


Adult Gifted Identity

SENG Annual Conference 2014

July 18, 2014

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Abstract

Giftedness is an integral aspect of one's identity; how we relate to it can impact our happiness and how we influence others. This presentation outlines the developmental stages in one's life and explores how giftedness may manifest through each one, from early childhood through death. Challenges and benefits of giftedness at each stage are reviewed. This may assist parents wanting to help their children cope, as well as adults working to integrate their own giftedness.

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Agenda

- Intro / disclaimers
- Identity: What is it?
- Identity and Personality
- Gifted characteristics: impact on identity
- Identity through the lifespan
- Summary

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Intro / Disclaimers

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Today's Presentation

- Presents various ideas about human identity & how they may apply to Gifted individuals
- Presents some research regarding the Gifted
- Includes anecdotal information
- May provide fodder for thought, grist for the mill
- Offers possibilities that may help in working with Gifted students (& adults); &/or may be personally meaningful
- May include information of which you are already aware
- Is offered in the spirit of "Take what you like, and leave the rest"

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Today's Presentation Is Not

- An attempt to try to tell you what to do or how to work with Gifted students or children; or with yourself
- Claiming to be more expert about your work or your children than you are
- Intended to train you in psychological diagnoses or treatment

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IDENTITY: WHAT IS IT?

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Identity

1a : sameness of essential or generic character in different instances

b : sameness in all that constitutes the objective reality of a thing : oneness


2 a : the distinguishing character or personality of an individual : individuality²³

- The distinctive characteristic(s) belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group³⁷

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Psychological Identity


- Relates to self-image (a person's mental model of him or herself), self-esteem, and individuality.
- "A person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future"³⁷
- Allows for definitions of aspects of identity

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Self-Concept

- Also called self-construction, self-identity, or self-perspective
- A collection of beliefs about oneself⁴ that includes elements such as academic performance,³¹ gender roles and sexuality,¹⁰ and racial identity¹
- Generally, embodies answers to "Who am I?".



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graph TD; PS[Past Self] --> SC((Self-concept)); PRS[Present Self] --> SC; FPS[Future/possible Selves] --> SC; SS[Self-schemas] --> SC;
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Aspects of Identity³⁷

- **Cultural identity**
 - Identity of an individual as belonging to a group or culture
 - Individuals may pick and choose aspects of cultural identity, while rejecting or disowning other associated ideas
- **Ethnic identity**
 - Identification with a certain ethnicity, usually based on common genealogy or ancestry
 - Recognition by others as part of a distinct ethnic group
 - Often united by common cultural, behavioral, linguistic, ritualistic, or religious traits
- **National identity**
 - Members of a "nation" share a common identity, and usually a common origin, in the sense of ancestry, parentage or descent.

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Aspects of Identity³⁷

- **Religious identity**
 - A set of beliefs and practices generally held by an individual
 - Involves adherence to codified beliefs and rituals and study of ancestral or cultural traditions, writings, history, and mythology, as well as faith and mystic experience.
 - Personal practices related to communal faith and to rituals and communication stemming from such conviction.
- **Gender identity**
 - The gender with which a person identifies
 - The gender that other people attribute to the individual
 - May be affected by a variety of social structures, including ethnic group, employment status, religion or irreligion, family.


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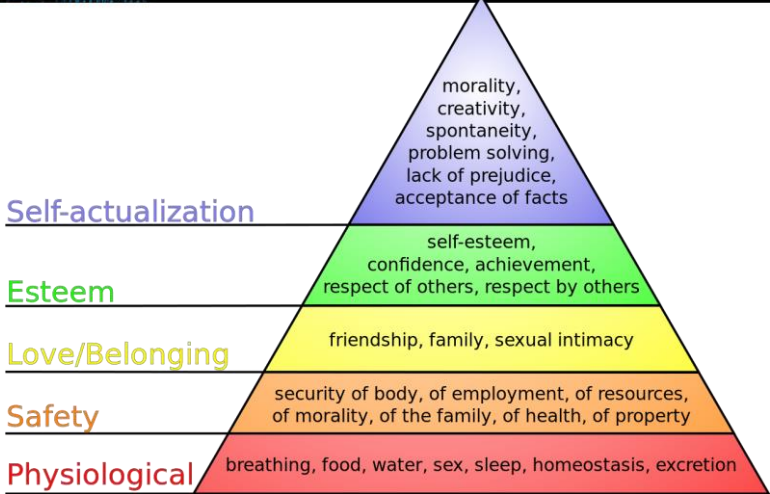
Interpersonal Identity³⁷

