

# **The Origin of Intelligence. A Chemist Views Natural Selection**

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This lecture delves into one of the great riddles perplexing modern science: “Why are humans so smart?” In a format understandable by any college student, I investigate the origins of human intelligence starting with classical Darwinian concepts. Thus, the strengths and beauty of natural selection are presented with frequent appealing examples taken from natural history. Common criticisms of Darwin are confronted and shown to be either inconclusive or outright false. I do this with a light but scholarly touch so as not to lose my audience. In the second section of the lecture, I launch into a discussion of human intelligence which, I argue, is the one feature of human evolution that cannot be readily explained away by natural selection. We are smarter than demanded by our evolutionary experience as hunters-gatherers. The lecture ends with a brief discussion of an epigenetic theory of intelligence.