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**“What About Me?”**  
**Gifted Parents ⇔ Parenting Gifted**

— **Sylvia S. Bagley, Ph.D.** —  
**SENG October 2022**

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# Presentation Goals

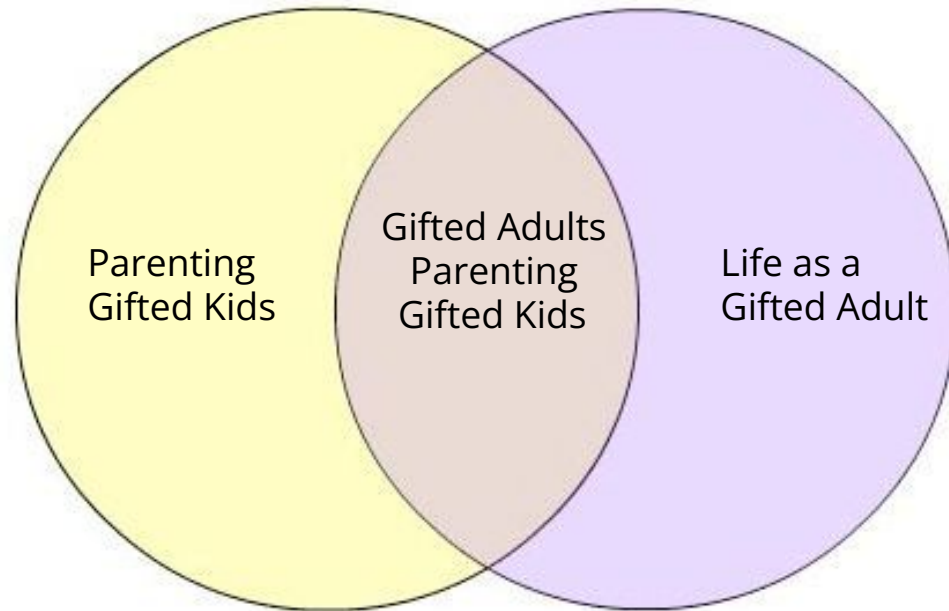
1. Key ideas about giftedness in adults
2. Nurture our own needs for complexity, drive, and intensity as gifted parents - 10 hints
3. Brainstorm and network

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# Who Am I?



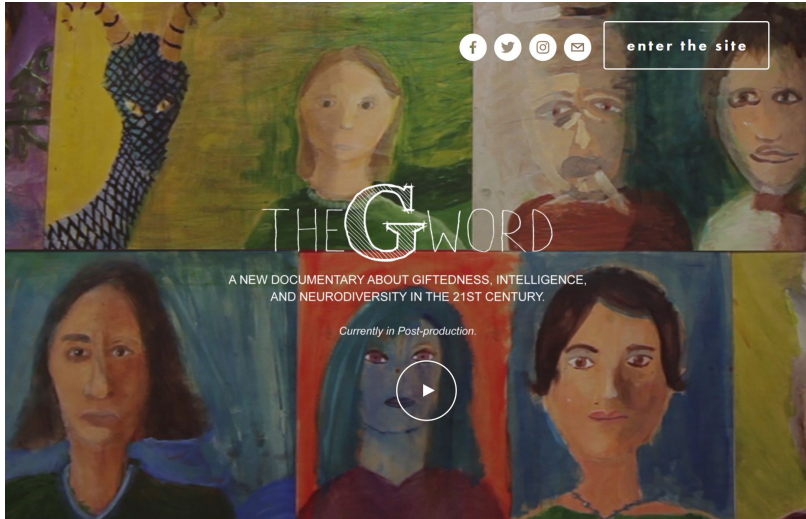
# Intersections of Giftedness Across the Lifespan



Giftedness is ***asynchronous development*** in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.