- Categorization: Labeling others & ourselves in categories
- Identification: associating others with certain groups
- Comparison: comparing groups
- Others' actions & thoughts are influences, have impact
 - Can be seen in socialization and peer pressure
 - The effect of other people on a person's behavior, thinking about one's Self, and subsequent acceptance or rejection of how other people attempt to influence the individual
 - Occurs during exploratory self-analysis and self-evaluation, ends with establishment of an easy-to-understand and consolidative sense of self or identity.

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Maslow & Identity³⁹



Self-actualization	morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts
Esteem	self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others
Love/Belonging	friendship, family, sexual intimacy
Safety	security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property
Physiological	breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

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Self-Categorization & Identity⁴⁰




- Majority / minority
 - In-group / out-group
- Visible / hidden
 - Self-categorization
 - Categorization by others
 - Match or different?

Level of self- abstraction	Content				
Human	Self as human being	●	●	●	●
Social	Self as member of organization	●	●	●	○
Social	Self as team member	●	●	○	○
Personal	Self as individual	●	○	○	○
		Sam	People in Sam's team	Other people in Sam's organization	People in other organizations

■ = self □ = comparison other (non-self)


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Aspects of Identity Less Formal Examples




- Physical attributes
 - Tall, thin, trim, stout, plump, average, fair, dark, ugly, pretty, striking, middle-aged, teen-ager, healthy, disabled
- Behavioral attributes
 - Nervous, quiet, industrious, active, loner
- Employment status, industry or job title
 - Unemployed, retired, IT professional, dancer
- Ethnic/cultural group, gender, sexuality, family role, religion
 - African-American, Jewish, FTM, gay, straight, mother, Baptist

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IDENTITY AND PERSONALITY


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Myers-Briggs (MBTI)²¹

- Four Axes: I or E, N or S, T or F, P or J
- Focus on the outer world or on your own inner world? Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I).
- Focus on the basic information you take in or interpret and add meaning? Sensing (S) or Intuition (N)
- Decisions: logic and consistency or people and special circumstances? Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)
- Get things decided or stay open to new information and options? Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)


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Gifted Personalities

- Potential challenges
 - Highly intelligent and F instead of T?
 - Highly intelligent & I or E?
 - Highly intelligent & N or S
- Gifted adolescents demonstrate all personality types³⁰
 - 50% or more of gifted population introverted; 25% in general population (GenPop)^{3, 5, 9}
 - Extraverts more frequent than introverts in gifted population³⁸
 - Most gifted adolescents intuitive; 70% of GenPop sensing^{5,9,38,8,19,21,25,22}
 - Intuitive types higher scores than sensing types^{3,21,22}
 - Gifted usually Perceiving; GenPop usu Judging^{5,9,38,8,19,21}

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Overexcitabilities and MBTI⁶

- Divergent-thinking SPs, NTPs & NFPs most often tagged ADD – possible synergy with OEs
- Convergent thinking SJ ("Traditionalist") with OEs
 - Please teacher, learn by memorization, being organized, accomplish tasks – more likely labeled gifted, not ADD
- Divergent thinking SP ("Artisan") with OEs
 - Explores, likes activities & freedom of action, not passive learning and obedience
 - More likely to be labeled ADD rather than gifted than previously described SJ child; though child may be every bit as bright

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MBTI Development

- Four characteristics, differently weighted¹⁵
 - Type core of conscious personality called *dominant* function
 - Next strongest: auxiliary function; supports & balances dominant
 - Dominant & auxiliary are two middle letters of four-letter type; sometimes called function pair (ST, SF, NT, NF)
- Dominant generally develops up to age 7
 - Rely most on this, develop most skill
 - Auxiliary up to age 20
 - Tertiary in 30s & 40s; Fourth function at midlife or later
- Extravert: use dominant in outside world, auxiliary inner
- Introvert: use dominant in inner world, auxiliary outer

