29. The composition of claim 27, wherein the human cells are somatic cells.

30. The composition of claim 29, wherein the human cells are fibroblasts.

31. A method of making stem cells comprising culturing the composition of claim 27, for at least 30 days under conditions to express the coding sequences of the replicon and isolating stem cells.

32. A method of making stem cells comprising transforming somatic cells with a replicon of any of claims 1-26, culturing the somatic cells under conditions to promote expression of the replicon and isolating stem cells.

33. The method of claim 31 or 32, wherein the culturing comprise culturing the cells in media conditioned with B18R.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the B18R conditioned media is produced by tranfection of B18R mRNA into primary human fibroblasts.

35. Isolated stem cells obtained from the method of claim 31 or 33, wherein the stem cells are retroviral DNA- or RNA-free.

36. An *in vitro* method comprising:

contacting a human somatic cell with an ectopic self-replicating RNA replicon comprising polynucleotides encoding at least four de-differentiation factors selected from the group consisting of a (i) KLF4, (ii) OCT4, (iii) SOX2, (iv) c-MYC or n-MYC or L-MYC, (v) GLIS1 and (vi) NANOG,

culturing the somatic cell to express the de-differentiation factor;

selecting cells that display a stem cell morphology and/or stem cell markers; and