

The ancestor effect

Or

How to boost your intelligence

Four German Psychologists (Fischer, Saver, Vogrincic and Weissweiler) writing in the European Journal of Social Psychology recently, suggested that tracing our ancestors can boost intellectual performance.

Intriguing – how might this work?

Apparently, when we look into what our forbears have achieved, the difficulties they had to overcome and the courage and moral fibre they showed when coping with adversity (e.g. two world wars), we have a sense of pride in them. Because there is a genetic link, it helps us to believe more in ourselves and have more confidence. We are inspired.

Fischer et al tested university students after they had time to think about what their ancestors had overcome. Their performance was enhanced on IQ tests and they were more confident in trying to answer questions that they would previously have avoided.

So if you have any kind of exam or testing time coming up, try talking to an elderly relative about their parents. That sense of pride might just boost your performance.