

Twelve Key Issues for Parents of Gifted Children

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Great Potential Press

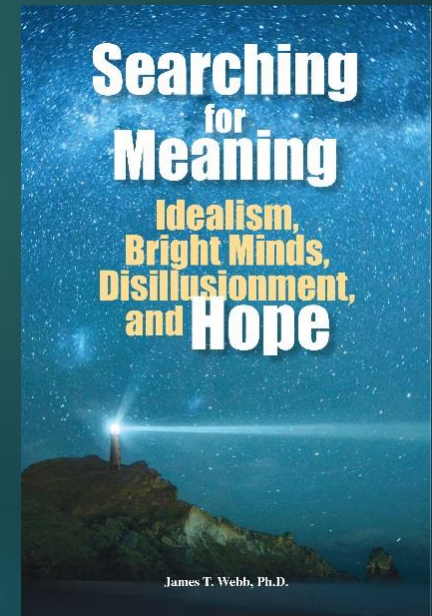
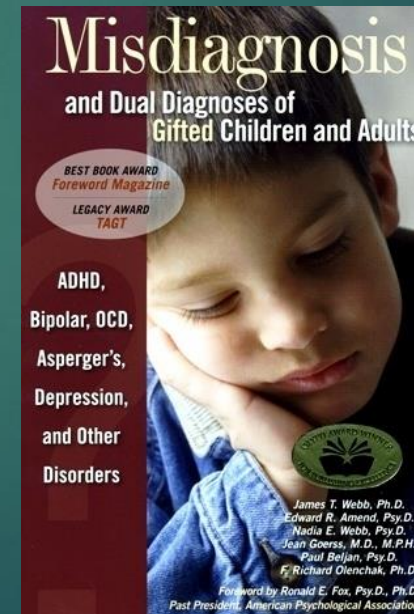
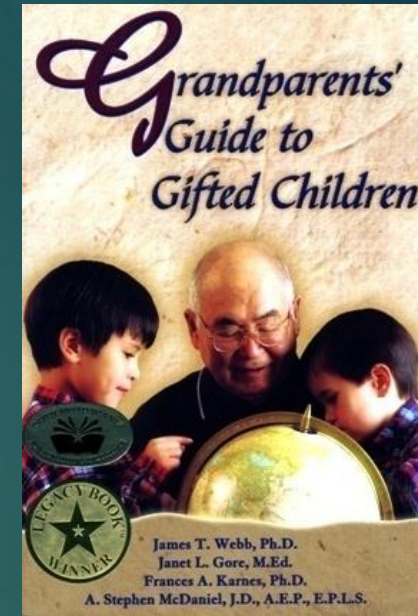
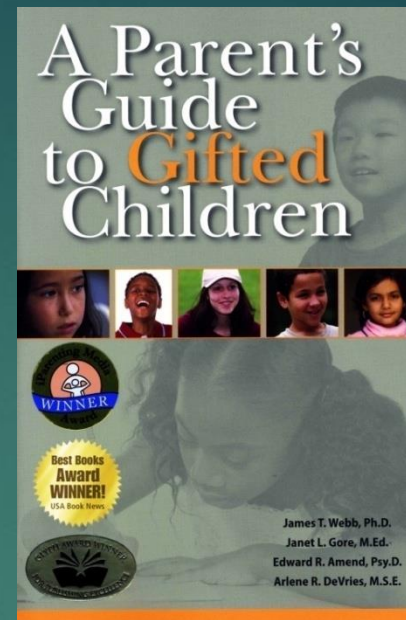
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WEB SITES FOR GIFTED RESOURCES

