



The Human Spark: The Science of Human Development

Jerome Kagan

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As infants we are rife with potential. For a short time, we have before us a seemingly infinite number of developmental paths. Soon, however, we become limited to certain paths as we grow into unique products of our genetics and experience. But what factors account for the variation—in skills, personalities, values—that results? How do experiences shape what we bring into the world?

In *The Human Spark*, pioneering psychologist Jerome Kagan offers an unflinching examination of personal, moral, and cultural development that solidifies his place as one of the most influential psychologists of the past century. In this definitive analysis of the factors that shape the human mind, Kagan explores the tension between biology and the environment. He reviews major advances in the science of development over the past three decades and offers pointed critiques and new syntheses. In so doing, Kagan calls out the shortcomings of the modern fad for neuroscience, shows why theories of so-called attachment parenting are based on a misinterpretation of research, and questions the field's reflexive tendency to pathologize the behavior of the young. Most importantly, he reminds us that a life, however influenced by biology and upbringing, is still a tapestry to be woven, not an outcome to be endured.

A profound exploration of what is universal and what is individual in human development, *The Human Spark* is the result of a scientist's lifelong quest to discover how we become who we are. Whether the reader is a first-time parent wondering what influence she, her genes, and the wider world will have on her child; an educator seeking insight into the development of her students; or simply a curious soul seeking self-knowledge, Kagan makes an expert and companionable guide.

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