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GIFTED CHARACTERISTICS: IMPACT ON IDENTITY

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Giftedness

Intersect with these definitions

- Academic Identity:
 - Performance / achievement
 - Extent to which we exceed / excel
 - Degree to which this is important
- Overexcitabilities (OEs)
 - Misdiagnosed / labeled / judged; dual diagnosis
 - Source of shame or strength?
- Asynchrony
 - Ostracized / misunderstood
 - Unreasonably expected to perform equally brilliantly in all ways
- Includes the past, present, and future selves

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Overexcitabilities

Out of Context

- Misunderstood
- Diagnosed / pathologized / seen as problematic
- Coping mechanisms can distract others (foot jiggling)
- Behaviors others see as problematic
 - Blurt out in class or at work
 - Questions that appear irrelevant or off-topic
 - Strong-willed behavior (can be seen as defiance)
 - Power struggles re: focus / areas of work
- Can impact self-concept because of internalization of (mis)diagnosis, or self-identification as a problem


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OEs: Impact on Identity

- Misdiagnosis or dual diagnosis / coexistence
 - Can impact self-concept via internalization of (mis)diagnosis
 - Bipolar; Personality disorders: Schizophrenic, Schizoaffective, Narcissistic; ADD / ADHD; Depressive disorders; Anxiety disorders; Asperger's / Autism spectrum; OCD
- Low psychomotor are significantly lower in self-concept
 - Females significantly outnumbered males in this group¹⁴


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Impacts of Asynchrony

- Brain more developed in some ways, not in others
- Bored in classroom; can be misinterpreted
 - Acting out frustrations -> exclusion / punishment
 - Lack of stimulation may slow potential brain development
- Different = bad / something wrong with me / inadequate
- Confusion, not fitting in
- Social comparisons can lead to poor self-image
- Can easily lead to sense of inferiority, confusion

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Some Differences: Girls & Boys

- Boys and girls can manifest giftedness very differently
 - sometimes challenging to detect
- Gifted girls
 - May hide abilities and learn to blend in with other children
 - Elementary school: focus on developing social relationships
 - Junior high: valued for appearance & sociability, not intelligence
 - May lead to rejection of Gifted identity; devaluing of intellect
- Gifted boys
 - Sometimes easier to 'spot' as intellect often more praised
 - May be held back in school if they can't socialize as others
 - Often considered "immature"
 - Nonconformity can be internalized as inadequacy or self-inflation


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Idealism

- Can envision how things 'ought to be'
- Can see clearly how things are
- Discrepancies can be painful (hypocrisy)
- Disappointment, dismay, cynicism, anger, depression
- May act out, isolate, become depressed
 - Nonconforming perspective can cause negative self-concept
- Can be seen as overly sensitive, too serious, pessimistic...
 - These may be internalized as part of identity


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Savant ↔ Multipotentiality

- Savant
 - Amazing skills in a particular area (memory, math, etc)
 - Very focused
 - When pronounced, often are socially under-developed / autistic
 - Topic 'genius' / SME can contribute to identity via niche/belonging
- Multipotentiality: characterized by multiple interests¹⁸
 - Can be a barrier to occupational choices and career progression
 - "Overchoice syndrome": can create high confusion and anxiety²⁷
 - Can be perceived as unspecialized (and therefore less valued)
 - Often, struggles with career & identity: no clear sense of identification with specific skills or a career


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Facets of Identity Can 'Override' Giftedness

- We 'belong' regardless of how Giftedness manifests
- Conformity (to majority or minority identity)
- Can lead to rejection of Giftedness²⁰, potential 'dumbing down' in order to fit in with other communities
 - Racial
 - Ethnic
 - Religious
 - National
 - Social class
 - Sexual
 - Gender


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Giftedness 'Can 'Override' Other Facets