➤ www.greatpotentialpress.com

➤ www.sengifted.org

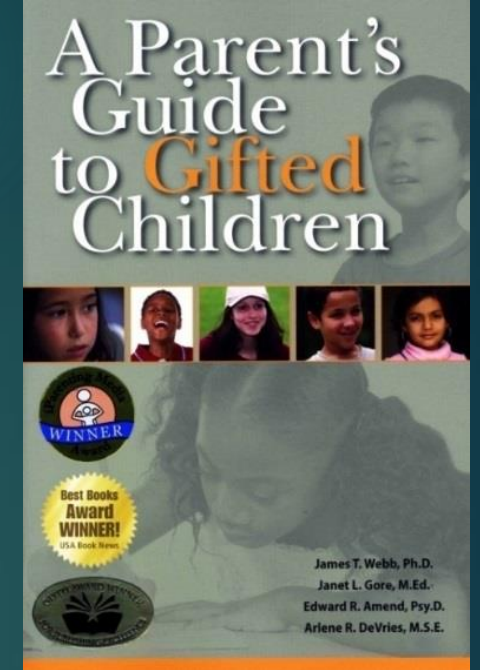
➤ www.hoagiesgifted.com

➤ www.nagc.org

➤ www.ditd.org

The 11 Key Parenting Concerns

1. Do I Really Have A Gifted Child? Characteristics.
2. Complexities of Modern Parenting.
3. Finding a Good Educational Fit.
4. Communication and Appropriate Parenting Approaches.
5. Motivation and Underachievement.
6. Discipline and Self-Discipline.
7. Siblings and Only Children.
8. Acquaintances, Friends, and Peers.
9. Intensity, Stress, and Perfectionism.
10. Unhappiness and Depression.
11. Tradition Breaking, Values, and Uniqueness.
12. Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses.



Issue # 1

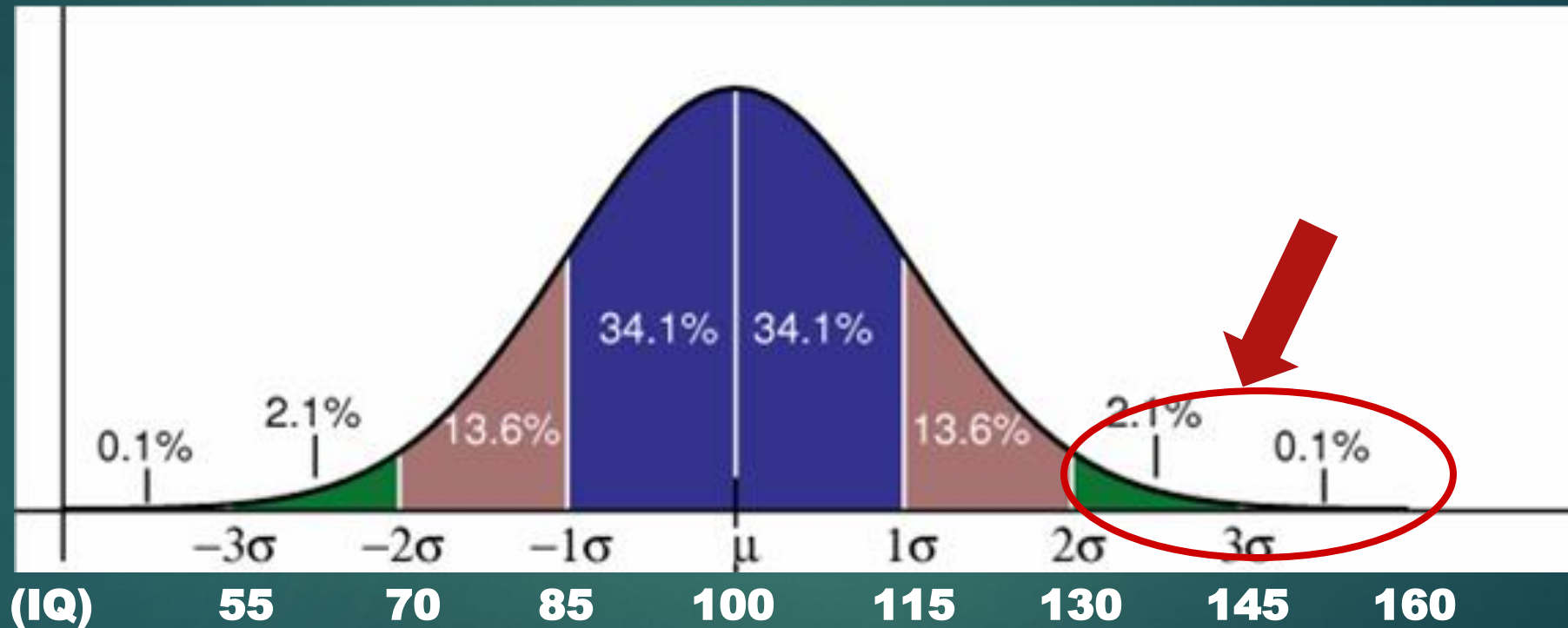
Characteristics of Gifted Children – Defining Giftedness

- **General intellectual ability**
- **Specific academic aptitude**
- **Creative or productive thinkers**
- **Leadership ability**
- **Visual or performing arts**
- **Psychomotor ability (since deleted)**

Marland Report (1972)

