

Emotional Giftedness: The Measure of Intrapersonal Intelligence

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In my chapter "Emotional Development and Emotional Giftedness" in the first edition of this handbook, I assumed that emotional development and emotional giftedness were expressions of intrapersonal intelligence. A closer look at Gardner's description of intrapersonal intelligence showed white areas in need of being chartered. The present chapter brings together emotional giftedness, emotional growth, and moral sensitivity with the concepts of developmental potential (overexcitabilities), self-evaluative processes, and inner transformation. A fuller and more comprehensive understanding of intrapersonal intelligence is thus served.

The Concept of Developmental Potential

Emotional sensitivity and emotional intensity are often cited as distinguishing most gifted children, and especially the highly gifted (e.g., Piirto, 1992; Silverman, 1983; Tolan, 1994). These traits account for their vulnerabilities in childhood and their troubles in school (Kurcinka, 1991; Richert, Alvino, & McDonnell, 1982; Roedell, 1984; Vail, 1987). Seeing themselves so different from "normal," they doubt themselves and ask, "What is wrong with me?"; they realize the discrepancy between their feelings and those of others, and to account for the lack of fit they judge themselves to be wanting. In fact, some intellectually precocious youngsters actually look in the catalog of mental disorders to find a label that could apply to them (Tolan, 1987). They are too young, of course, to see that the lack of fit is not evidence of mental disturbance. Alas, even gifted adults are often not free from this fallacy, for such is the power of the pressure to

be normal. But not all this pressure comes from the outside.

One of the basic human faculties is the capacity for making comparisons and evaluations. In the personal domain this means self-evaluation—comparing ourselves with others—and responsiveness to how others evaluate us (Bandura, 1986). But this process may be taken a step further, and a very significant step it is—namely, comparing ourselves in the present with what we can become—our potentials, possibilities, and above all, our ideal self.

It is likely that to be emotionally sensitive entails a range and speed of evaluative processes that is greater than average. Combined with great imagination and intellectual power this may lead to brooding and devastating self-criticism. It may turn morbid or neurotic. Or it may mobilize one's whole psyche toward the goal of self-realization in creativity; in service to others; or in a higher, transpersonal consciousness in which the illusion of separateness gradually lifts.

Dabrowski (1967, 1972) studied the mental health of intellectually and artistically gifted youths. Recognizing that creative individuals tend to live more intensely, Dabrowski took the intensity of their emotions, their sensitivity and emotional extremes, as part and parcel of their psychophysical makeup. In their intensified manner of experiencing, feeling, thinking, and imagining, he perceived a potential for further growth. Inner forces were at work that often generated overstimulation, conflict, pain, but also—and this is significant—a search for a way out of it. An escape route may lead to addiction, or to inner growth and transformation.

To Dabrowski the seemingly typical signs of morbidity and neurosis spelled genuine poten-

tial for advanced development. Dabrowski's (1937) early study of self-mutilation led him to examine this phenomenon among writers, artists, and other highly creative people and to conclude that self-aggression represents a psychologically higher level than aggression against others. Individuals who experience great inner turmoil, the result of the tension created by the combined forces of several overexcitabilities, may be pushed toward self-mutilation. This happens—Van Gogh cutting off his ear comes to mind—because these individuals find themselves in a climate of misunderstanding and alienation, without emotional support.

Dabrowski's concept of *developmental potential* includes talents, specific abilities, and intelligence, plus five primary components of psychic life: psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional overexcitabilities (see Table 30.1).

To varying degrees, these five dimensions give talent its power (Piechowski, 1979, 1986). They may be thought of as modes of experiencing or as channels through which flow the colors, textures, insights, visions, currents, and energies of experience. These channels can be wide open, narrow, or barely present. Dabrowski called them "forms of psychic overexcitability" to emphasize the intensification of felt experience much beyond the ordinary. Overexcitabilities contribute to the individual's psychological development, and their strength can be taken as a measure of developmental potential. They are easily observed in children, and they stand out loud and clear in gifted children. Kurcinka (1991) had the felicity of calling them *spirited*—"children who are more intense, sensitive, perceptive, persistent, energetic."

