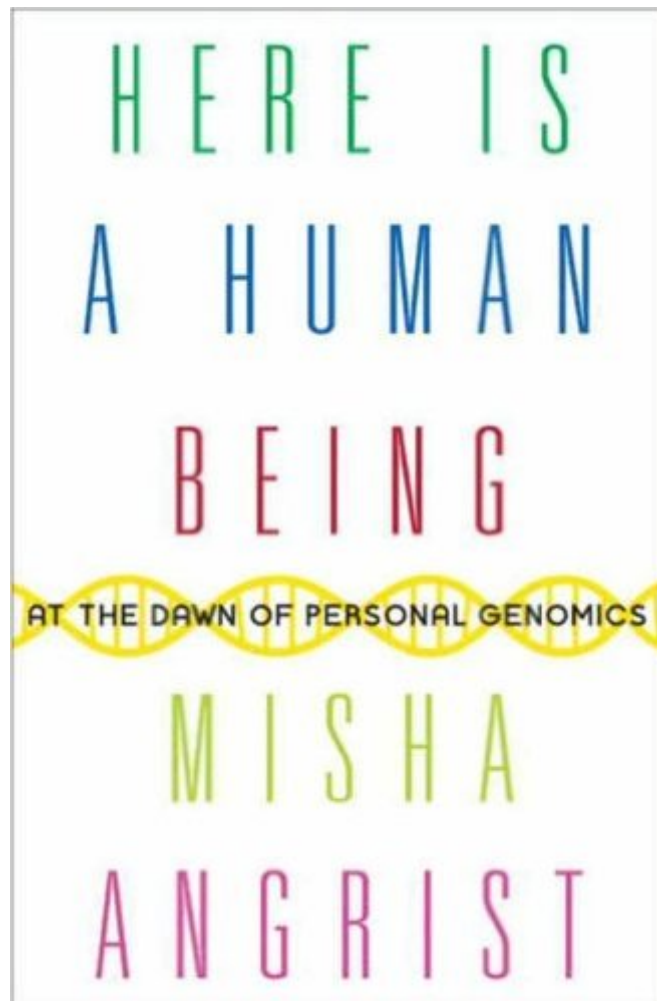


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# Here Is A Human Being: At The Dawn Of Personal Genomics



## Synopsis

Here is a Human Being delivers the first in-depth look at the Personal Genome Project—the effort to construct complete genomic maps of a specific human beings—written by one of the study’s ten human participants. Misha Angrist recounts the project’s fascinating nuances, including the larger-than-life personalities of the research subjects, the entrepreneurial scientists at the helm, the bewildered and overwhelmed physicians and regulators who negotiated for it, the fascinating technology it employed, and the political, social, ethical and familial issues it continues to raise. In the vein of James Shreeve’s The Genome War, Craig J. Ventner’s My Life Decoded, and Francis J. Collins’s The Language of Life, Angrist’s informed exploration of this cutting-edge science is a gripping look at the present and future of genomics.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Misha Angrist’s "Here is a human being: At the dawn of personal genomics" is a must read for anyone interested in knowing what’s in his or her own DNA. I would further highly recommend it to anyone in the medicine or genetics field. This is the personal story of Misha Angrist who became

one of the ten individuals that had their entire human genome sequenced through Dr. George Church's Personal Genome Project. This book delves into the humanity of the great question of "what DO I want to know about my DNA?" How comfortable are any of us with the knowledge that our DNA can suggest that we have inherited a predisposition to cancer or some other malady? The author does a wonderful job of approaching these questions from a myriad of ethical, legal, societal, and medical directions in a captivating, first-person narrative. This book has forever changed my views on what I would and would not want to know about my own DNA. What makes this book such a nice read is that it is a story full of fascinating people. Despite the impossibly complex science that goes into determining one's DNA sequence, the book never becomes trapped in technical speak (although the technical terminology, when present, is both accurate and accessible). I have previously read "The genome war" by James Shreeve and I consider this Angrist book to be the next chapter in the ever-unfolding genomic saga of the day.

I am not someone who reads a lot of science material, at least for pleasure reading, but I found this book to be very interesting. It does more than just talk about science. It talks about the important people behind the sciences, which interest me a lot more than the actual sciences. There is plenty of science in this book, which is (for the most part) very well explained. There were times I found myself doing a little research to have a better understanding of what the sciences were about, but I feel that this book was good for those who don't necessarily want to know everything about the sciences but want to know about the process of how genomics came to the public. When I started reading this book, I expected something a lot different than what I got, but I feel that this is a good thing. I don't think this book will necessarily appeal to science lovers and researchers; it is light compared to the hefty tomes that more suit those wanting in-depth knowledge of any subject. It covers the basics so that it can be brought to the average person who \*isn't\* a scientist, which is what appealed to me as I read it. Best of all, you realistically only need middle or high school level science to understand what is going on in the book, which opens this title to the average teenager, if that sort of research is up their alley. I also like the general message of this book, and how it pursues the potential impact of genomics on base society.

A great book by a thoughtful and honest member of the PGP, one of the first people on the planet to have his genome sequenced. Unlike James Watson, a mid-80s legend with most of his life behind him, Misha Angrist is just like you or me - OK, maybe a little bit smarter and a much better writer. He has a wife, kids, a job, health insurance and self doubts. His honest accounting of his decision to

become part of the personal genome project, and what he found out from looking at his whole genome feels like the kind of journey of discovery any of us might go through. If you've wondered what all this "genome" stuff is all about, the author also narrates the human genome project, and how scientists have achieved the capability to affordably sequence a human being. He's met all the big names, the legends, the people on the cutting edge of science and he shares his impressions and interactions. It's a great book, a fun read, and a journey of introspection for the author and for the reader.

Although I tend to be a fiction gal, the topic drew me to *Here is a Human Being: At The Dawn of Personal Genomics* by Misha Angrist as a book to receive (and then review) from the folks at Harper. I never really focused on science studies but I was always intrigued by genetics and fulfilled one of my natural science requirements in college with a course titled Human Genetics, Ethics and Public Policy. I was in college in the later 90s so obviously there has been change since then. I say all this to provide more information about my background...I think I'm a smart gal and I've had more than passing exposure to genetics issues but I'm really a lay-reader in this realm. I'll also admit I read this with a nasty head cold which limited my ability to focus intelligently. That's important context for my review. I found the book very interesting, but I had a lot of trouble following it. It felt a bit jumbled to me. The book explores both the technology of studying human genomes and the ethics and other human issues surrounding it. The main focus is a project that sought to sequence and make public the genomes of 10 individuals who were selected because of their knowledge and understanding of the field. Angrist does try to explain the technology and science but I got a bit lost in it at times. I was more drawn to the ethical issues and thought they were well explored. I was drawn to a few individual stories (esp. a young girl whose father was trying to identify the condition that caused her health struggles. I cared less about the battles between different companies and different techniques for gene study. There's a lot of information in this book, a lot of good information, and I'd give it high marks for content. But the form was hard to follow and made the reading experience much more difficult. It might be better suited for someone a bit closer to the scientific realm or with a bit more patience for pushing through the information.

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