- Columbus Group (1991)

# My Stance on Gifted



“... we cannot continue to offer gifted services exclusively to those who fit culturally dominant paradigms of giftedness. **If we are unable to equitably reach all gifted kids across diverse settings**, we are at very real risk of losing gifted education services altogether.” - Sylvia Bagley

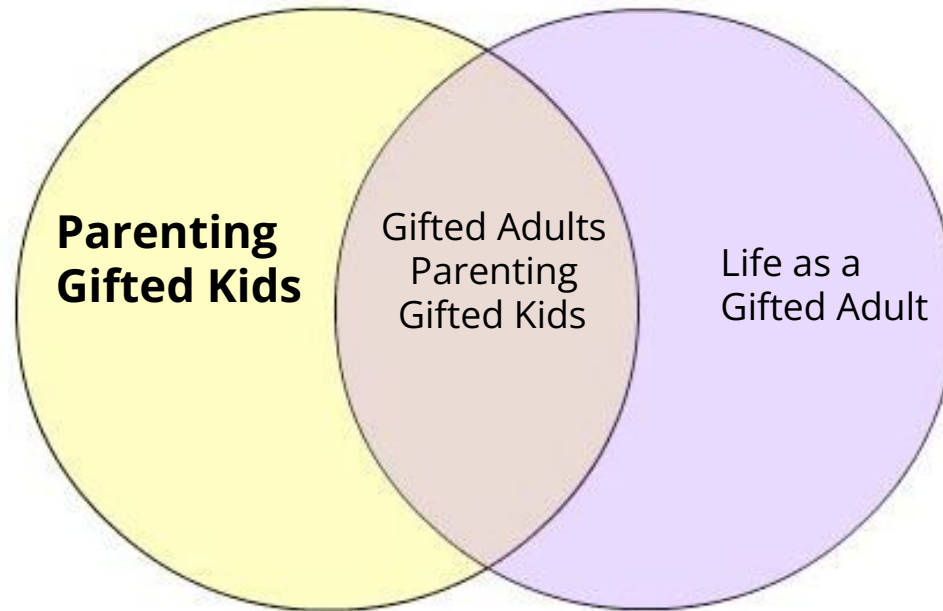
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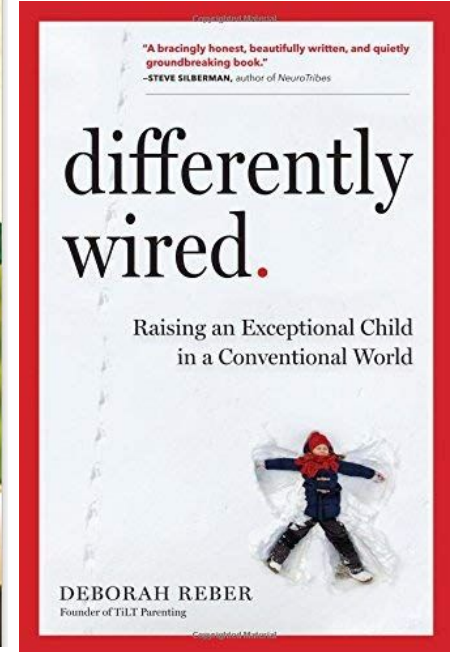
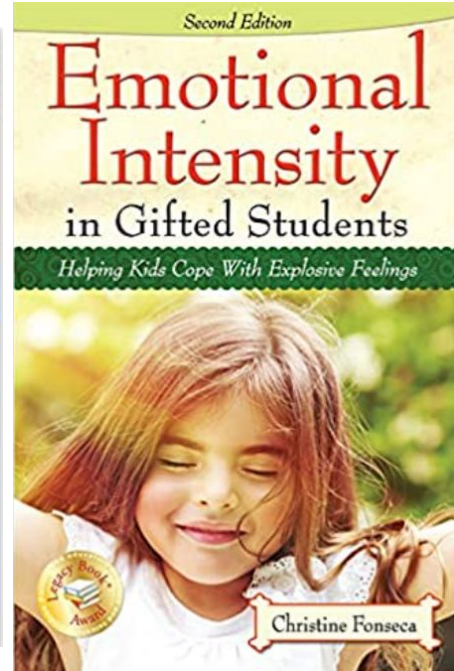
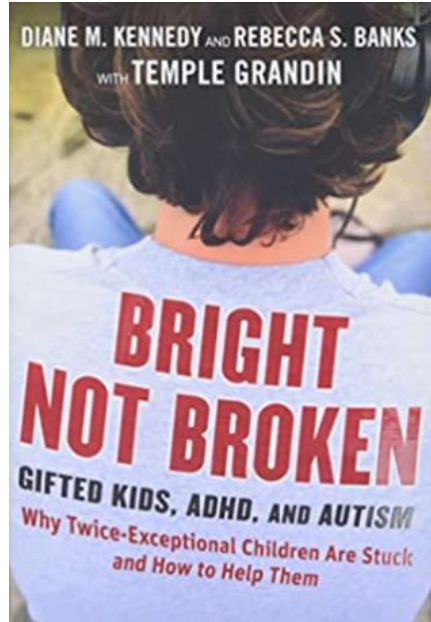
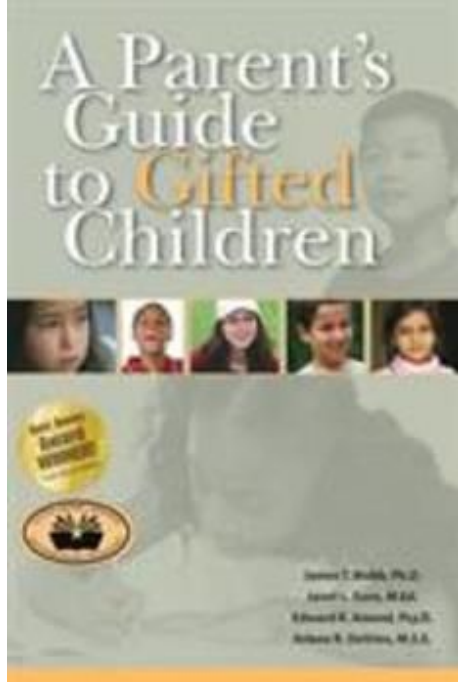
<https://www.sengifted.org/post/directors-corner>