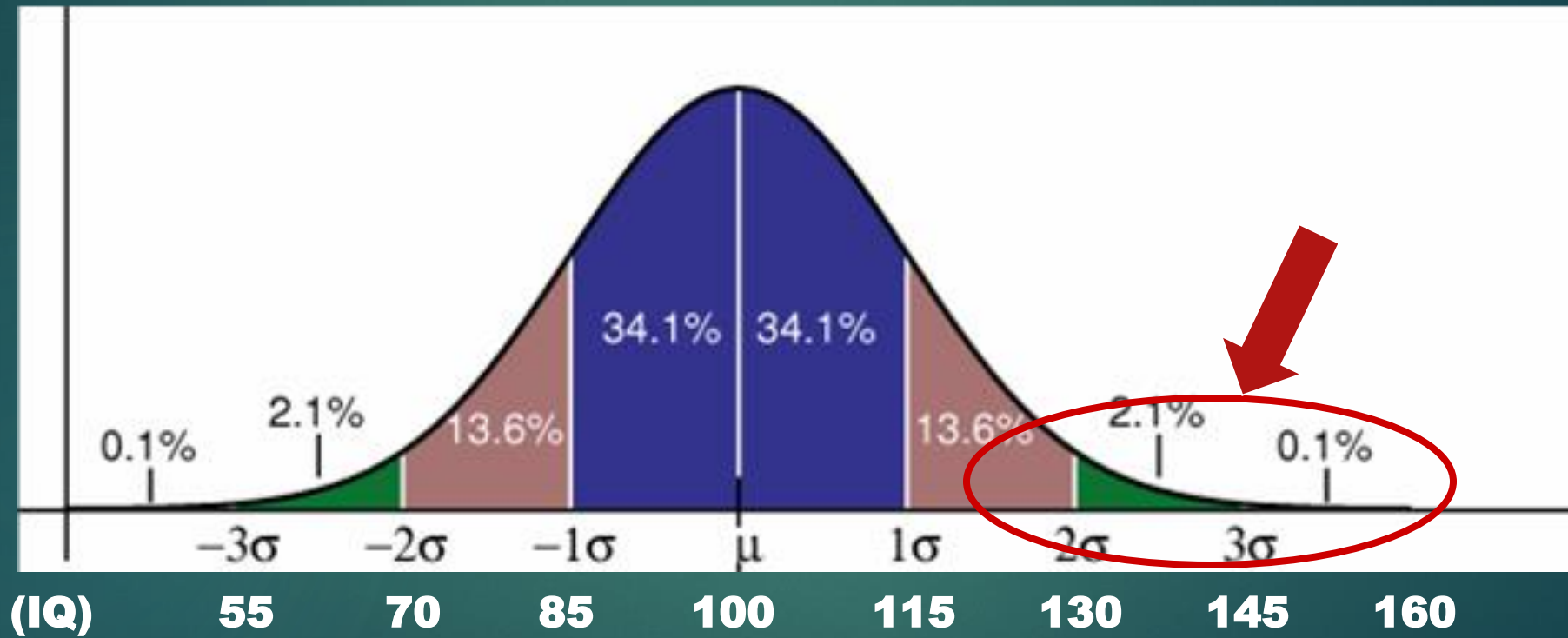
Most Schools Focus on Intellectual and Academic Giftedness and Try to Estimate Potential Using Tests to Identify the Upper 3% to 5%.

(Tests are simply shorthand attempts to measure what we could observe, if we had enough time and the proper settings. We need to focus on behaviors as much as on test scores.)



Mean= 100 Standard Deviation= 15

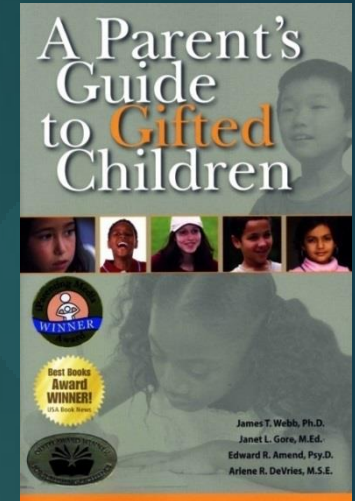
**Now, However, There Is Good Reason to Broaden This to
Identify the Upper 10%
(1.5 Standard Deviations above the Mean,
Rather than 2.0 Standard Deviations).**



Mean= 100 Standard Deviation= 15

Characteristics of Gifted Children

- Unusually large vocabularies
- Complex sentence structures
- Greater comprehension of language nuances
- Longer attention span, persistence
- Intensity of feelings and actions
- Wide range of interests
- Strong curiosity; limitless questions
- Like to experiment; puts ideas or things together in unusual ways