It is unfortunate that the stronger these overexcitabilities are, the less peers and teachers welcome them unless they, too, are gifted. Children exhibiting strong overexcitabilities are often made to feel embarrassed and guilty for being "different." Criticized and teased for what they cannot help, they begin to believe there is something wrong with them. Sometimes they learn to disguise their intensity, sometimes they seek refuge in fantastic worlds of their own creation, sometimes they try to "normalize" it and, as a result, suf-

fer depression or ill-defined anxiety. These reactions are the consequences of being forced into denying their own potential.

Intensity and Emotional Sensitivity

The intensity of emotional reactions, especially in children, may sometimes be difficult to understand, especially when they strike seemingly out of the blue, when the child seems terribly upset over "nothing." Parents and teachers must show considerable patience and knowledge of the child to see that this apparent overreaction comes from the child's sensitivity and need for his or her own order of things to be preserved. That children need order and predictable routines is well known. To a sensitive and intense child who may be disequibrated, often by his own emotions, a departure from routine (for instance, in the way a story is told), may be extremely upsetting because the need for reliable markers of consistency and support is all the greater. Without doubt, the strongest support is the parent's loving patience and acceptance.

To illustrate how emotional intensity and sensitivity are experienced, a few examples taken from written responses of subjects who answered an overexcitability questionnaire are given next. This questionnaire was designed to tap the five dimensions of developmental potential (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983; Piechowski, 1979; Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985; Piechowski, Silverman, & Falk, 1985).

Positive feelings take the form of being "flooded by unexpected waves of joy," feeling "incredibly alive—every cell, muscle, etc., feels stimulated. I have incredible energy then and hardly need any rest," or "Sometimes I can be so happy that I want to laugh and cry or be silent and shout, all at the same time." The beauty in music or nature can move a person to tears. Pain can have a different aspect: "Even the greatest pain that I have felt has been ecstatic and full of life." Just as they are capable of communion with nature, of merging with a painting or a piece of music, a religious or spiritual experience can overtake such people completely.

Intense individuals feel their emotions very strongly; they soar high and plunge into black glooms with sometimes rapid and bewildering

Table 30.1
Forms and Expressions of Psychic Overexcitability

<i>Psychomotor</i>
<p><i>Surplus of energy:</i> Rapid speech, marked excitation, intense physical activity (e.g., fast games and sports), pressure for action (e.g., organizing), marked competitiveness</p> <p><i>Psychomotor expression of emotional tension:</i> Compulsive talking and chattering, impulsive actions, nervous habits (tics, nail biting), workaholism, acting out</p>
<i>Sensual</i>
<p><i>Enhanced sensory and aesthetic pleasure:</i> Seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, hearing, and sex; delight in beautiful objects, sounds of words, music, form, color, balance</p> <p><i>Sensual expression of emotional tension:</i> Overeating, sexual overindulgence, buying sprees, wanting to be in the limelight</p>
<i>Intellectual</i>
<p><i>Intensified activity of the mind:</i> Curiosity, concentration, capacity for sustained intellectual effort, avid reading; keen observation, detailed visual recall, detailed planning</p> <p><i>Penchant for probing questions and problem solving:</i> Search for truth and understanding; forming new concepts; tenacity in problem solving</p> <p><i>Reflective thought:</i> Thinking about thinking, love of theory and analysis, preoccupation with logic, moral thinking, introspection (but without self-judgment), conceptual and intuitive integration; independence of thought (sometimes very critical)</p>
<i>Imaginational</i>
<p><i>Free play of the imagination:</i> Frequent use of image and metaphor, facility for invention and fantasy, facility for detailed visualization, poetic and dramatic perception, animistic and magical thinking</p> <p><i>Capacity for living in a world of fantasy:</i> Predilection for magic and fairy tales, creation of private worlds, imaginary companions; dramatization</p> <p><i>Spontaneous imagery as an expression of emotional tension:</i> Animistic imagery, mixing truth and fiction, elaborate dreams, illusions</p> <p><i>Low tolerance of boredom</i></p>
<i>Emotional</i>
<p><i>Feelings and emotions intensified:</i> Positive feelings, negative feelings, extremes of emotion, complex emotions and feelings, identification with others' feelings, awareness of a whole range of feelings</p> <p><i>Strong somatic expressions:</i> Tense stomach, sinking heart, blushing, flushing, pounding heart, sweaty palms</p> <p><i>Strong affective expressions:</i> Inhibition (timidity, shyness); enthusiasm, ecstasy, euphoria, pride; strong affective memory; shame; feelings of unreality, fears and anxieties, feelings of guilt, concern with death, depressive and suicidal moods</p>