**Giftedness isn't always formally acknowledged, let alone served.**

# Intersections of Giftedness Across the Lifespan



# Parenting Gifted Kids



My own kids...



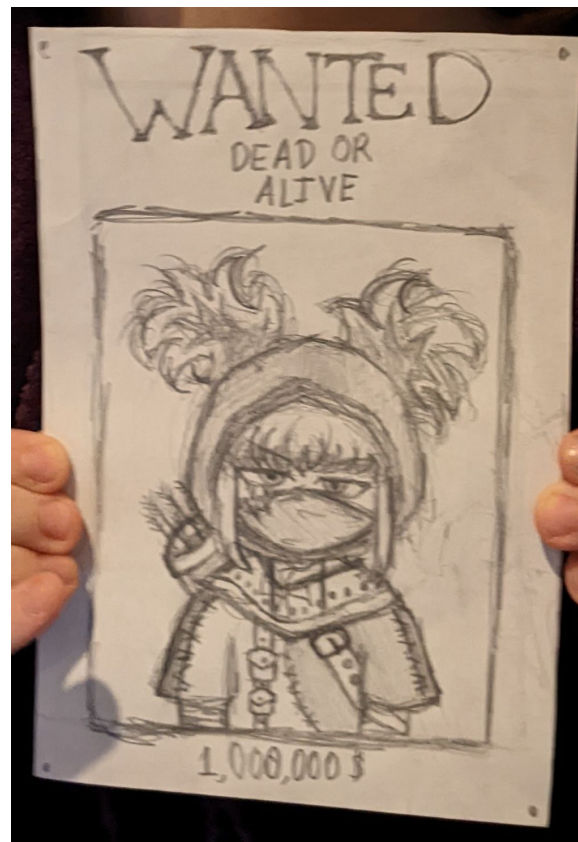
## Kid 1 (14 years old)

“You don’t have to be like everybody else.

You don’t have to fit into the norm - I’m not here to conform.

I am here to take a look inside myself - recognize that I could be the eye; the eye of the storm.”

- **“Ancient dreams in a modern land” by MARINA**



# Kid 2 (12 years old)

Use the figures below to find the corresponding sides and corresponding angles to the ones identified.