- Nonconformity
- Prioritizing Gifted identity may contribute to feeling we don't 'belong' regardless of other factors²⁹
 - Racial:- "uppity",
 - Ethnic: "strange ideas" (where education is not valued)
 - Religious: independent thought devalued ³⁵
 - National: espousing non-mainstream beliefs = "unpatriotic"
 - Social class: "beyond your station"
 - Sexual: potential alienation from majority / minority identity
 - Gender: androgyny, gender role exploration ¹⁴
 - Family role: "too big for your britches"


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Model of Gifted Identity Formation¹⁷

- Way to examine integration of Giftedness into identity
 - Impact of 12 systems across 4 constructs
- Systems
 - Self, Family, Family or Origin, Cultural, Vocational, Educational, Environmental, Social, Psychological, Political, Organic-Physiological, Developmental
- Constructs
 - Validation: acknowledgment/corroboration of one's giftedness
 - Affirmation: continued reinforcement of nuances of giftedness
 - Affiliation: peer group or fellowship without loss of self
 - Affinity: engagement in tasks that exercise gifted traits (OEs)

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Stage	Validation	Affirmation	Affiliation	Affinity
Self				
Family				
Family of Origin				
Cultural				
Vocational				
Environmental				
Educational				
Social				
Psychological				
Political				
Organic-Physiological Developmental				

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IDENTITY THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

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Erik Erikson^{7, 2}

- Stages of Development in life
- Physical, emotional and psychological
- Relates developmental work or tasks, to each stage
 - Conflict at each stage serves as turning point in development
 - Centers on either developing a psychological quality or failing
 - Potential for personal growth is high; so is potential for failure
 - Tasks at each stage are not yes/no; can be partially achieved
- Ages are estimates, can vary widely
- Can be non-linear
- Erikson believed people experience a challenge in each stage, often not consciously

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Erikson First Four Stages

- Infant, birth - 18 months Basic Trust vs. Mistrust
 - Develop ability to trust self, others, environment - constancy
 - When things hurt, will they ever feel better?
- Toddler, 18 mo. - 3 yrs Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
 - Develop belief: can survive interactions with the world
 - Can a toddler survive scary things, even their own rage?
- Play Age, 3 - 5 years Initiative vs. Guilt
 - Learn to plan / do things on one's own, e.g. get dressed
- School-Age, 6 - 12 yrs Industry vs. Inferiority
 - Develops identity by comparing to others, e.g. in classroom
 - Establish self-worth via industry (accomplishments)

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Erikson Last Four Stages

- **Adolescence: 12 - 18** Identity vs. Role Confusion
 - Self-questioning: Who am I? Do I have a place? Learn to fit in groups
 - **To this stage, development mostly depends upon what is done to us. From here forward, it depends primarily upon what we do.**
- **Young adult: 18 - 35** Intimacy/ Solidarity vs. Isolation
 - Learning to be intimate, who to do so with, exploring relationships
- **Adult: 35 - 55/65** Generativity vs. Self absorption
 - Establishing one's value through work: accruing accomplishments
 - Mid-life crisis. Measure accomplishments/failures. Am I satisfied?
 - Stagnation: not having done anything to help the next generation
- **Late adult: 55 or 65 to death** Ego Integrity vs. Despair
 - Considering death; reflecting on the past; reach contentment or despair


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MBTI Development


- **Four characteristics, differently weighted¹⁵**
 - Type core of conscious personality called *dominant* function
 - Next strongest: auxiliary function; supports & balances dominant
 - Dominant & auxiliary are two middle letters of four-letter type; sometimes called function pair (ST, SF, NT, NF)
- **Dominant generally develops up to age 7**
 - Rely most on this, develop most skill
 - Auxiliary up to age 20
 - Tertiary in 30s & 40s; Fourth function at midlife or later
- **Extravert: use dominant in outside world, auxiliary inner**
- **Introvert: use dominant in inner world, auxiliary outer**

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Gifted Identity Model¹⁷ Stage-related assessments


