

# The Definitive "Are Beavers Born With The Innate Disposition To Build Dams, Or Do They Learn It From Older Beavers?" Thread

Post by "Cassius" of July 7, 2024 at 7:32 AM

In the discussion of prolepsis, I - for one - regularly throw around the supposed "example" that beavers are born with the innate disposition to build dams, and that this is not "learned" after birth from their parents. The assertion would imply that while this behavior may be amplified from watching others after birth, it is not primarily dependent on observation after birth, and that baby beavers separated from older beavers at birth would still build dams.

Pretty obviously the truth or falsity of this assertion bears on the issue of exactly what kind of behaviors are transmitted genetically over generations, and plays into the whole "blank slate" controversy. If beavers are born with certain types of behaviors being innate, then it's not much of a leap to consider that humans are too.

There are probably lots of other significant examples, but Beavers really stand out as dramatic examples which capture the imagination. 😊 It therefore probably makes good sense to focus on them as a litmus test example - if beavers can be established to have this disposition programmed into them before any personal exposure of any kind to prior dam-building, then I would think most all the other alleged examples of genetic dispositions in the natural world will be correspondingly easy to accept - or harder to accept if innate beaver dam-building is a myth.

We've discussed this in the forum on the past, primarily in the thread I will link below. Some links were produced, primarily by Don if I recall correctly, but i don't recall that we found any kind of "gold standard" article from a respected publication or source that really nailed down the question with persuasiveness. And I also know that some people dispute the contention that beavers are "born" with this behavior programmed in them, and they consider the assertion to be totally false.

Thus this thread is born. Every time we discuss anticipations/prolepsis we come around eventually to dealing with this question of what in fact we are able to observe in nature as to whether "patterned" behavior is totally learned after birth, or is partially encoded in our genetics. The title of this thread will hopefully make it more findable on the future when we need these sources. So as time goes by, I would appreciate it if those of us who are interested in this question could use this thread to collect the best links which bear on it, positively or negatively. If this is true, let's embrace it, if it's false, let's blow it out of the water.

Post

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3953-the-definitive-are-beavers-born-with-the-innate-disposition-to-build-dams-or-do/?postID=31322#post31322>

## **RE: Is There A Relationship Between "Anticipations" and "Instinct"?**

(Since I am suggesting we always ought to be planning our seminar presentations)

[...]

On the symbolism of pigs/hogs I think there is some material which help explain the reference. We surely know it it existed from the Boscoreale cup and the Horace reference. I think there is a church father comment also referencing it in which hogs are cited as pursuing pleasure singlemindedly.

Numerous animals would work for the others but any that are known for their instinctive behavior, beavers and their...



Cassius

April 23, 2021 at 5:23 AM