Table 30.1 (Continued)

<p><i>Capacity for strong attachments, deep relationships</i> Strong emotional ties and attachments to persons, living things, places; attachments to animals; difficulty adjusting to new environments; compassion, responsiveness to others, sensitivity in relationships; loneliness</p> <p><i>Well-differentiated feelings toward the self</i> Inner dialogue and self-judgment</p>

Source: From R. F. Falk, M. M. Piechowski, & S. Lind, "Criteria for Rating Intensity of Overexcitabilities Manual," Unpublished manuscript, Northland College, Ashland, Wisconsin, 1994.

succession. By contrast, individuals lacking in intensity feel their emotions mildly and only with minor fluctuations; their lives lack the complexity and spice of those living at a higher pitch (Sommers, 1981). The degree of emotional intensity is a stable individual characteristic and quite independent of what actually evoked the emotion. Emotional intensity, or its lack in unemotional people, is a characteristic of temperament observable early in life (Larsen & Diener, 1987).

Emotional sensitivity is another matter. Emotionally intense individuals can also be very sensitive to the feelings of others, to others being hurt, to injustice, but also to criticism and pain. If an emotional child grows up with too much criticism and ridicule, the child will begin to seek self-protection in emotional withdrawal and may create an inner shield. The price for such withdrawal and denied feelings is high: loss of emotional vitality, lack of enjoyment of one's successes and achievements, and lack of the sense of who one is, in short, a process of emotional deadening (Miller, 1981, 1983).

The Case for Emotional Giftedness

Annemarie Roeper (1982, p. 24) suggested that the emotionally gifted are persons who have "the capacity to integrate emotions, intellect, and creativity against enormous odds":

Some gifted children show enormous empathy with others, surpassing at times the compassion of adults who are more limited by society's expectations. As a result, adults may not understand a child's reaction. For example, during a chess tournament, John, the obvious winner, be-

gan to make careless mistakes and lost the game. When asked what happened, he replied, *I noticed my opponent had tears in his eyes, I could not concentrate and lost my desire to win.* John's empathy was greater than his ambition. Many adults, especially those who supported John, were disappointed. Yet, one could argue that his reaction was a more mature one than theirs for his self esteem did not depend on winning the competition. (emphasis in the original)

In the film *Searching for Bobby Fisher*, the supercharged competitive drive of the parents, some of whom want a victory at any cost, contrasts sharply with the distinctly more sane behavior of the young competitors. It takes a great deal of fortitude and moral courage to resist the pressure to win and the prospect of a barrage of accusations: "Why did you do that?!" "How could you?" In a competitive climate, young John's action made no sense. Yet it is a clear-cut example of what Dabrowski called *positive maladjustment*. Winning the tournament would have been the socially expected and approved act; it would have made John a well-adjusted champion. But this conflicted with his empathy for the opponent. A win at the price of the other boy's tears was—to John—unacceptable. One could say that to John, in face of this, a victory was morally wrong. Doing what is morally right is a positive action. When morally right action conflicts with social expectations and pressures, it is positive maladjustment.