RA corresponds to **1** rats and bugs are both annoying   $\angle R = \angle$

**2** rats and bugs are both annoying

AT corresponds to **3** rats and bugs are both annoying   $\angle A = \angle$

**4** rats and bugs are both annoying

RT corresponds to **5** rats and bugs are both annoying   $\angle T = \angle$

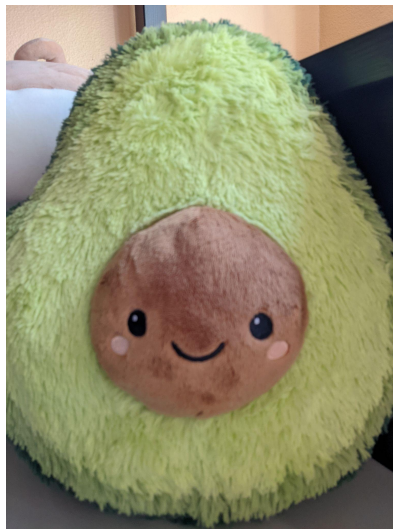
**6** rats and bugs are both annoying

**Rats and bugs are both annoying**

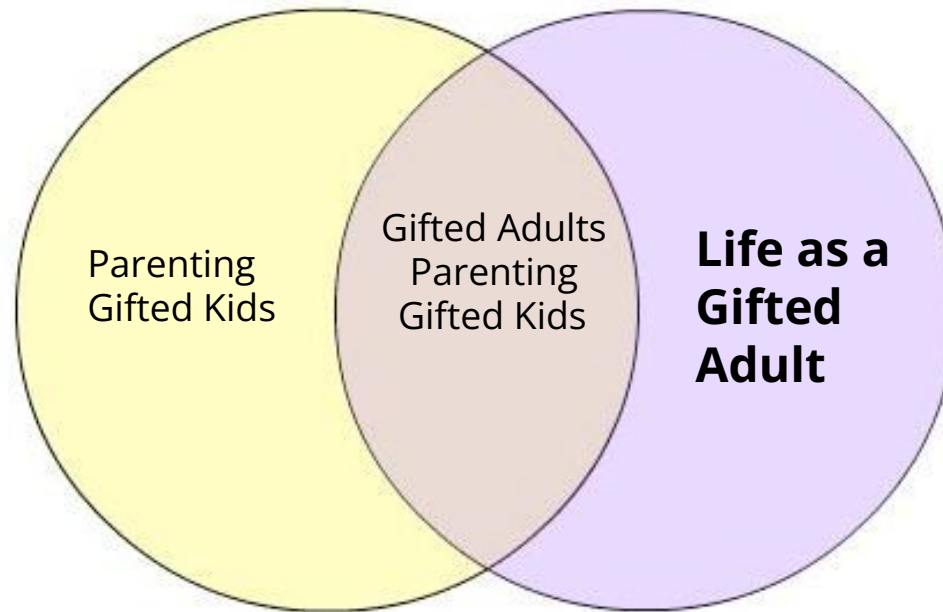
*“Did you know there are more decimal numbers between zero and one than there are positive whole numbers?”*



