

## 5 Reasons Why you Need to Be Careful About Who you Marry for The Sake of Your Children

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For better or for worse. This statement means a lot more than it is given credit for. This is especially true when it comes to your children. This statement is not only binding to the parents but also relates to the outcome of the children you will have with your chosen partner. Choosing a spouse is already difficult enough without having to consider how your choice will influence your future kids. This article explores 5 reasons why you need to be careful about who you marry for the sake of your children.

### 1. *Genetics and IQ*

To a certain extent, you can thank (or blame) your parents for the way you think. Scientists for more than a century have been trying to discover the relationship between IQ and genetics. The answer they have come up with is that the differences between people on intelligence tests are substantially the result of genetic differences. Genes make a big difference, but they are not the only thing that determines intelligence. They account for more than half of all differences in intelligence among people. Some studies put genetic influence to as high as 80%. This estimate reflects the results of twin, adoption and DNA studies. These studies have revealed that later in life, children adopted away from their biological parents at birth are just as similar to their biological parents as are children reared by their biological parents. Similarly, we know that adoptive parents and their adopted children do not typically resemble one another in intelligence.

#### **Evidence of Genetic Influences on Intelligence**

- Twin studies suggest that identical twins' IQ's are more similar than those of fraternal twins (Plomin & Spinath, 2004).
- Siblings reared together in the same home have IQ's that are more similar than those of adopted children raised together in the same environment (McGue & others, 1993).

I.J. Deary of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and colleagues in several countries wanted to find out "whether genetic differences that we could test on people's DNA could explain some of the reasons that people have different intelligence test scores,". They estimated that they found a genetic influence that accounts for at least 40 percent to 50 percent of the differences in intelligence test scores in the 3,511 unrelated adults in their study who were tested on knowledge and problem-solving skills.

### 1. **For richer or poorer**

*Cognitive difficulties* are very common in children from impoverished backgrounds, putting them at risk of educational failure. The link between social background and cognitive ability is present in babies as

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young as four months and adults over 50.

The main issue affecting cognitive ability is *working memory*. This is what allows us to juggle multiple thoughts simultaneously. Working memory has a “limited capacity”. This means that there is an upper limit to the amount of information we can hold in our minds at any given time. In children, it is a strong predictor of many cognitive functions such as reading and maths skills. Early on in life, working memory abilities are closely linked with school grades. Children with bigger working memory capacities typically perform better in the classroom.

Deficits in working memory are very common in children from underprivileged backgrounds and place them at increased risk of poor progress at school. Children from deprived families, therefore, face both social and economic barriers to success and impaired cognitive skills. This means that they are often ill-equipped to overcome hardship and break out of the vicious circle of poverty.

### **1. Smart Parents, Smart Children?**

In a concept termed “*nature versus nurture*”, it is debated whether smart parents will yield smart children. This involves whether the child was born with the abilities to become a great student or whether life experiences and exposure in the world have a bigger influence. In what may be a controversial study it was revealed that a mother's genetics determines how clever her children are and the father makes no difference.

Women are more likely to transmit intelligence genes to their children because they are carried on the X chromosome and women have two of these, while men only have one. Researchers interviewed 12,686 young people between the ages of 14 and 22 every year from 1994. Despite taking into account several factors, from the participants’ education to their race and socioeconomic status, the team still found the best predictor of intelligence was the IQ of the mother. However, research also makes it clear that genetics is not the only determinant of intelligence - only 40 to 80% of intelligence is estimated to be hereditary, leaving a similar chunk dependent on the environment.

### **1. Happy wife, happy life? especially for your children**

According to one of the researchers from Washington University (Brittany C. Solomon) successful people often turn out to have strong marital relationships. Sheryl Sandberg (Facebook COO), who jump-started the “Lean In” movement, remarked, “the single most important career decision that a woman makes is whether she will have a life partner and who that partner is.” The results from the research demonstrate that the characteristics of the person one marries influence important aspects of one’s professional life. If your professional life is strong then it becomes easier to provide for your children. This means that the child will have little to worry about and can fully focus on having a happy childhood.

### **1. Socioeconomic status of both you and your spouse**

Children’s *cognitive abilities* and school achievements are deeply affected by parental socioeconomic

status. Socioeconomic status in childhood has been linked to cognitive function and future academic and occupational success in studies from several countries. Eilertsen T., Thorsen A. L., Holm S. E. H., Bøe T., Sørensen L. & Lundervold A. J. (2016) in Parental socioeconomic status and child intellectual functioning in a Norwegian sample. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 57, 399–405 conducted a study which investigated the association between SES and cognitive functioning in a sample of 255 Norwegian children, including 151 typically developing children and 104 children with a psychiatric diagnosis. They defined socioeconomic status as defined from maternal and paternal education and family income of typically developing children.

Economic models view families with greater economic resources as better able to purchase or produce important ‘inputs’ into their young children’s development (e.g., nutritious meals; enriched home learning environments and child care settings outside the home; safe and stimulating neighborhood environments).

These are just a handful of reasons why the choice of your life partner is important not just for you but also for your children.

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