Instances of empathy, unselfishness, and consideration for others are readily found among gifted children. Seymour (1987) described two such boys. The older was accelerated from second to fourth grade. The boy's exceptional intelligence and verbal facility

impressed everyone. His brother, a year younger and also highly gifted, was, by contrast, considered "average." His great imagination and sensitivity attracted less attention than his brother's obvious scholastic brilliance. The older boy had a temper and often hit his younger brother who, although in fact he was the larger of the two, did not strike back but would walk away instead; despite his anger and obvious pain, he controlled himself—and he was only seven years old. On a school trip to the zoo this very young boy, unlike his classmates, showed a concentrated interest in every animal. There was a goat he wanted to feed. But when he was given a bag of corn by some visitors, instead of running with it to the goat, he first offered the corn to each of his classmates so that they could have the pleasure of feeding the goat, too. Seymour found attention to others to be a consistent trait in this boy. From responses to her parent questionnaire, Silverman (1983, 1994) collected numerous observations of emotional sensitivity, compassion, and moral sensitivity in gifted children (above 130 IQ) as young as age 2½ or 3.

Considerateness, understanding of others, of their feelings, motives, and aspirations characterize what Gardner (1983) called *interpersonal intelligence*. Empathic acts—a response to another's distress and a desire to soothe—have been observed in infants (Borke, 1971; Hoffman, 1983). The capacity for empathy and unselfish acts is readily observed in preschoolers (Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler, & Chapman, 1983). Empathy is the foundation out of which grow the moral emotions (Damon, 1988).

Intrapersonal Intelligence in Extenso

Introspective individuals who are keenly and accurately aware of their own emotional life are characterized by *intrapersonal intelligence* or self-knowledge. Gardner (1983, 1993a, 1993b; see Chapter 5) defined intrapersonal intelligence as introspective capacity. Gardner further noted that through continued development this capacity may culminate in a mature sense of self and inner wisdom.

However, there is a gap in this picture. By what developmental process is the mature self realized? What has to take place in a person's development to make gaining advanced self-knowledge and wisdom possible? To fill this gap, we must turn to Dabrowski's theory of emotional development, and particularly to his concept of *multilevel development*. By multilevel, Dabrowski meant the type of inner growth in which a split between the higher and lower in oneself is strongly felt. The split is healed by concerted emotional labors of aligning one's life with the ideal of becoming a better human being.

Originally Gardner (1983, p. 252) included in his formulation of intrapersonal intelligence a "continued development, where an individual has an option of becoming increasingly autonomous, integrated, or self-actualized. . . . The end goal of these developing processes is a self that is highly developed and fully differentiated from others," but subsequently he did not include or develop it further. In multilevel development, the goal is to confront the whole truth about oneself as a prelude to a far-reaching inner transformation. As Eleanor Roosevelt astutely observed, such truth can make you wince. To make Gardner's definition of intrapersonal intelligence full, and in keeping with his original conception, we must include the process of inner growth that leads to profound self-knowledge of the kind that is characteristic of a highly developed sense of self.

Moral Exemplars

Individuals who are guided by compassion, emotional sensitivity, and moral certainty are given the appellation of moral exemplars. Gandhi's life is a classic instance of spiritual growth powered by deep emotions. Gandhi's emotional giftedness lay in his ardent concern to have no blemish on his character (punishment for an infraction caused him the greatest pain by the very fact that he deserved it), his ability to befriend people, his joy in serving others (he tells how he developed a passion for nursing the sick), and his dedication to abolishing any kind of discrimination based on

color, caste, religion, nationality, social position, or wealth (Gandhi, 1948/1983). He taught himself to follow the inner voice: "I delighted in submitting to it. To act against it would have been difficult and painful to me" (p. 118). Following it, this very shy and sensitive man was transformed into a radical reformer who championed the rights of those who were denied human rights, who were exploited and in bondage. Although Gardner (1993a) chose him as the epitome of *interpersonal intelligence*, it must be recognized that without persevering with utmost honesty and rigor in his self-knowledge and the task of inner transformation, Gandhi could not have become a Mahatma—a Great Soul.