Characteristics of Gifted Children - continued

- Learn basic skills quickly and with less practice than peers
- Largely self-taught reading and writing skills as pre-schoolers
- Unusually good memory; retain information
- Unusual sense of humor; may use puns
- Like to organize people and things, and typically devise complex games
- Imaginary playmates (as preschoolers)

Four Factors Particularly Influence the Expression of Giftedness, as Well as Educational, Social, and Emotional Functioning

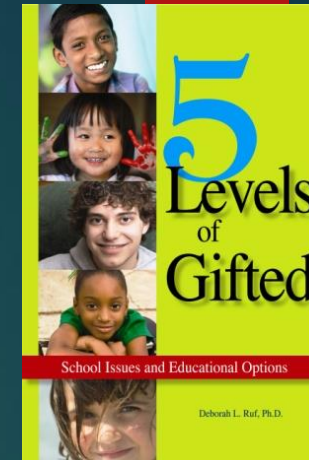
1. Level of Giftedness
2. Asynchronous Development
3. Thinking Styles
4. Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities

➤ The higher the child's overall ability level, the more these variables influence the behaviors.



Level of Giftedness

Ruf (2003)



Levels of Giftedness	Approximate Score Range	Descriptive Designation
Level One	117 - 129	Moderately Gifted 120-124/Gifted 125-129
Level Two	125 - 135	Highly Gifted
Level Three	130 - 140	Exceptionally Gifted
Level Four	135 - 141	Exceptionally to Profoundly Gifted
Level Five	141+	Exceptionally to Profoundly Gifted



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Thinking Styles

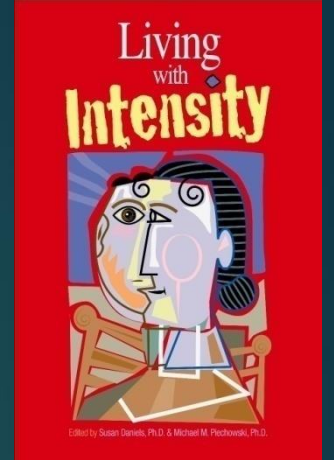
Auditory-Sequential

- Prefers verbal explanations; uses language to remember
- Processes information sequentially; deals with one task at a time
- Produces ideas logically; prefers analyzing activities
- Prefers concrete thinking tasks; likes structured experiences
- Prefers proper working materials and proper settings for working
- Prefers to learn facts and details
- Approaches problems seriously

Visual-Spatial

- Prefers visual explanations; uses images to remember
- Processes information holistically; deals with several tasks at a time
- Produces ideas intuitively; prefers synthesizing activities
- Prefers abstract thinking tasks; likes open, fluid experiences
- Improvises with materials available; creates own structure
- Prefers to gain general overview
- Approaches problems playfully

Dabrowski Overexcitabilities



- **Intellectual** (Avid Reading, Curiosity, Asking Probing Questions, Concentration, Problem Solving, Introspection, Theoretical Thinking)
- **Imaginational** (Fantasy Play, Animistic and Imaginative Thinking, Vivid Visual Recall, Daydreaming, Love of Drama, Use of Metaphor)
- **Emotional** (Unusual Sensitivity and Responses; Concern for Others, Timidity and Shyness, Fear and Anxiety, Difficulty Adjusting to New Environments, Intensity of Feeling)
- **Psychomotor** (Marked Enthusiasm, Rapid Speech, Compulsive Chattering; Surplus of Energy, Nervous Habits, Impulsive Actions)
- **Sensual** (Heightened Awareness of Senses; Sensory Pleasures, Appreciation of Sensory Aspects of Experiences, Avoidance of Overstimulation)

Key Issue # 2

Complexities of Modern Parenting

- Fast pace, mobility, divorce, remarriage, consumerism, information explosion
- Fractured families; lack of extended family and neighborhood support
- Stresses of parenting; setting parental priorities
- Reacting to the urgent rather than the important
- Dual parent, single parent, step-parent issues; difficulties in blending families
- Adultizing the child and enmeshment issues
- Importance of having house rules
- Need for communication and consistency (family huddle)
- Special time for parents; recharging your own batteries
- Involving grandparents
- Super-parent versus reality
- Balancing the pushy parent versus the supportive advocate

Key Issue # 3

Finding a Good Educational Fit

From Rogers, K. B. (2001). *Re-Forming Gifted Education: Matching the Program to the Child*.

