It may seem like some people are natural born neatniks and others are hardwired to create clutter. But experts say that’s just not true.

Far from innate, these tendencies are largely acquired over time. “We are the products of our learning environments — you’re not born to be tidy or messy,” says Joseph R. Ferrari, a professor of psychology at DePaul University in Chicago who researches procrastination and clutter. “Tidiness can be learned or unlearned, just like messiness can be learned or unlearned.”

So, if your messy spouse or kid thinks they simply weren’t born with the neatness gene — or if you think that about yourself — it might be time to reconsider.

…