Gandhi's goal was to live a life of truth so that he could find God. When he started his law practice, his goal was to resolve the conflict rather than to win the case for one side only:

I felt that my duty was to befriend both parties and bring them together. I strained every nerve to bring a compromise. . . . [In the end] both were happy over the result, and both rose in public estimation. My joy was boundless. I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. (Gandhi, 1948/1983, p. 117)

As a child and as a man Gandhi was intensely emotional, sensual, exquisitely sensitive (he was extremely shy), endowed with rich imagination, and engaged in relentless intellectual and spiritual inquiry. In other words, his experiential channels—overexcitabilities—were wide open.

In the life of Eleanor Roosevelt we get a close look at the inner workings of emotional giftedness par excellence (Piechowski, 1990; Piechowski & Tyksta, 1982). The driving forces of her life were a sense of duty, a desire for love and to belong, a willingness to be of service, and a determination to develop her individual identity on an equal basis with her powerful husband. She was propelled by compassion toward those in need, whether material, emotional, or to fulfill a personal goal.

Because she made sense of the sorrows of her own childhood, she had a thorough understanding of the emotional needs of children and adolescents (Vander Ven, 1984). At the same time her behavior, though outwardly ladylike, was radical and revolutionary.

Guided by humility, compassion, and understanding of human nature, the conscience of such individuals is a reliable guide for acting in accordance with the highest principles of fairness and compassion. From the point of view of giftedness, one is prone to ask: In what way can such a conscience be considered a talent? How did it develop? How was it trained?

Briefly, we find that some do achieve their inner knowledge as a result of guidance and training, exemplified in the spiritual traditions of the East and West. Spiritual directors and masters guide their disciples' inner growth (Nixon, 1994). But there are certain individuals who arrive at self-knowledge by guidance from within. For instance, Brennan and Piechowski (1991) and Grant (1988) described persons who were taught, as it were, by an "inner voice"; their inner growth was guided almost entirely from within.

Inner growth and transformation, as we are beginning to discover, can follow different paths. The moral exemplars described by Colby and Damon (1992) appear to tread the path of increasing moral certainty; those studied by others show growth through inner struggle and self-chosen work at inner transformation (Dabrowski, 1967; Nixon, 1994; Piechowski, 1990, 1992, 1993). Nevertheless, moral exemplars are not entirely free from inner conflict generated by a clash between the unquestioned beliefs they grew up with and the face-to-face encounter with oppression, poverty, social injustice, and denial of basic human rights.

To sum up, the young chess player who chose to lose the championship for the sake of another player, the 7-year-old who refrained from fighting despite his advantage in size and strength, Gandhi's submission to his inner voice, Eleanor Roosevelt's self-knowledge and life of service, are outstanding examples of emotional giftedness or intrapersonal intelligence in its full sense. They are strongly empathic, introspective, self-

analytical, and self-corrective; they possess emotional intensity, depth, and devotion. And they are "positively maladjusted" as well!

Dabrowski's Theory and Bandura's Self-System: Self-Knowledge and Self-Evaluation Conjoined

The examination of the nature of this process of inner transformation is the core of Dabrowski's theory of emotional development which he called "positive disintegration" (Dabrowski, 1964, 1967; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977). By this paradoxical name he emphasized the dismantling and tearing down that takes place in one's inner being once the process of emotional growth is launched in earnest. What is experienced as "lower" gradually is removed and replaced by what is "higher." Self-evaluation and self-judgment play a strong part. Since the process is usually experienced as a movement from a lower to a higher level, it has been called "multilevel." The split between higher and lower in oneself takes many forms but is distinctly and spontaneously experienced by emotionally gifted people. [The theory is too elaborate and too broad to attempt a sketch here, but serviceable outlines exist (Nelson, 1989; Piechowski, 1975, 1992).]

