle

In our seminars we often have discussions, sometimes heated, about the degree to which an individual's temperament is determined by nature or nurture. Scientists have long been split on the issue, with some advocating that temperament is genetic and established before we are even born and others who feel that the environment in our formative years has a more significant impact.

Recent developments over the last few years have supported the position of the nature camp. A study of non-identical twins, performed by the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College, London, found that qualities such as self-perception and self-confidence, long thought to be a result of one's upbringing, were, in fact, largely determined by genetics.

This belief was also popularized in the Malcolm Gladwell best seller, *The Tipping Point*, which cited studies determining that the personalities and intelligence of children who were adopted were influenced by their birth parents rather than their adopted parents.

What are the implications for McQuaig users?

For starters, this recent research speaks to the stability of an individual's underlying temperament. It implies that the degree of Dominance, Drive or Compliance that we are born with has a greater impact on our day-to-day behaviour and future potential than our immediate work environment or training.

Some implications for using McQuaig's suite of tools for different applications are outlined below.

For Leadership Development

The fact that temperament is deeply engrained and unshakeable underlines the need to focus on inherent strengths in the development process. In the Action Items generated by The McQuaig Self-Development Survey®, fifty percent deal with leveraging strengths and fifty percent deal with managing your developmental areas. The research would imply that time spent in the strengths development would reinforce one's natural temperament and therefore yield greater rewards. For example, if someone is highly competitive, an action item that builds on that strength, like "Promote competition among your team" may yield greater results than one that encourages individuals to restrain their competitive side, like "Take a back seat role". While recognizing one's limitations is certainly helpful, using one's strengths is naturally more effective.

For Job-Fit

The degree to which one's temperament is engrained varies by trait, according to our reliability studies. We have found that while Dominance is deeply rooted, people tend to be more flexible when it comes to Sociability - an important discovery that can impact selection decisions. As such, when generating a McQuaig Job Fit report matching a candidate's Word Survey results to a Job Survey, a gap in results-orientation would be more significant than a gap in people-orientation. The good news is that the Job Fit report has already taken that into account when giving a final rating to the candidate by allocating extra weight to certain traits.

These recent findings on the genetic impact of temperament heightens the need to understand your candidates and employees prior to making people decisions in all aspects of the Talent Management Cycle.

If you would like to view a sample Job Fit report please click: "[Job Fit Sample](#)". For a version customized for a job that is important to you simply [reply](#) and type the name of the job in the subject line.

To view a sample Self-Development Survey please click: "[SDS Sample](#)" or to receive your own Self-Development Survey just [reply](#) and type SDS in the subject line.

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