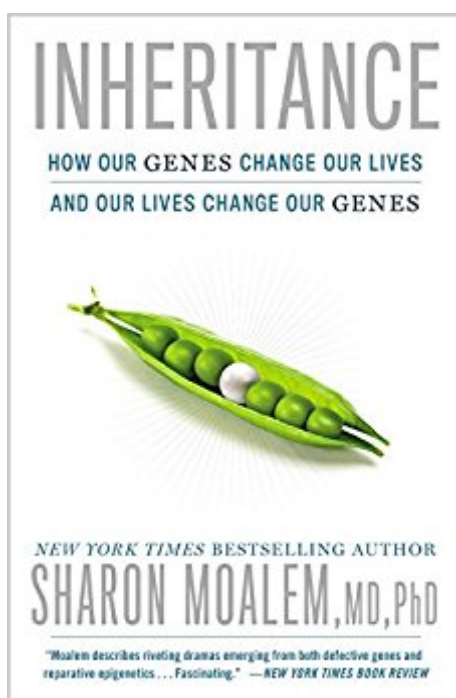


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# Inheritance: How Our Genes Change Our Lives--and Our Lives Change Our Genes



## Synopsis

Award-winning physician and New York Times bestselling author Sharon Moalem, MD, PhD, reveals how genetic breakthroughs are completely transforming our understanding of both the world and our lives. **INHERITANCE** Conventional wisdom dictates that our genetic destiny is fixed at conception. But Dr. Moalem's groundbreaking book shows us that the human genome is far more fluid and fascinating than your ninth grade biology teacher ever imagined. By bringing us to the bedside of his unique and complex patients, he masterfully demonstrates what rare genetic conditions can teach us all about our own health and well-being. In the brave new world we're rapidly rocketing into, genetic knowledge has become absolutely crucial. **INHERITANCE** provides an indispensable roadmap for this journey by teaching you: -Why you may have recovered from the psychological trauma caused by childhood bullying-but your genes may remain scarred for life. -How fructose is the sugar that makes fruits sweet-but if you have certain genes, consuming it can buy you a one-way trip to the coroner's office. -Why ingesting common painkillers is like dosing yourself repeatedly with morphine-if you have a certain set of genes. -How insurance companies legally use your genetic data to predict the risk of disability for you and your children-and how that impacts the coverage decisions they make for your family. -How to have the single most important conversation with your doctor-one that can save your life. And finally: -Why people with rare genetic conditions hold the keys to medical problems affecting millions. In this trailblazing book, Dr. Moalem employs his wide-ranging and entertaining interdisciplinary approach to science and medicine-- explaining how art, history, superheroes, sex workers, and sports stars all help us understand the impact of our lives on our genes, and our genes on our lives. **INHERITANCE** will profoundly alter how you view your genes, your health--and your life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An Best Book of the Month, April 2014: In the last microsecond of the scientific age, we've figured out that our brains change throughout our life, adapting for good or ill based on lifestyle choices we make. But most of us haven't yet realized the extent to which our genes also remain flexible, making Dr. Sharon Moalem's *Inheritance* nothing short of revolutionary. Drawing on bleeding-edge science and sometimes heartbreaking stories of individuals he's treated for rare genetic anomalies, Moalem explains how your DNA's constant shape-shifting is "mediated and orchestrated by how you live, where you live, the stresses you face, and the things you consume." Most fascinating (and terrifying, especially for parents) is evidence of how experiences--from trauma like bullying to times of happiness--can alter your genes so profoundly that the effects are passed down for generations. But his message is ultimately one of empowerment: we're accelerating into a world where understanding your unique genetic inheritance will give you the power to eat, exercise, and seek medical treatment tailored to what your body really needs, where we'll have "the opportunity to transform what we get and what we give, altering the course of our destiny." --Mari Malcolm --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

In the biological tug-of-war between nature and nurture that determines exactly who you are, there is no clear-cut winner. To explain why, physician-scientist Moalem invokes two important concepts, flexible inheritance and epigenetics. Flexible inheritance is defined as "the relationship between what our genes do to us and what we do to our genes." Turns out that genetic traits can change. Genes are surprisingly sensitive. How we live influences our DNA. Moalem likens genes to "thousands upon thousands of little light switches, some are turning on while others are turning off." An example of epigenetics is how a chemical (betaine) contained in spinach can ward off genetic mutations that give rise to cancer. Many rare hereditary metabolic disorders are discussed in the book. The ways that doctors utilize the study of genetics in their medical practices are described. Human beings are more than the product of a genetic blueprint. As Moalem writes, "We are the genetic culmination of our life experiences, as well as every event our parents and ancestors ever lived through and survived." --Tony Miksanek --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This is a really good read. The author does a great job of writing in a chatty, nontechnical way for the most part. Chapters are organized so that the main idea of each chapter builds on the points made in the chapter before. However, I came away from reading this with a sense of having read numerous interesting anecdotes about rare genetic disorders and with a better grasp of how there is a real interplay between genes and the environment one lives in. I didn't give it five stars because I'm not sure there really is a cohesiveness to the book as a whole. I did come away with an appreciation for epigenetics: how the environment affects genes.

This is a perfect read if you are interested in Epigenetics, Nutrigenetics or Nutrigenomics. Or, if you are simply a human. The language the author uses to describe genomic concepts is readable for anyone of varying levels.

I loved this book! I am interested in this subject, so it was easy to buy it for the content, and I do enjoy Dr Moalem's writing style- pretty accessible and understandable (speaking as a clinician, that is useful to get important concepts and points across to patients, or the public as well). Highly recommend for those who are following genome breakthroughs and genetic family tree searching.

This is really a fascinating book for those of all ages. Should help parents to be and those with newborns understand what to be doing to not damage genetic material before conception and then what to watch for so if something has gone amiss it can be addressed early. Also fascinating correlation between traumatic and physical stress on genetic expression. Needs to be read slowly and the references used as well.

This book definitely introduces many of the different diseases out there and shows how genes can be altered by the smallest things. I do have a background in genetics and I thought this book was a good introduction to epigenetics, but of course my craving to learn more and more in depth did influence my overall rating of the book. Inheritance is very nicely laid out though, that you barely realize you are learning! Sharon Moalem is an excellent writer.

My wife has been raving about this book and says it was enthralling, well written, and fascinating. I'll have to check it out myself!

My family has a rare inherited condition, Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia, so I had a reason to be interested. Dr. Moalem in this book says that rare diseases together affect a large percentage of the American populace. So more people than I would have thought would be interested in reading this book. He offers in this book many one on one stories of people with rare conditions and some idea of how their rare conditions work to cause their maladies. What was left out, I think, is the science and practical how-to's behind the stories. How are researchers trying to fix the genes that he is describing? How do people with this or that condition live their lives today? Who or what agency supports people with this or that condition and how do their families cope? He mentions Obamacare briefly but I imagine this would date the book too much if he were to delve too heavily into today's issues. These were all questions I was left with but again it was an interesting fast read.

I absolutely loved this book. It has a wealth of information and is not at all difficult for non-scientific people like me. I am a language geek, and the thought of chemistry, my husband's field, gives me chills and nightmares about my college freshman year when I mistakenly took chemistry instead of biology. Dr. Moalem writes with a simplicity that belies his incredible brilliance. I very highly recommend this book and can't wait for another one by him!

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