Emotional giftedness grows out of emotional overexcitability when there is a will to change oneself and to help others, whether materially, emotionally, or in the realization of their potential. Naturally, intellectual and imaginal overexcitabilities play a strong role. The examples of Mohandas Gandhi and Eleanor Roosevelt underscore the link between robust emotionality and finding one's mission in life by serving others. Dabrowski's theory is very much about this quest that comes from a deep longing for an ideal of love, an ideal of brotherhood, an ideal of beauty, an ideal of caring, an ideal of humility, an ideal of truth, or all such ideals. It is a call to a higher, more deeply meaningful life.

Children who advance in development more rapidly than their peers, especially emotionally and intellectually, feel this call early but often find themselves misunderstood.

Clark (1983, p. 126) noted that an intense sense of justice and unwavering idealism appear early in the emotional growth of gifted children and that it is hard for them to understand why adults are not doing anything to correct what is so blatantly wrong and unfair in the world. Such children have trouble adjusting to a world where everything appears to stand on its head; it makes them "positively maladjusted."

This presents the practical problem of how to coach gifted children when they show signs of positive maladjustment. Delisle and Galbraith (1987) offer survival strategies. Specialists in conflict resolution teach win-win strategies (Fisher & Ury, 1981).

Silverman (1994) reports that in the extensive files of the Gifted Development Center there are

dozens of cases on record of gifted children fighting injustice, befriending and protecting handicapped children, conserving resources, responding to others' emotional needs, becoming terribly upset if a classmate is humiliated, becoming vegetarian in meat-eating families, crying at the violence in cartoons, being perplexed at why their classmates push in line, refusing to fight back when attacked because they considered all forms of violence—including self-defense—morally wrong, writing letters to the President to try to end the Gulf War, and writing poems of anguish at the cruelty in the world. I have found that the higher the child's IQ, the earlier moral concerns develop and the more profound effect they have on the child. But it usually takes maturity before the child can translate moral sensitivity into consistent moral action. (p.111)

The association of high IQ with moral sensitivity, moral character, and early ethical concerns was already noted by both Terman and Hollingworth. Although it is easy to recall cases of extremely bright people who appear to lack the emotions that make for moral responsibility—"whiz kids" who become devious presidential advisors, Wall Street manipulators, athletic saboteurs, scientists who forge data—one cannot ignore such individuals' life histories, how they were raised and what they were taught, the choices they made, and the developmental context that led to their con-

science ending up muffled. Life has many pressures and decision points arising from the dominant value system, which prizes achievement and status at nearly any price. Lives can go wrong in countless ways and, when in the service of established authority, often without catching on that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

Bandura (1986) identified eight mechanisms by which we can get around our conscience, our self-evaluative process. Activation of these mechanisms can be gradual, or limited to certain situations. For instance, it is easier to do something unethical when one tells oneself that what other people are doing is much worse, or when the responsibility is diffused or relegated to a higher authority, or when one finds moral justification in carrying out heinous acts as did Hitler's SS (*Stutzstaffel*), his special force for ethnic cleansing and racial purity. The SS was trained to believe in *their* moral superiority which then justified extermination of people deemed morally inferior, degenerate, or subhuman (Moczarski, 1981). However, there have always been cases of those whose emotional system rebels, whether through psychosomatic illness or doubt, leading to positive maladjustment. Conscientious objectors are cases in point, such as Lieutenant Louis Font (Piechowski, 1992), the airman Daniel Cobos, and others who broke ranks with established but dishonest and secretive power structures (Everett, 1989). At least half of those described by Everett were people in jobs requiring exceptional intelligence.

