When psychologists talk about development, we’re usually referring to a continuous process that spans an entire lifetime. Hongyong’s story serves as an example of the different factors that can influence development. Some are personal (genetics, biology, personality, intellect), some are interpersonal (the influence of others such as parents, friends, and teachers), and some are environmental (cultural norms and expectations, socioeconomic environment).

Take a moment to reflect upon your own experiences, along with those of your friends, family, neighbors, and peers. How important are the different factors that contribute to a person’s development? The impact of these factors won’t be the same for every individual, but if you had to identify the 3 generally most important factors in development, what would they be? Do you think they change over time, if so, how?