

Cloning

Wrigley's Doublemint Gum Twins

Natural Clones

Many people talk about cloning as if it's a bad thing. Is it a bad thing? No - not in itself, but like all the technology presented here, it all depends on how you use it. Here we have cloned girls. The cloning process occurred naturally and we call them identical twins. One is an exact copy of the other. At the time the original cells split into 2 separate clusters. But natural or not - clones are clones.

Suppose however we did the same process artificially. We use artificial insemination in a laboratory. Suppose the couple wants identical twins. We could just clone the fertilized egg and implant both and you have twins. Or - suppose that you want to keep one of them frozen - just in case the first one doesn't take, so you can try again. But the first one does take and she grows up and finds out she has an identical twin sister frozen in a lab somewhere and she decides to implant it and be the mother of her twin sister? It would almost be like being the mother of yourself. That would be an opportunity for some self insight.

But aside from making copies of yourself and other people, medical cloning is mostly focused on making replacement parts. You have a heart that is going bad or your kidneys are shot. You are surviving on a machine. But now they can take your DNA, produce a clone, but just grow the part you need, then implant that back into you and you're good as new. Seems like there's nothing ethically wrong with that.

But - what if my ex-wife were to find an old hair follicle and decide to grow a copy of me? Now we've crossed a line. So far no one has given property rights to anything that leaves your body. In fact doctors have made products out of tissues taken from people who's DNA has been turned into a commercial product, and the person who's body parts were used had no property rights in the result. Somehow that doesn't seem right to me.

Cloning, like genetic engineering, is something that is in our future and we have to be smart about and make the right choices. Personally, if they make 100,000 of the Doublemint girls, that would be fine with me. But I'm sure other people might have a problem with it.