

Seligman and Zuckerman Research*

Martin Seligman (1994) has cited studies find massive effects of genes on adult personality and only negligible effects on any particular events. For example, adopted children share more with their biological parents than with their adoptive parents. Identical twins reared apart are far more similar as adults than fraternal twins reared together across a broad spectrum of personality types.

It has been found that babies born with low levels of MAO-B are more aroused, active, and reactive than those with high levels – character traits that are emblematic of their behavior throughout their lives. An individual's level of MAO-B is considered the biological force behind his or her level of sensation seeking (i.e., his or her desire for novel, varied, and thrilling sensations and experiences, and his or her willingness to take risks to experience thrills. Sensation seekers search out novelty in an unconscious attempt to increase their dopamine levels. According to Marvin Zuckerman (1980) an individual's sensation seeking level is largely a function of the person's genetic make-up with environmental differences playing little or no part.

*Roberts, J.A. (2011) *Shiny objects: We we spend money we don't have in search of happiness we can't buy*. New York: Harper One.