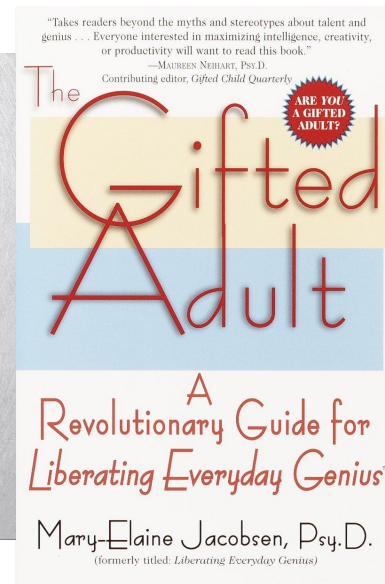
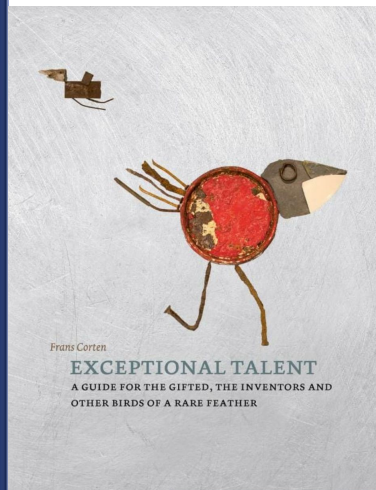
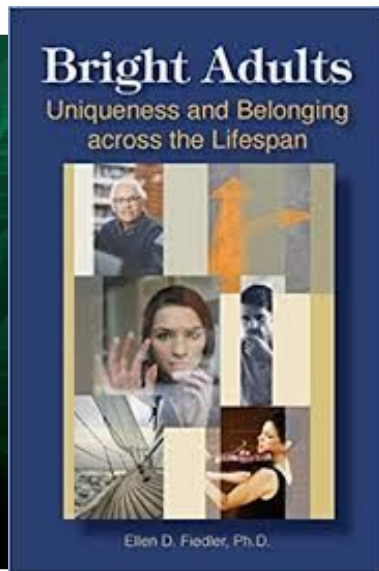
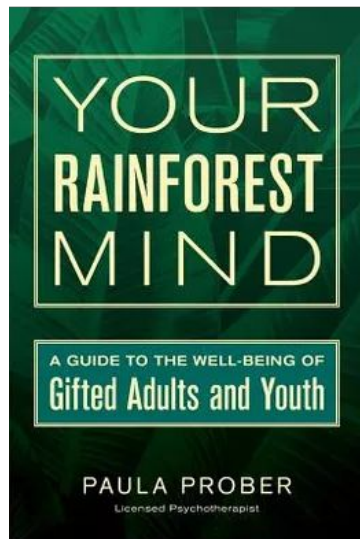
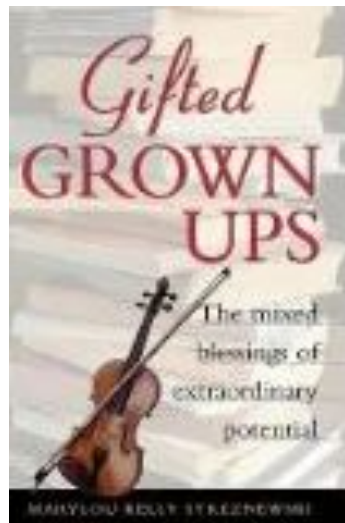
# Kid 3 (9 years old)



# Intersections of Giftedness Across the Lifespan



# Gifted Adults



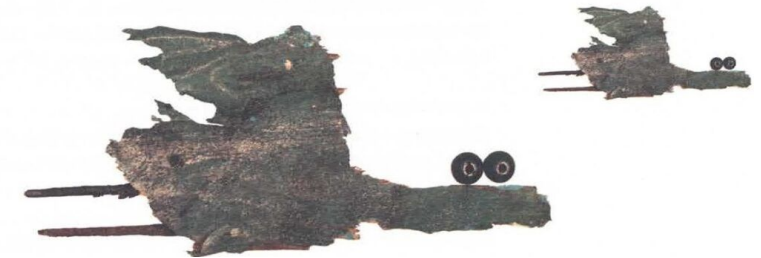
<http://www.halfofthetruth.org/>

search-for-meaning  
sense-of-humor  
need-for-solitude  
strong-moral-convictions  
too-many-abilities  
perfectionists misunderstood  
difficulty-with-authority  
verbal-ability  
develop-own-methods

**“Giftedness is a state of being - a process that makes an impact wherever it occurs” (Annemarie Roeper, 1991, p. 85).**

# Challenges With “Exceptional Talent” At Work

- heightened powers of observation
- vulnerability
- combinations of talents
- uniquely innovative
- a tendency to “think and speak too fast for other people to keep up, often without knowing” (p. 22).



# Different Stages of Gifted Adulthood

- **Seekers:** Usually 18-25, on a quest to find their place in the world
- **Voyagers:** Usually ages 25-35, purposely journeying through life to establish themselves
- **Explorers:** Usually ages 35-50, matching their lives to their identity and priorities
- **Navigators:** Usually ages 50-65, using prior knowledge, including self-knowledge, to fulfill their goals
- **Actualizers:** Usually ages 65-80, on a path of self-actualization as well as helping others actualize their goals and dreams
- **Cruisers:** Usually age 80 and beyond, using minds that remain intensely active regardless of physical changes

*Where are you right now? Where are (were) you when parenting?*

Fiedler, E. (2015). *Bright adults: Uniqueness and belonging across the lifespan*. Gifted Unlimited, LLC.