Stage	Theme	Validation	Affirmation	Affiliation	Affinity
1: Basic Trust vs. Mistrust	Possible to trust?				
2: Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	Can I stand alone?				
3: Initiative vs. Guilt	Start/conceive				
4: Industry vs. Inferiority	Accomplish tasks				
5: Identity vs. Role Confusion	Sense of self				
6: Intimacy/ Solidarity vs. Isolation	Relate to others				
7: Generativity vs. Self-Absorption	Contribute				
8: Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Contentment				39



Erikson Impact of Asynchrony & OEs

- Brain more developed in some ways, not in others
 - Boredom in classroom can be misinterpreted
- Non-conformity can lead to poor self-image (OEs also)
 - Can lead to acting out, exclusion
 - Lack of stimulation may slow potential brain development
- Social comparisons can lead to poor self-image
 - If unresolved, can lead to under-achievement &/or unhappiness
 - Potential isolation
 - Confusion, not fitting in, 'being different'
 - Interests, "small talk", reasoning ability, "too intense", "too weird"
- Can easily lead to sense of Inferiority (vs. Industry) or Role Confusion (vs. strong Identity)

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Erikson: Stage 2

- Toddler, 18 mo. - 3 yrs Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
 - Develop belief: can survive interactions with the world
 - Gifted: OEs or asynchrony may manifest early (esp. with prodigies)
 - Early sense of differentness, perhaps isolation, lack of peers
 - Different interests in preschool may cause early sense of differentness
 - The earlier a sense of 'not belonging', the more work it takes to heal
 - May cause increased challenges in developing independence
 - E.g.: Erica, 2E
 - Advantage: If context is understood & support developed, perhaps early establishment of autonomy

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Erikson: Stage 3

- Play Age, 3 - 5 years Initiative vs. Guilt
 - Learn to plan / do things on one's own, e.g. get dressed
 - Gifted: OEs or asynchrony more likely to start manifesting here
 - Increased comparison to pre-school peers, more awareness of others
 - May begin to develop 'outsider' identity
 - OEs: may lead to pre-absorption, task neglect; undermine initiative
 - More likely with intellectual, emotional, sensual, imaginal
 - MBTI dominant starting to develop; if introverted, child is starting to internalize messages in a specific way (hard to observe)
 - E.g.: Bobby, Intellectual OE, unchallenged
 - Advantage: ability to deeply & quickly comprehend may contribute to early clear sense of initiative, esp. academically, in interest areas, if environment supports this

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Erikson: Stage 4

- School-Age, 6 - 12 yrs Industry vs. Inferiority
 - Child develops self worth by comparing to others, e.g. in classroom
 - Establish self-worth via industry (accomplishments)
 - Gifted: teachers value performance/ peers value conformity
 - Under-developed social skills & intellectual disparity due to Asynchrony
 - Heightened emotions, creativity, imagination due to OEs
 - May cause ostracism, leading to sense of difference; peer message: at this age is difference = bad / inferior
 - Disparity may lead to confusion about whose praise to seek
 - MBTI dominant trait formed by this age
 - Advantage: If child develops ability to complete complex tasks & be praised for them, can develop solid sense of industry & self-reliance even if non-conforming

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Gifted at Work / School

- Often deny exceptionalness as we mature¹¹
- “Not enough” accomplishments = not gifted¹¹
 - Dissatisfaction due to high standards, perfectionism¹⁶
 - Despite many accomplishments; de-motivating
- The “Too” problem: “too much” (for others, for self) ¹¹
 - Too excitable, too intense, too conscientious, etc.
- Often never feel they have reached their potential¹⁶
 - Because of comparison to perfection, impossible goals
- Self-knowledge can contribute to success
 - Non-judgmental inventory of skills, attributes, challenges
 - Intensity, complexity, drive can be seen as assets¹²
- E.g: Erica

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Erikson: Stage 5

- Adolescence: 12 - 18 yrs Identity vs. Role Confusion
 - Self-questioning: Who am I? Do I have a place? Learning to fit in
 - What makes me unique? Often, rebellion from parents; exploration
 - Gifted
 - Potential isolation; peer scarcity; uncertain roles; self-doubt (ongoing)
 - Minimize abilities; intense emotions/hormones; androgyny¹³
 - Earlier experiences may have equated uniqueness with social rejection, may lead to inner turmoil or distrust of self
 - If inadequate support for Gifted identity, could reinforce rejection of it
 - Sex: immerse as way to fit in / escape intellect; or avoid b/c of overwhelm, confusion, asynchrony & focus on interests instead³⁶
 - E.g.: Sam, Aspergers
 - Advantage: Expanding opportunities to explore talents, often larger pool in which to find peers, asynchrony may be catching up