It is significant that the emotional and moral sensitivity of high-IQ children is frequently and consistently observed. It is imperative that it be recognized, understood, supported, and perhaps emulated as well. In order to be able to understand this association we will have to study the way in which high levels of abstract reasoning, in combination with emotional sensitivity, accelerate development of evaluative and, particularly, self-evaluative processes. In Bandura's (1986) terms, we will have to study more closely the *self-system* in emotionally precocious children.

What emerges from the examples given earlier is a natural progression from emo-

tional overexcitability to emotional giftedness with a strong component of moral sensitivity, from which moral responsibility and moral action arise. The strong potential for inner transformation begins with a reaction to how things are in the world in which one lives, then shifts to evaluating one's moral responsibility and preparing to act on it.

Dabrowski outlined a typology of personality development (Table 30.2) with special attention to inner growth in which the split between "what is," the current state of one's being, and "what ought to be," the call to an ideal higher state, is so acutely felt that it spurs further growth. The process of self-correction becomes inner transformation in multilevel growth. Inner transformation is also the process of creating a new self or realization of the higher, transpersonal, or transcendental self (Assagioli, 1965; Csikszentmihalyi, 1993; Piechowski, 1974, 1993).

As an example, Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who lived in Holland at the time of the Holocaust, felt at the age of 27 a spiritual restlessness, inner chaos, depression, and despair. She took up the inner struggle to overcome it by deep reflection, acts of will, and prayer. Under the horrifying conditions of arrests and deportation of Jews, she attained serenity and inner peace entirely free of hatred toward the Germans. She realized that to give in to hate, as she was initially moved to do, would mean to become just like them. Instead, as a way of preparation for the inevitable, she volunteered for the transit camp in Westerbork from which she was eventually shipped to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. She left behind a diary, an absorbing document of her inner transformation (Hillesum, 1981/1985; Piechowski, 1992; Spaltro, 1991). Surprisingly, the horrors of war are placed as if on the periphery. Her diary is "in the first place a journey through her inner world, and that inner world of hers is not governed by the threat of war" (Gaarlandt, 1985).

Strong developmental potential, in its combination of talents, abilities, and strong overexcitabilities, is the necessary condition for self-actualization. In all cases of self-actualization studied so far, there is evidence of a very

Table 30.2
Levels of Emotional Development According to Dabrowski's
Theory of Positive Disintegration

Level V: Secondary Integration

The struggle for self-mastery has been won. Inner conflicts regarding the self have been resolved through actualization of the personality ideal. Disintegration has been transcended by the integration of one's values into one's living and being. The life is lived in service to humanity. It is lived according to the highest, most universal principles of loving—compassionate regard for the worth of every individual.

A magnetic field in the soul—Dag Hammarskjöld

Level IV: Organized Multilevel Disintegration

Individuals are well on the road to self-actualization. They have found a way to reach their own ideas, and they are effective leaders in society. They show high levels of responsibility, authenticity, reflective judgment, empathy for others, autonomy of thought and action, self-awareness, and other attributes associated with self-actualization.

Behind tranquility lies conquered unhappiness—Eleanor Roosevelt

Level III: Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration

Multilevelness arises. The person develops a hierarchical sense of values. Inner conflict is vertical, a struggle to bring up one's behavior to higher standards. There is a dissatisfaction with what one is, because of a competing sense of what one could and ought to be (personality ideal). This internal struggle between higher and lower can be accompanied by existential despair: anxiety, depression, and feelings of dissatisfaction with the self (inferiority, disquietude, astonishment).

Video meliora proboque deteriora sequor^a—Marcus Tullius Cicero

Level II: Unilevel Disintegration

Individuals are influenced primarily by their social group and by mainstream values, or they are moral relativists for whom "anything goes," morally speaking. They often exhibit ambivalent feelings and indecisive flip-flop behavior because they have no clear-cut set of self-determined internal values. Inner conflicts are horizontal, a contest between equal, competing values.