# Three Primary Traits of Gifted Adults

Three primary traits: ***complexity, intensity, and drive*** (Jacobsen, 1999)



As intrinsically rewarding as parenting often is, it can't replace continuing to validate our own thirst for knowledge, learning, and creativity.

Jacobsen, M-E. (1999). *The gifted adult: A revolutionary guide for liberating everyday genius*. Random House Publishing.

<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Intensity</b>	<b>Drive</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Multiple interests</li> <li>● Self-awareness</li> <li>● Intuition</li> <li>● Transcendent experience</li> <li>● Perception</li> <li>● Exceptional memory</li> <li>● Originality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Excitability</li> <li>● Verbal agility</li> <li>● Strong sense of humor</li> <li>● Exceptional concentration</li> <li>● Empathy</li> <li>● Emotional sensitivity</li> <li>● High energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Insatiable curiosity</li> <li>● High standards</li> <li>● Exceptional perseverance</li> <li>● Independence</li> <li>● Self-motivation</li> </ul>

**Which of these traits stand out to you as you're reading?**

# Complexity: Self Awareness

**Collapsed:** Self-negative or self-loathing

**Exaggerated:** Distorted self-image; grandiose

**Balanced:** Honestly introspective; self-knowledgeable (p. 268)

*How would you rate yourself on Self Awareness - now, and in the past?*

# Intensity: Verbal Agility

**Collapsed:** Dodges controversy; steers toward popular opinion

**Exaggerated:** Intractable opinions; dominates conversations

**Balanced:** Engaging conversationalist; comfortable with intense discussion (p. 259)

*How would you rate yourself on Verbal Agility - now, and in the past?*

# Drive: High Standards

**Collapsed:** Chronic procrastinator; wavering and unprincipled

**Exaggerated:** Chronic perfectionist; stubbornly holds out for perfection and loses ground

**Balanced:** Holds firm to vision of the ideal; discerningly pushes for excellence; lives by solid standards (p. 280)

*How would you rate yourself on High Standards - now, and in the past?*

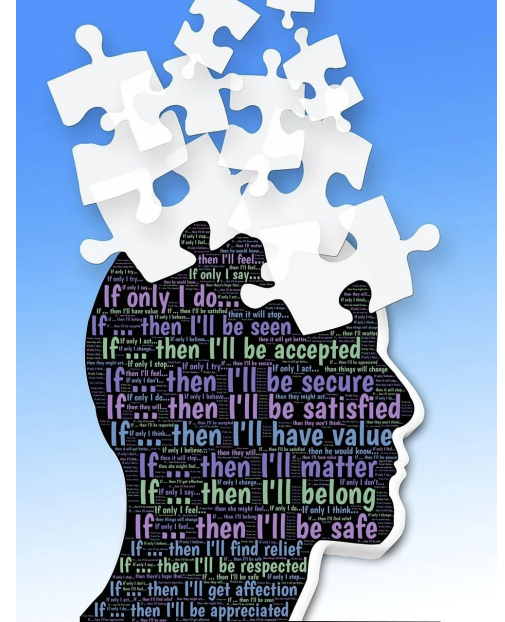
# You may ask yourself: “When will I ...”

Be satisfied?

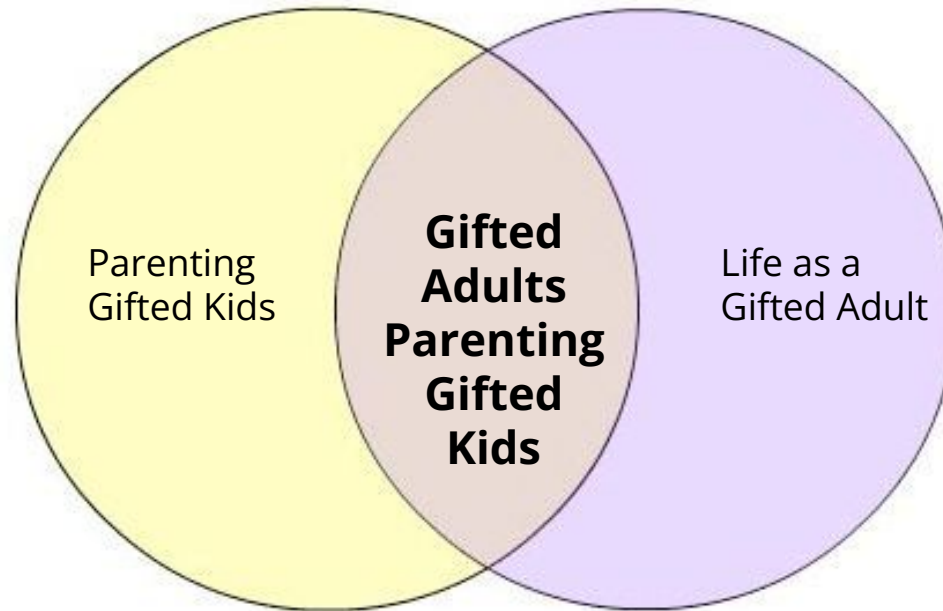
Be accepted?