What You Need to Know about Your Gifted Child

- Cognitive Functioning Information
- Learning Strengths Information
- Personality Characteristics and Traits
- Learning Preferences
- Your Child's Interests

Frequent Issues for Parents and Teachers

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- Continuous academic progress issues
- Failure to identify a child as gifted
- Early entrance or grade-skip
- Underachievement or behavior that disrupts the classroom
- Perfectionism and stresses
- Asynchronous development
- Deciding who is responsible for what actions
- These are particularly likely to arise for:
 - Highly gifted
 - Creatively or non-conforming gifted
 - Visual-Spatial learners
 - 2e gifted learners

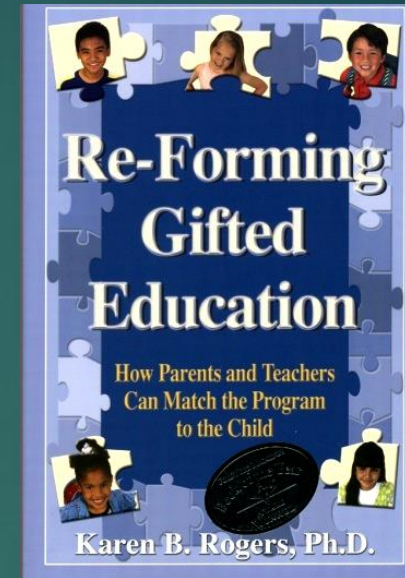
Finding a Good Educational Fit (cont.) – Matching the Program to the Child

Managing Curriculum Modifications

- Guideline 1: Does it Provide for Academic Progress?
- Guideline 2: Does it Remediate Academic Weakness?
- Guideline 3: Does it Enhance Psychological Adjustment?
- Guideline 4: Does it Provide for Socialization?

A Menu of Educational Options

- Early Entrance and Grade-Skipping
- Non-Graded or Multi-Grade Classes
- Compacting the Curriculum and Grade Telescoping
- Single-Subject Acceleration
- Cluster Grouping
- Regrouping for Specific Subject Instruction
- Like-Ability Cooperative Grouping
- Cross-Grade Grouping
- Peer Tutoring Dyads
- Full-Time Ability Grouping/Tracking
- Pull-Out Groups
- Full-Time Gifted Classes or Programs
- School-within-a-School
- Testing Out
- Advanced Placement Programs
- International Baccalaureate
- Early Admission to College
- Talent Search Programs
- Correspondence Courses, Distance Learning, and Independent Study Courses
- College-in-the-Schools
- Mentorships
- Home schooling



Key Issue # 4

Communication: The Key to Relationships

- Information explosion handicaps relationships
- Disturbing role models; “unthinkable” acts are no longer unthinkable
- Barriers to communication (fast pace of life, television, newspapers, computers, etc.)
- Communication cannot be forced; create the climate
- Special times and special places enhance communication
- Parents model communication styles (Self-disclosure prompts self-disclosure)
- Active listening is communicating
- Accept the feelings (though not necessarily the behavior)
- Match the body language with the words
- Avoid "killer statements" (“You are too...”
- Use "I" statements (“When you...I feel..., so please”)
- Emotional temperature readings
- Avoid making promises you cannot keep

Key Issue # 5

Motivation, Enthusiasm, and Underachievement

- Is the child really unmotivated?
- What are the reasons for lack of motivation?
- What motivates us as adults?
- Start where the child is; transfer motivations
- Recognize the child's needs, not just the behaviors
- Avoid power struggles
- Use goal setting
- Successive successes; anticipatory praise
- Frequency of praise is more important than amount or duration
- Focus on effort, not just outcome
- Encouragement, not criticism (avoid sarcasm/ridicule)
- Avoid "Yes, buts"
- Importance of personal relationships
- Special time to value just the child, not the accomplishments
- Don't expect perfection

Key Issue # 6

Discipline and Self-Discipline

- Discipline and limits are needed for all children
- Discipline is not the same as punishment
- We set limits because we care
- Set as few limits as possible, but set limits that can be enforced
- The “V” of love
- Encourage choices to develop self-esteem
- Ensure that choices are within limits
- Avoid “shooing flies,” “no-win” struggles, nagging, “referential” speaking
- Seek self-discipline
- Catch the child doing something right in self-discipline
- Frequency of consequences is more important than severity
- Use natural consequences where possible
- Avoid harsh, inconsistent punishment

Key Issue # 7

Only Children and Siblings

- First borns are only children for a while
- Avoid giving only children too much power
- They then are dethroned
- Kids rival for something, usually attention
- Importance of birth order (oldest, youngest, middle) roles
- Children adopt characteristic roles, seldom compete
- Important to help children expand their roles and to promote role overlap
- "Either/or" concepts of ability; "if he is, I'm not;" negative comparisons
- Competition/rivaling versus sibling synergy
- Parents remove themselves from squabbles
- Take the "sail out of the wind"
- Fair doesn't always mean equal

