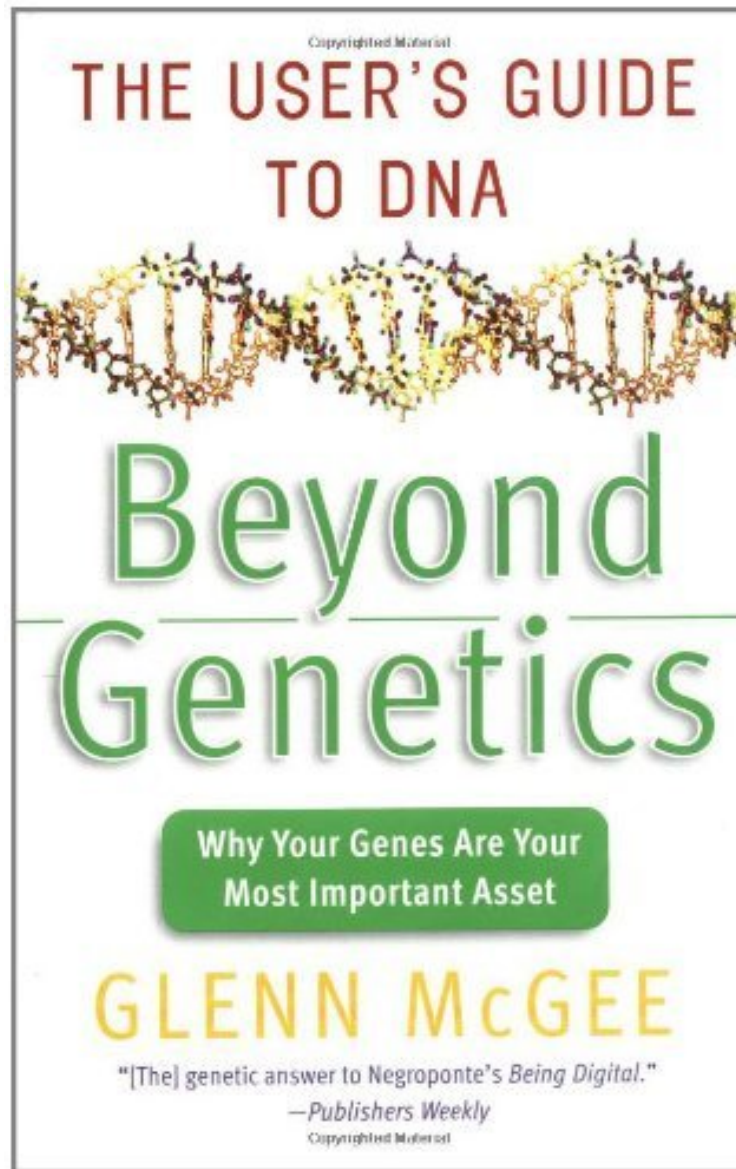


Beyond Genetics: The User's Guide to DNA

Glenn McGee

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Glenn McGee : Beyond Genetics: The User's Guide to DNA before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beyond Genetics: The User's Guide to DNA:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Genetics and bioethics, some interesting discussions. By Wesley L. Janssen McGee's discourse is somewhat dry, uneven, vague (particularly the first three chapters which generally stuck me as being too abstract and grandiose), the editing should have been better, and for these reasons the text is often discouraging. But if you can stay with McGee, you will eventually find that the issues being examined are important