Be “there”?

*I'm a parent and I love my kids - why am I still questioning my other choices?*



# Intersections of Giftedness Across the Lifespan



**Please share with a partner, one question at a time.**

**On a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being very comfortable, 1 not at all):**

1. How comfortable are you using the word “gifted” to describe your kids?
2. How comfortable are you using the word “gifted” to describe yourself?

**Finally, just to reflect on:**

3. Are your kids “differently” gifted from you? (If so, how?)





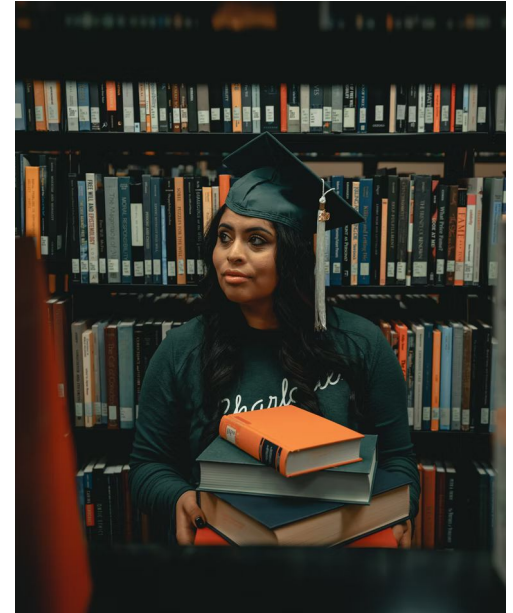
# Gifted Parents Parenting Gifted: Top Ten Hints

1. **Acknowledge your own giftedness** in whatever way is comfortable.
2. Recognize **what you didn't get as a gifted child** (*but remember: your own kids might not need the same things*).
3. Openly explore how you and your kids may be **differently gifted**.
4. Find a **peer support group** (*or just a like-minded friend or two*).
5. **Don't allow others to define** who you "should" be as a parent.
6. View parenting as an opportunity for **ongoing learning**.
7. Enjoy your child's (perhaps quirky!) **intellect and humor**.
8. Make time for your **personal passions**.
9. Extend the same **compassion and sensory care** to yourself as you do for your kids.
10. Don't forget the **little things**.

# 1. Acknowledge your own giftedness

Would you call yourself a...

- Gifted adult?
- Former (perhaps undiagnosed) gifted kid?
- Lifelong learner?
- 2E adult?
- Bright and quirky adult?
- [Multipotentialite](#)?
- [Rainforest-minded](#) adult?



## 2. Recognize your unmet (gifted) needs

How did things go for you as a gifted kid?

Did you experience trauma of any kind stemming from your giftedness?