Key Issue # 8

Acquaintances, Friends, and Peers

- Who are peers? Peers in what area?
- Several different peer groups often needed
- Many friends or few? How many real friends do we have as adults?
- Special friendships are often intense
- Bright children have high expectations; may lack tolerance for others
- Leadership or bossiness? Teaching leadership skills
- Use role-playing to enhance understanding
- Time alone versus time with others; eminence requires time alone
- Is time alone by choice or due to lack of skills?
- Peer pressure at different ages (including peer pressure on adults)
- Stages of friendship: Inclusion; Control; Affection
- Strategies for friendship: Aggressive, passive, or assertive?
- Peer pressure for parents

Key Issue # 9

Intensity, Stress, and Perfectionism

- Asynchronous development may cause stress
- Some stress (challenge) is desirable; learn to manage it
- What causes stress is self-talk
- Blame and irrational beliefs leave us helpless
- Balancing self-talk; "bookkeeping error"
- Perfectionism (idealism to an excess; fear of risk-taking)
- Parents can model positive self-talk
- Don't teach stress management skills during crisis times
- Immediate calming techniques (HALT); teaching meditation
- Humor to reduce tension and create perspective
- Socratic method of teaching (e.g., "How awful is it?")
- Develop frustration tolerance and resiliency
 - What is the worst possible outcome?
 - What is the best possible outcome?
 - What is the most likely outcome?

Key Issue # 10

Unhappiness, Depression, and Idealism

- Not all children experience depression, but idealists are more likely
- Depression is increasing and is now ten times the rate of the 1950s
 - 2.5 percent of children and 8 percent of adolescents in the United States suffer from depression
 - The incidence of depression has increased in each generation over the last ten decades – not just in the United States, but worldwide
 - Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 10-24 year olds
- Symptoms of depression
- Feelings of aloneness, interpersonal alienation, existential depression
- Cannot argue people out of depression
- Avoid "Pollyanna cheerleader" or belittling of their feelings
- Listen/give emotional support
- Re-label depression as anger; inward or frustrated anger
- Depression as self-blame ("hair shirt"); negative self-talk
- Relationships/physical touch are important
- Evaluate seriousness; is the child considering suicide
- When and how to refer; getting professional help

Key Issue # 11

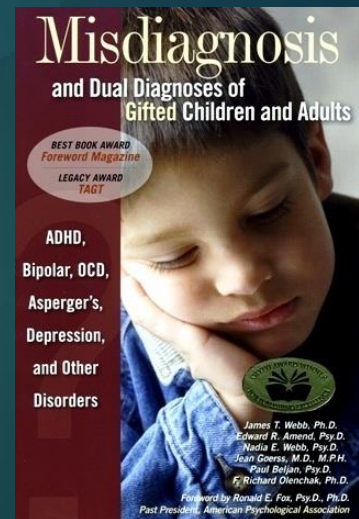
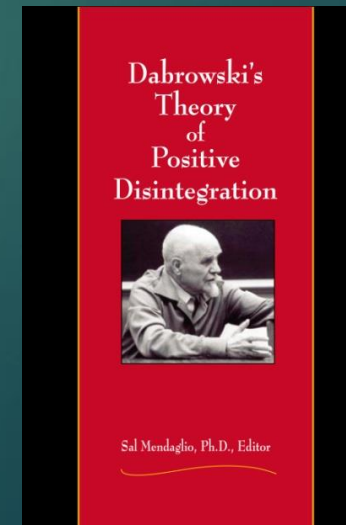
Values, Traditions, and Uniqueness

- Bright, creative children question traditions, rituals, rules
- Creativity/innovation always implies being non-traditional
- Progress in society comes from challenging the status quo
- Breaking traditions always has a price tag
- Kohlberg and Dabrowski stages of moral development; more advanced is less traditional
- Traditions have a value (but can be overly binding)
- Traditions promote belongingness and predictable behaviors; tap root
- Family traditions can produce a sense of sanctuary
- Importance of creating our own traditions starting now
- What do we model for our children in tradition breaking?

