
BOOK REVIEW

Dona J. Matthews, *Book Review Section Editor*

Piechowski, M. (2006). *"Mellow Out," They Say. If I Only Could: Intensities and Sensitivities of the Young and Bright*. Madison, WI: Yunasa Books (307 pp., \$23.95 pb, ISBN: 978-0977753000).

This special issue on Dabrowski is the perfect venue for a review of Michael Piechowski's *"Mellow Out," They Say. If I Only Could*. The title of the book is immediately engaging and sets the stage for a personal journey through the complex landscape of emotional intensities. I smiled throughout, especially in those sections that were most poignant and captured Michael's humor.

Because I have known Michael Piechowski for almost half of my life, I was somewhat hesitant about writing a review, out of concern about being able to maintain objectivity. However, I quickly realized that there is no need to be objective when talking about the contents of this book. The concept of emotional intensities, which was first introduced to me by Michael, is subjective, not objective. Whether you have been fortunate enough to know Michael, and thus will hear his voice when reading the book, or whether this is your first introduction to the subject and the author, you will be hooked from the beginning because it is a genuine story of the heart. *Mellow Out* offers optimism and light to the potentially dark and ugly realization that we are all alone. Understanding aloneness within the context of our relationships with others and the world gives way to confidence in our experiences and their role in personal growth and development.

Michael truly captures Kazimierz Dabrowski's contribution to psychology. Dabrowski introduced two concepts essential to understanding the social-emotional development of gifted individuals: developmental potential and multilevelness.

Developmental potential refers to the "endowment and the properties of the system that enables us to feel and experience things . . . [multilevelness] introduces the notion that the extremes—for good and for bad—of human emotions, motivations, values, strivings, and behaviors will make more sense if looked at through a prism of levels" (p. 18). Adolescence is a period of change and transition from childhood to adulthood. By reading the excerpts from the research, the quotes from adolescents, I was reminded that the process of change does not terminate when the physical transition to adulthood is complete. By reading these excerpts, and knowing that at various times during my adolescence and adult life I've felt like this, I found comfort because, if others feel the same way, not only are we not alone in this universe, we do not have to be alone.

Yes, this is must-reading for young, bright people as well their parents and educators. But don't read it like a novel that you can't put down. Take your time. Once you've read the three chapters in Part 1, which present the theory and provide vignettes and quotes to make it real, you will have the necessary foundation to skip around the remaining chapters and sections. Open it up and just start reading. Then, use it in your daily life to remain connected to the heart and soul of gifted individuals.

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