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What's Next: Relationships

- Dating: What's important in a partner?
 - Intellectual compatibility; Emotional compatibility; temperament
 - Balance / complementing vs. homogeneity
- Chemistry
 - Instinct: an accumulation of experience & responsiveness
- Learning communication skills & empathy
 - Negotiating conflict
 - Skills: Acknowledging others' perspectives
 - Not about right / wrong, about understanding & negotiation
- Relationship structure
- E.g.: Sam, Aspergers


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Erikson: Stage 6

- Young adult: 18 - 35 Intimacy/ Solidarity vs. Isolation
 - Learning to be intimate, who to do so with, exploring relationships
 - Gifted: Many new adjustments when entering the work force
 - Underdeveloped social skills in heterogeneous work place
 - Asynchrony: devoted attention to develop interpersonal skills
 - May judge self harshly if they are lacking
 - Possible conflicts, disappointments, disillusionment about at jobs
 - Potential (further) sense of differentness / erosion of self-esteem
 - Pressure to prove one's self in the world; leaving family support
 - E.g.: Sam, Bobby
 - Advantage: College & workplace offer opportunities to find interest-peers and to explore abilities at higher level
 - Potential for much growth if giftedness supported / integrated


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Beyond College: Work

- Dealing with others' expectations
- How to translate abilities to happiness
 - Know yourself: honest inventory of skills, needs, desires
- Fewer opportunities for intellectual recognition
 - Outside of academia
 - Not gifted any more¹⁰
 - Lack of external acknowledgment, de-motivating


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Work Adaptation Problems²⁴

Work environment notices	Gifted employee states
Many conflicts with management	I have a great sense of justice
Cannot listen to what others say	I'm not understood; I'm usually right
Difficult to place motives.	Apparently I'm a threat to my colleagues
Bad timekeeping, e.g. in meetings	I'm held back all the time; it's all so slow
Strongly fluctuating performance, without apparent cause	I have no idea what I want; I find almost everything interesting.
Optimal position? Concerns self with everything	I get too little appreciation; people don't see what I'm capable of.
Lack of perseverance & discipline	I'm easily distracted
Difficult to approach, not social	I hate small talk
Demanding re: work environment	How can you work in all that noise?


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Gifted Life / Work Strategies²⁴

Strategy	Place of Giftedness in Life & Career
Inconspicuousness	Keeps low profile, which results in restricted personal development. Often unaware of intelligence, works at simple jobs. Can develop with insight / information.
Accepted	Establishes connection with peers at early age, which is stimulus. Often works in gifted environment, has unique task / position, or starts company.
Social	Discovers intellect alone isn't enough. Has actively raised social skills to high level. Often functions well in multidisciplinary jobs.
Confrontational	Checked career history, rife with conflict. Emphasizes quality of work to survive.
Isolation	Operates almost exclusively alone. Runs risk of losing social contact.


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Erikson: Stage 7

- Adult: 35 - 55/65 Generativity vs. Self absorption
 - Establishing one's value through work: accruing accomplishments
 - Mid-life crisis; measure accomplishments/failures. Am I satisfied?
 - Stagnation: not having done anything to help the next generation
 - Gifted: What is enough? Have I lived up to my potential?
 - Possibility of being trapped in dead-end situations,
 - Lack of workplace recognition in same way as in academia; may challenge identity as Gifted
 - OEs: may drive multi-potentialed to additional or new careers, interests; all to great productivity; if integrated / understood as strengths
 - Asynchrony: Impact usually negligible; task: integrating & healing past
 - E.g.: Caroline, multi-potentialed, psychomotor OE
 - Advantages: Work praise for productive energy; maturation of gifts; appreciation of them & of accomplishments can increase happiness