**Social-Emotional Attributes and Potential Problems**

*(Fonseca, 2016, as adapted from Hébert, 2011)*

Attribute of Gifted Individuals	Potential Problem When Attribute Is Not Supported or Developed
High performance standards	Unhealthy perfectionism Severe procrastination Significant mood swings
Internal motivation	Anxiety Poor resiliency
Emotional intensity	Easily emotionally hurt by others Overly self-critical
Empathy	Can trigger emotional intensity
Moral maturity	Rigid sense of justice Difficulties with peer interactions
Self-actualization	Existential depression at a very young age
Resiliency	Poor resources to combat anxiety and/or emotional distress

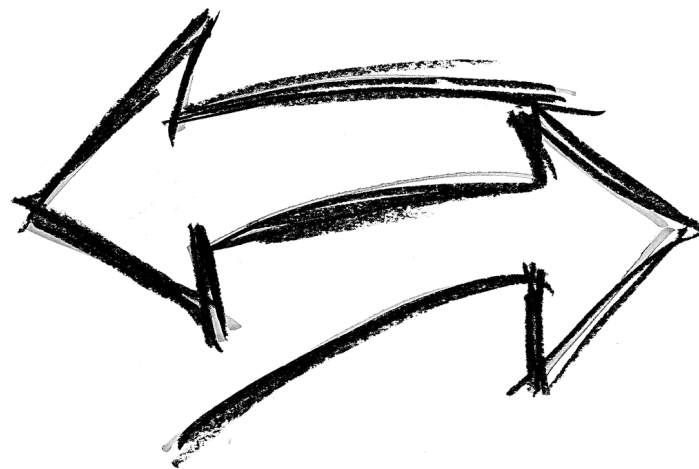
# 3. Explore how you and your kid(s) are differently gifted

What is your child's "gifted profile"?

What is *your* "gifted profile"?

I use "gifted profile" to refer to:

- Twice-exceptionalities (LDs, anxiety, ADHD, Autism, etc.)
- Levels of giftedness (mildly, moderately, highly, profoundly)
- Overall personality profile



**OCEAN** (5 Factor Model of Personality)

## 4. Find gifted-parent peers

- SENG support group
- Online groups
- Interest group peers (for you!)
- Book club



## 5. Don't be defined (as a parent) by others

- There is no “one way” to be an effective parent for your kids
- Taking care of your own gifted needs should be part of your overall parenting plan
- For some gifted parents, this means continuing your career in some fashion.



## 6. View parenting as part of lifelong learning

- Gifted adults tend to look for new opportunities to learn and explore...
- Parenting is an ideal venue for a growth mindset!
- As (age) appropriate, talk out loud with your kids about parenting. What choices are you facing? How do you problem solve?



## 7. Enjoy your child's (quirky!) intellect and humor

- Geek out with your kid!
- They often have amazing insights and a great sense of humor.





## 8. Make time for personal passions

Let go of “I’m too old.”

Let go of “I’m too busy.”

Let go of “I need to focus exclusively on my kids’ skills, not mine.”

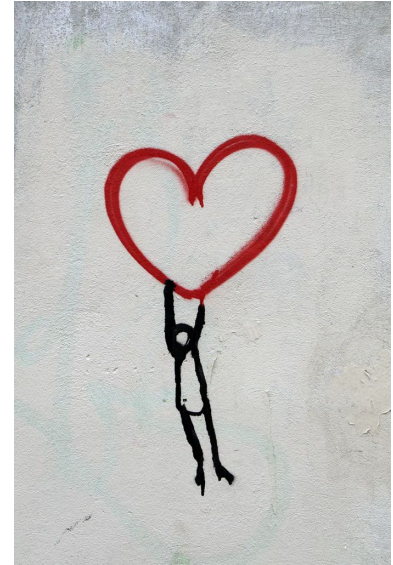
*By engaging in your passions, you are modeling lifelong learning and personal growth for your kids.*



# 9. Extend compassion and sensory care to yourself

Your gifted child needs compassion, support, and sensory attention.

*Are you extending that to yourself?*



## 10. Don't forget the little things

Our minds are often on the big issues of life.

*The small things matter, too - a lot.*



# Reminder: Top Ten Hints

1. **Acknowledge your own giftedness** in whatever way is comfortable.
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# Your Thoughts

Check out this **Padlet Wall** where parents shared some thoughts about these hints: [https://padlet.com/sylvia\\_s\\_bagley/m6aud3s296xqkbtz](https://padlet.com/sylvia_s_bagley/m6aud3s296xqkbtz)

## Prompts for You:

- 1) Which of these strategies can you “cross off the list”? (i.e., you’re already doing them!)
- 2) Which ONE of these do you most want to prioritize next?
- 3) What are other ideas for managing your own giftedness while parenting?

# Contact Me

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