

Birth of a Science

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Psychology just wouldn't be the same without William James, known as the father of modern American psychology. He initially earned a degree at Harvard Medical School, but rather than practice medicine, James wandered into the fields of philosophy and psychology. He acknowledged that he was a newbie, writing that "I never had any philosophic instruction, the first lecture on psychology I ever heard being the first I ever gave." But that didn't stop James. A prolific writer, he published books and essays on topics ranging from emotion theory to free will, and wrote up until the day he died. James is best known for his classic psychology text *The Principles of Psychology*, a work that had a profound impact on the field of psychological science. Most researchers and theorists would shudder to think what modern psychology would be like if James decided to do something with that MD. The Association for Psychological Science (APS) established the [William James Fellow Award](#) to honor individuals for their lifetime of significant intellectual contributions to the basic science of psychology.