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Work challenges / opportunities

- Dealing with boredom: adaptation & variety
- Inventions / explorations: making space for nonconformity
- Reflect on OEs, how to turn potential liabilities to assets
 - Intellectual = Focused: research, academia, expertise
 - Imaginational = Creative: arts, inventions, intellectual property
 - Emotional = Empathic: arts, healing, non-profits, social justice
 - Psychomotor = Energetic: diversity, sports, arts, corporate climb
 - Sensual = Subtle: culinary, empathic bridge, massage


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Skills, OEs in the Workplace^{32,11}

- Can see through veneers & confusion to root of problem
- Verbalize abstractions and images
- Simultaneously consider several options
- Drawn to complexity and ambiguity
- Enjoy delving into multifaceted problems
- Move quickly to creative solutions with practical results
- Often are perceived as thinking “outside the box”
- Requires awareness of abilities in order to apply them
- Demands self-confidence and possibly self-marketing
 - Proving oneself, using past successes as examples
 - Non-conformists can be misunderstood, under-valued


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Aging: Healing the past Moving Forward Productively

- Challenge: Gifted adults often under-achieve
 - Integrating identity can help social acceptance, self-image, focus
- Past: limited or nonexistent intellectual peer group
 - Peers can make it easier to neither over- nor under-value intellect
- Told you could achieve any goal you chose?
 - Get support in sorting out desires vs. talents
 - Find help in understanding how to turn dreams into realities
- Learn how to learn, in areas of relatively less interest
- Often, higher than average relationship difficulties (esp. men)
 - Difficulty balancing intellectual and emotional needs
 - Challenged social skills: develop them through exercise
- Grow beyond formative hurts (“buttons”)

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Erikson: Stage 8²⁸

- Late adult: 55 or 65 to death Ego Integrity vs. Despair
 - Coming to terms with death; reflecting on the past; reach contentment or despair
 - Gifted: Enough achieved over lifetime? Potential reached? What's enough
 - Impact dependent on life experience & self-acceptance, as with everyone; may hinge on integration of Giftedness over one's life to some degree
 - Dementia / Alzheimer's – poignant burden if identity linked to intellect
 - OEs: can be old friends, may give added depth or richness to process
 - E.g.: Frances
 - Advantages:
 - Potential for wisdom;
 - Ability to anticipate this stage throughout life may influence choices in earlier stages, so it holds fewer surprises
 - Enfeebled physical condition may be less problematic if mental life is rich
 - Lifelong coping with existential depression may better prepare for challenges

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Gifted Adults³³ Life-long Attributes; Looking Back

- Self-concept linked to success in life (as in model)
- Social adjustment: find &/or maintain peer group
 - May be school-age peers from various times in life
 - May mean exploring new opportunities; social skills important
- Perfectionism, sensitivity, intensity part of Giftedness^{34,12}
 - Derive from complex cognitive and emotional development
 - Often creates stress
 - Learn to channel them, not be ruled by them (turn them down)
- Immense capacity to care
 - Lifelong attributes: complexity, intensity, heightened awareness
 - Often extraordinary conscience; drive to make life meaningful

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SUMMARY

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Self-Reflection

- Impact of Giftedness in past: pos & neg ramifications
- How has Giftedness interacted with group identities?
 - Placed you within or excluded you from groups
 - How you saw yourself & how others treated you
 - How have you internalized these? To what degree(s)?
- Aspects of your identity you want to reclaim
 - How to do that?
 - Healing the past & moving forward

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THANK YOU!

**FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION
AND PARTICIPATION**

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REFERENCES & RESOURCES

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For More Information

- **National Association of Gifted Children** <http://www.nagc.org>
 - Pages on parenting, publications, special programs, etc.
 - Pages / programs by state
- **Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted** <http://www.sengifted.org>
 - Pages addressing parenting, diagnosis, finding a qualified psychotherapist, gifted adults, and multicultural outreach
- **Hoagie's Gifted Pages** <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>
 - Education–focused
 - Articles: home schooling, advancement, enrichment programs, etc
 - Frequent updates
 - Scholarships available for the gifted
 - Links to many other web pages

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