

Justin Dyer

Nature/Nurture

The first video with Laurence Steinberg, was short and to the point which I particularly enjoy. He covers an argumentative topic on nature and nurture. His belief counters that of Piaget's. Steinberg believes that the world thinks it is genetics that defines a person's attributes, but he believes it is a web of both nature and nurture. He states that a baby is more susceptible to depression if there is a trend of depression in genetics. I think that this is not fully genetic. I believe that if an infant's mother/father struggles with depression, the infant picks this up through its life, rather than through its genes. Steinberg continues on the importance of nurture and how it dramatically influences the behavior of a child and its life proceeding it. I enjoyed his analogy of nature being a switch that the environment can control someone's attributes and turn them on or off.

When does learning begin? This is the question that Annie Murphy Paul began her Ted Talk with, and I believe she answered for the audience. She has researched and been a part of studies where this question is focused on fetuses. I follow this belief that learning begins in the womb. I have mainly heard stories and examples that has led me to this belief, since I do not have any first-hand experiences with it. Annie argues that learning begins inside the womb and continues throughout the fetus's and mother's experiences during development. I loved her stories and studies she provided in her speech. The one I found most interesting was the story of the German's starving. In summary, during war, food got scarce for a nation and led to starvation for many pregnant mothers. This starvation led to a malnourishment of the fetuses. This led to mass deaths of mothers and children; however, the most interesting part was the traits that the fetuses that survived developed. The surviving fetuses were more prone to obesity, diabetes, and heart conditions. This is rather interesting; I would have hypothesized the opposite conditions. I understand though that the scarcity of food during development made the infant want to eat anything it could to survive. This carried over too many of the infants' lives as they grew up. This is prevalent to many common situations in the modern day. I am a strong believer that the learning process begins in the womb.