and complex. McGee addresses the broad misunderstandings that many people fasten to the now frequent reports of the identification of "genes for" this or that condition or disease or shenanigans (I write this amid titillating headlines that "science" has identified a "gene for" sexual infidelity--so there you have it, I'm sure!). He highlights the difficulties and injustices that have arisen, and continue to develop, as regards "genetic discrimination". The abuse of genomic information (and likely other incomplete science, although McGee's focus is strictly genomics) by industry, employers, and particularly the for-profit private health insurance system enshrined by the American political Right, is now intractable, for the simple reason that the entire discipline of bioinformatics is enormously incomplete, at best. On points, current understandings of data (whether extant or absent) will certainly prove to be wrong (or perhaps too complex to foreseeably become scientifically "right"), but in many cases this incomplete and/or wrong science is wielded by for-profit "health care" insurers to isolate and [virtually eugenically] punish innocent but exploitable individuals, in hopes of producing a more attractive spreadsheet for investors. A putative "health care system" (that is, the American for-profit system) that is inherently fastened to the abuse and the selective misuse of science, and to place the necessity for profitability above mere scientific caution (apparently 'science' must be malleable, or even dispensable, if, when, and where science might conflict with financial strategies!), is a health care system seriously in need of dispassionate scrutiny, repair, and/or replacement. The issues surrounding 'genetic discrimination', the 'scientific' aspects of which are often dubious, is not McGee's only topic here, but in that it highlights our culture's misunderstanding of the fundamental nature of what science is and what science actually does (including what its appropriate uses, inherent uncertainties, and constraints are), and in that it highlights the inherent problems of doing healthcare for maximally large black or green numbers, it's an important topic. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Are Designer Genes in Your Future? By Arnold V. Loveridge McGee does an excellent job of sorting through the hype about genes and genetic engineering putting to bed some issues that seem to be frightening large amounts of people (like genetically modified food) and raising issues that do not appear to be on anyone's radar screen (patents issued to large, money-making corporations for YOUR genes). He explains in terms understandable by almost everyone why it matters that we look harder at what is being done and by whom. Too many articles on this topic today seem to concentrate on genetic manipulation that will pass on to future generations of plants or animals and thus be a major factor in evolution. But this book focuses on what can or can't be done with genes in the current generation, a much more clear and present danger (or benefit). The only fault I could find with the book is that the subtitle might lead a person to believe he had more control over where, when and by whom genetic engineering will impact his life. Unless more of us get together to help craft policies and laws about the use of genetics, the answers will all come from those who stand to profit moneywise from your genes. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thought Provoking Yet Readable By Noelle Blayde McGee's predictions, while some may seem infeasible, are thought provoking and founded on ample research in today's biotechnology market. As a student taking AP Biology, I found this book to be wholly readable; it touched on topics I've had to study, but no where did it become tedious or perplexing.

Genetic science is about to radically alter our lives. Sooner than you can imagine, human beings will be capable of diagnosing their own illnesses, designating the sex of their children, even designing the food they eat -- all as easily as using a cell phone. Now is the time for every one of us to take control of our DNA, and one man is uniquely qualified to show us how: Glenn McGee, bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania, pioneer in the study of "home genetics," and the acknowledged wunderkind of the exciting world found at the nexus of life science and computer technology. One of the most respected authorities in the field of genomics -- the study of the genetic "software" inside plants, animals, and us -- McGee takes us on an eye-opening journey behind the headlines and into the heart of this formidable cutting-edge science. Probing the far-ranging ethical and legal implications of genomic research, McGee tackles its most controversial and hotly debated aspects -- from patenting your DNA to genetic engineering at the supermarket -- and explodes unnecessary fears about this wondrous new knowledge. We live in a brave new world. Beyond Genetics provides us with the knowledge we need to take the right steps forward into tomorrow ... and beyond.

From Publishers Weekly Prominent bioethicist McGee urges readers to get smart about their DNA before it's too late in this genetic answer to Nicholas Negroponte's Being Digital. For instance, the author writes, though we would never leave our ATM code where someone could read it, we "think nothing of leaving bits of blood and tissue in the emergency room of a major hospital that is sure to conduct research on it." In decades past, questions of genetics were answered by "appeals to natural law theory," and often led to discrimination, injustice and even genocide. But the very notion of heredity has become obsolete in the new world McGee describes; instead, scientists are about to offer reproductive choices beyond our imaginings, cure diseases and feed billions more people--all while making astonishing amounts of money from "our" genes. In rapid-fire chapters packed with references to news stories and scientific studies, McGee outlines new developments in genetic testing, gene therapy and genetically modified food organisms. Just as personal computers have brought the digital revolution into our daily lives, home diagnostic kits will let us (or force us to) take charge of our own genes. "You'll update your medicine cabinet the way you update your computer

software," writes McGee. Our food, drugs and children will all be subject to genetic analysis and modification. This book is something of a scattered cautionary lecture, veering off into corporate tactics, legalities and personal anecdotes, but McGee makes his point in the end, offering a heads-up assessment of how advances in genetic research are sure to complicate our lives. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Pitched to readers who take genetics personally, wondering what all those headlines about the Human Genome Project mean for my genome, McGee presents in effect an owner's manual. He anticipates the development of technology born of the marriage between computer power and DNA mapping that will enable the ordinary person to access their personal genome. But McGee, a bioethicist, asks several questions. Do you really want to know what your DNA codes are? Is your physician competent enough to tell you? For most people, their main concern will be whether their DNA harbors genes indicating susceptibility to a disease for themselves or their progeny. And if it does, should you let bio-entrepreneurs have your DNA, so they can develop tests and cures for the disease? Outlining the ethical thickets, including the patenting of genes, McGee gives clear understanding of vital considerations in deciding whether to perform a test, undergo infertility treatment, or chow down on genetically manufactured food. Health-conscious readers will close McGee's book more informed and, perhaps, less worried. Gilbert Taylor Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved "The voice of a new generation of bioethics scholars that takes science seriously and puts it in ordinary language.