Issue #12

Misdiagnoses and Dual Diagnoses

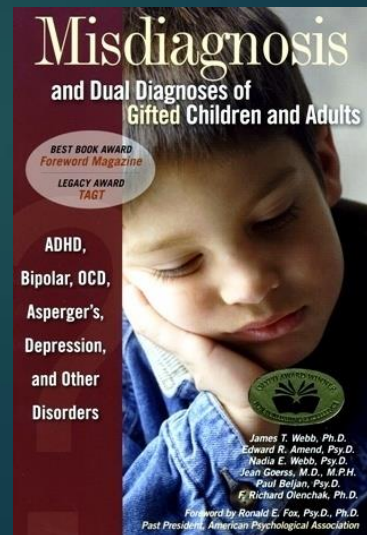
- Few health care or counseling professionals have any training about gifted children.
- There is a lot of misdiagnosis of gifted children as well as overlooking of dual diagnoses (2e).
- Asynchronous development may require special assistance.
- Consider Dabrowski's concept of "positive disintegration."
- Inquire about past training and experience in working with gifted children and their families.



Issue #12 - Continued

Misdiagnoses and Dual Diagnoses

- Gifted children have a higher incidence of:
 - learning disabilities (asynchronous development)
 - allergies, asthma, unusual food and drug reactions
 - reactive hypoglycemia
 - eating disorders
 - alcohol and substance abuse, including binge drinking
 - existential depression
- Gifted children who are twice-exceptional should not have their giftedness neglected.
- Schools must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate both areas of need.

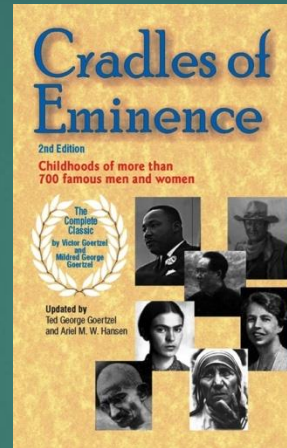


High Ability Is a Benefit Overall. However, Some Problems Are More Frequent

1. Asynchronous development and Expectations of Others
2. Judgment Lags behind Intellectual Abilities
3. Underachievement
4. Boredom
5. Peer Issues
6. Feelings of Belongingness
7. Anger
8. Power Struggles
9. Stress and Perfectionism
10. Misdiagnosis and 2e
11. Health and Behavioral Problems
 - allergies, asthma, unusual food and drug reactions
 - reactive hypoglycemia
 - alcohol and substance abuse
12. Existential Depression

Lessons From People Who Became Eminent

From *Cradles of Eminence: Childhoods of More Than 700 Famous Men and Women* (Goertzel, Goertzel, Goertzel, & Hansen, 2003)

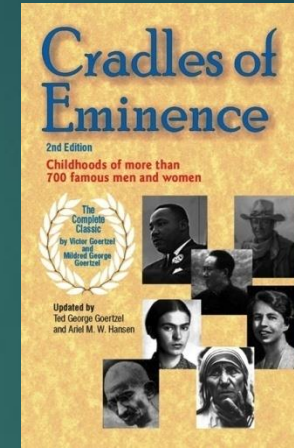


- Homes usually were full of books and stimulating conversation.



People Who Became Eminent

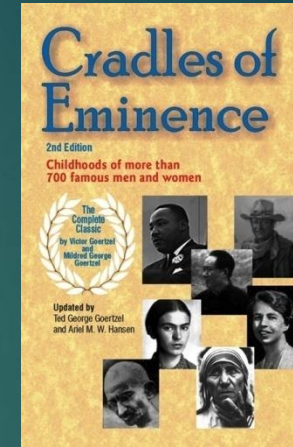
Findings from *Cradles of Eminence* (continued)



- Their families valued learning, and the children loved learning.
- As children, most of them disliked school and schoolteachers.

People Who Became Eminent

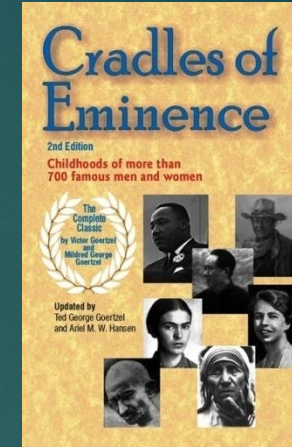
Findings from *Cradles of Eminence* (continued)



- These children learned to think and express themselves clearly.
- All had learned to be persistent in pursuing their own visions and goals.
- Many had difficult childhoods (which may have been a spark)
 - Poverty
 - Broken homes
 - Physical handicaps
 - Parental dissatisfaction
 - Controlling or rejecting parents

