

What would I choose?

What do you find attractive or desirable?

If you had the opportunity during your lifetime, would you choose:

- to change the shape of your nose
- your height to be at least 180 cm tall
- to have fair hair or blue eyes
- to be very intelligent
- to be able to sing or play the piano well
- to cure an inherited disease so that you did not pass it on to your children?

If you could use gene therapy, what would you change about yourself? Would you change anything about someone else? And what would they change about you?

In this activity, you will consider what you find attractive and desirable in yourself and others. This will help you to decide whether gene therapy is an appropriate tool to be used in any of the situations mentioned above.

What to do:

Part A – What do you find attractive or desirable?

1. In each column labelled '1' of the table on the next page, assign 20 points for the characteristic you rate as most important when thinking about various people. Continue until you reach the characteristic you rate as least important, which you assign 1 point.

Characteristic	Your best friend		Your partner/spouse/ girlfriend/boyfriend		A parent	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
reliability						
intelligence						
height						
lip shape and size						
skin colour						
health						
honesty						
teeth						
body proportion						
income						
eye size						
eye colour						
nose shape						
religion						
hobbies and interests						
sense of humour						
political views						
hair						
age						

2. Do the task again, but this time think about what these people might change about you. List your answers in the columns labelled 2.

3. Compile results for the class on the whiteboard.

4. Consider:

- Did you give higher ratings to different characteristics in friends, girl/boyfriends or parents?
- If you did not give the highest ratings to the same characteristics in friends, girl/boyfriends and parents, why do you think this is so?
- Is what you'd like to change about yourself different from what your best friend would change?
- Is what you'd like to change about yourself different from what your parents would change about you? Would they change anything at all of the characteristics listed?
- As far as you know, which of these characteristics are genetically determined? Mark these with a 'G' on the list above.
- How highly did you rate the genetically-determined characteristics?

Biotechnology Online School Resource

For further information contact the Gene Technology Information Service on freecall Australia-wide **1800 631 276**.

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Part 2 – How do you go about getting what you want?

Work in a small group to discuss what you think about the situations described in each of the following scenarios. Think about whether it is a good use of the technology and who should decide if it is, or not.

Write down a few notes to summarise your discussion points.

- a) A woman looks for a man who she considers to be physically attractive, so that the baby she has with him is likely to inherit his attractive genes.
- b) A couple who want to have a child go to a sperm bank and select sperm from a donor whose characteristics they find attractive. In this case, does it make any difference whether or not the husband is fertile?
- c) A couple want a smart, blue-eyed, female baby, so they seek gene therapy to ensure they get one. Otherwise, they look for such a child to adopt.
- d) A man and woman seek gene therapy treatment of their fertilised egg to ensure that their child is healthy.
- e) In 2000, during a rape case in a small Australian community, hundreds of the town's men voluntarily undertook DNA testing. The police welcomed this because it enabled them to eliminate individuals as suspects. Some men, however, objected to the testing on the grounds that it was an invasion of privacy. They saw it as having to prove their innocence.
- f) When so many people have cosmetic surgery these days, why not save future generations the need by using gene therapy?
- g) Life insurance premiums might be a lot cheaper for people who can show that they have an excellent DNA profile.
- h) Employers select their workers on the basis of their various qualities, such as skills and education. What about using their DNA profile as well?