

**Genetics matter;
family bonds matter more**

Re: Cheap, easy paternity test has perils, Feb. 10

Last week, my husband and I hosted a dinner with our extended family to celebrate six birthdays that occur during the months of January and February.

At this dinner, as at all of them, my sister and I look around at the 15 people there (it's sometimes 20 or more) and marvel at the relationships around us.

Only about half of us are genetically related to one another. About one-quarter of us are legally related through marriage or adoption. By adoption, I refer both to children who were legally adopted and children who came into our lives as foster children and have since been adopted by us in our hearts, although never on paper.

The last quarter of us are not related by anything at all, except the only thing that counts: The fact that we have stood by each other through thick and thin for years.

No one who knows much about raising children would deny the importance of children having an idea where they came from genetically.

It's a vital part of their sense of identity. But to hang so much importance on genetics as to risk family bonds is crazy.

It's the relationships that transform our motley crew into the only thing that really means much of anything in life: A family.

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