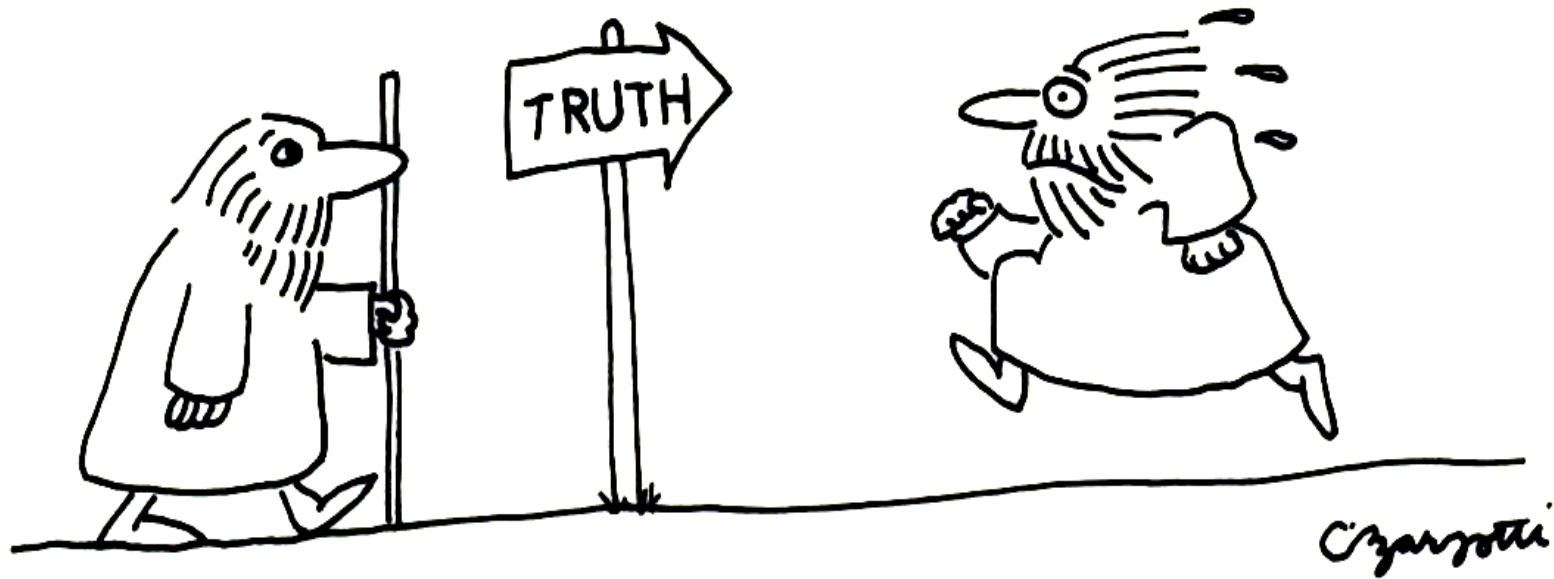
People Who Became Eminent

Findings from *Cradles of Eminence* (continued)



- Their parents held strong opinions about controversial subjects.
- Their parents, particularly mothers, were highly involved in the lives of their children, even dominating.
- The parents often were pressured by others to have their children conform to mediocrity.

The Truth Is — Parenting Gifted Children Is Often Difficult



Recommended Readings

- *Academic Advocacy for Gifted Children: A Parent's Complete Guide* (Gilman, 2008).
- *Children: The Challenge* (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1991).
- *Cradles of Eminence: Childhoods of More Than 700 Famous Men and Women* (Goertzel, Goertzel, Goertzel, & Hansen, 2003).
- *Dr. Sylvia Rimm's Smart Parenting: How to Raise a Happy, Achieving Child* (Rimm, 1996).
- *Helping Gifted Children Soar, 2nd edition.* (Whitney & Hirsch, 2011).
- *How to Behave So Your Children Will, Too* (Severe, 2003).

Recommended Readings

- *How to Parent So Children Will Learn.* (Rimm, 2008).
- *Living with Intensity* (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009).
- *The Optimistic Child* (Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995).
- *A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children* (Webb, Gore, Amend, & DeVries, 2007).
- *A Parent's Guide to Gifted Teens* (Rivero, 2010).
- *The Resilience Factor* (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).
- *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families* (Pipher, 1995).

Recommended Readings

- *Siblings without Rivalry* (Faber & Mazlish, 1998).
- *Smart Boys: Talent, Manhood, and the Search for Meaning* (Kerr & Cohn, 2001).
- *Smart Girls in the 21st Century: Understanding Talented Girls and Women.* (Kerr & McKay, 2014).
- *Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades (and What You Can Do about It.* (Rimm, 2008).