



*Your Social and  
Physical Heredity*

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*Y*our parents made you what you are, physically, but YOU can make yourself what you WILL, mentally.

You and every other human being are the sum total of just two things, heredity and environment.

You inherited certain physical tendencies and qualities from your parents. You inherited other tendencies and qualities from your grandparents, and from their parents.

The size of your body, the color of your hair and eyes, the texture of your skin, and certain other physical qualities of this nature you inherited; consequently, much of your physical makeup is a result of causes beyond your control.

Those qualities which were “wished” upon you, through your physical heredity, are, for the most part, qualities which you cannot change very materially.

However, it is another matter when you come to those qualities which you have developed out of your environment, or through what is called social heredity. You can change these qualities at will. Those which you developed before the age of ten years will, of course, be much harder to modify or change because they are deeply set, and you will find it hard to exercise sufficient willpower to change them.

Every sense impression which reaches your mind, from the moment of your birth, through any of the five senses, constitutes a part of your social heredity. The songs you sing or hear sung, the poems you read, the books you study, the sermons you listen to, the sights you see, all constitute a part of your social heredity.

Probably the most influential sources from which you absorb the tendencies which constitute your personality are these: first, the teachings which you receive at home, by your parents; secondly, your teachings at church or Sunday school; thirdly, your teachings in

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public or private schools; fourthly, the daily newspapers and monthly magazines and your other reading.

You believe as you do, regarding every subject, as a result of the sense impressions which have reached your mind. Your belief may be false or correct, according to the soundness or unsoundness, truth or falsity, of those sense impressions.

If, in the process of your schooling, you have been taught how to think accurately; how to overcome prejudices which attach to race, creed, politics, and the like; how to see that nothing but facts impress themselves on your mind; how to keep away all sense impressions which do not arise out of truth, you are very fortunate, because you will be able to extract from your environment that which you can use to best advantage in developing your personality into exactly that which you want it to be.

Physical heredity is something that cannot be altered to any very great extent, but social heredity can be changed, and the new ideas can be made to take the place of the old, the truth to take the place of falsehood.

A small, weak body may be made to house a great mind by properly directing that mind through social heredity. On the other hand, a strong physical body may house a weak, inactive mind through the same cause. The mind is the sum total of all sense impressions which have reached the brain; therefore, you can see how important it is that these sense impressions arise out of truth, how important it is that they be kept free from prejudice, hatred, and the like.

The mind resembles a fertile field. It will produce a crop according to the nature of the seed that is sown in it, through the sense impressions which reach it.

By controlling four sources, the ideal of a nation or a people can be completely changed, or even supplanted by a new ideal, in one generation. These four sources are: (1) the home teachings, (2) the church teachings, (3) the public school teachings, and (4) the newspapers, magazines, and books.

Through these four sources, any ideal, thought, or idea can be forced upon the child so indelibly that the results would be hard, if not impossible, to erase or change in afterlife.

Summarizing, we believe it worthwhile to repeat, in a few words, the two chief points made, namely:

*First*—Any ideal or habit which is intended to become a permanent fixture in a human being must be planted in his or her mind in early childhood, through the principle of social heredity. An idea so planted becomes a permanent part of that person and remains with him or her throughout life, excepting in very rare instances, where stronger influences than those which planted the idea tend to counteract or erase it. This principle is called social heredity, because it constitutes the medium through which the dominating qualities of a person are planted and developed out of all those sense impressions which reach the mind out of one's environment, through the five senses, as separate and distinct from those physical qualities which are inherited from the parents.

*Second*—One of the most important fundamental principles of psychology, through which the human mind functions, is the tendency of the mind to want that which is withheld, prohibited, or hard to acquire. The moment you remove an object out of reach of a person, that moment you set up in that person's mind a desire for that object. The moment you forbid a person to do a thing, that moment that person strongly desires to do the very thing it has been forbidden to do. The human mind resents being forced to do anything. Therefore, to plant an idea in a person's mind in such a way that it will remain there permanently, it must be so presented that the person welcomes it and readily accepts it. All competent salesmen are familiar with this principle, and practice the habit of so presenting the merits of their services, goods, or wares, that the prospective buyer is scarcely aware that the ideas he is forming are not originating in his own mind.

These two principles are worthy of consideration by all who would become leaders in any worthwhile undertaking, because all successful

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leadership depends upon their use. Whether you are selling goods, practicing medicine or law, preaching sermons, writing books, teaching school, or managing commerce and industry, you will find your ability greatly augmented by studying, understanding, and using these two principles through which the human mind may be reached.

You are the sum total of just two factors, heredity and environment. You can't help how you were born, but you can build up your strong traits and overcome your weak ones. And you **CAN** change your environment, your thoughts, your purpose, your life aim. It's up to **YOU**; do you **WANT** to? Then you **CAN**.