A reed shaken in the wind—Matthew, XI, 7

Level I: Primary Integration

Egocentrism prevails. A person at this level lacks the capacity for empathy and self-examination. When things go wrong, someone else is always to blame; self-responsibility is not encountered here. With nothing within to inhibit personal ambition, individuals at Level I often attain power in society by ruthless means.

Dog-eat-dog mentality

Source: Adapted from Nelson (1989), Maxwell (1992), and Piechowski (1992).

^a "I regard the better but follow the worse."

strong developmental potential—that is, besides special talents and high intelligence there are necessarily very strong overexcitabilities (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991; Piechowski, 1978). Although self-actualization and emotional giftedness are not the same, in the cases cited here they go together (Piechowski, 1992).

By what signs can we recognize the potential for self-actualization and for emotional giftedness in young people? Some signs have

been mentioned: emotional overexcitability expressed in the intensity and sensitivity to others' feelings and one's own; empathy and understanding of others; early emergence of moral concerns about being fair to others; self-judgment; and worrying about subtle issues in how others are affected by one's actions. In other words, the signs of emotional giftedness can be read in anything that we can recognize as proper to the dual domain of *inter-* and *intra-*personal intelligences, but only if combined

with compassion, caring, and corrective self-judgment. In other words, as conceived here, it is called *emotional growth*.

Emotional Growth of Gifted Children and Adolescents

In a two-year follow-up study conducted in collaboration with Nicholas Colangelo, self-reports were obtained from gifted youngsters. At the beginning of the project the children were 12 to 17 years old. The purpose of the study was to find individual patterns of emotional growth. The youngsters were given an open-ended questionnaire asking what evokes in them strong positive feelings, what stimulates their mind, what is their conception of self, and so on. The items were designed to tap the five overexcitabilities enumerated in Table 30.1.

Two contrasting types of emotional growth were found (Piechowski, 1989). In one type the orientation is pragmatic, with well-defined and not-too-distant goals and not much inner exploration. This type of growth was called *rational-altruistic* because it closely fits with the type of character development described by Peck and Havighurst (1960). For example, a female high school student gave this response to the question, "If you ask yourself, 'Who am I?' what is the answer?":

I am a 17-year-old girl who is smart, dependable, responsible, tall, hardworking, but lazy at times, kind, active in clubs, has high ideals, who functions best in an organized environment, somewhat slow, involved, and tired.

At 19 she gave the following reply to the same question:

I am an intelligent young woman who enjoys being with others and who likes to do things for them. I like to learn and I like to do things well. I am a person who likes things to be clearly defined—I want to know what is expected of me in a given situation. Right now, I am someone who is making difficult decisions about the future and what I really want to do with my life.

In these and other of her responses we see a strong goal orientation. The framework is ra-

tional and altruistic. Satisfaction comes from involvement in many activities, service to others, and seeing clearly what ends it all serves. In another place she said, "I dislike activity that has no purpose." Such response could come from a self-actualizing "doer" (Maslow, 1971), and, although we do not see here a high degree of emotional intensity, rich imagination, or intellectual thirst for knowledge, it is worth remembering that Eleanor Roosevelt, who had all these traits, also disliked activities that had no purpose.

The other type is characterized by an awareness of inner life quite unlike the typical self-conscious adolescent. This type was called *introspective-emotional*. It is in this type of emotional growth that we see the potential for advanced development as described by Dabrowski's theory. Several characteristics emerged (see Table 30.3). By a striking coincidence, Averill and Nunley's (1992) steps toward an emotionally creative life resemble the characteristics of emotional growth found in gifted adolescents.

Unlike many adolescents who live for the moment, are very peer-conscious, or are much worried about their future, we find in a number of gifted children an early awareness of their personal growth and its numerous possibilities—an eager anticipation and making ready for what is to come. At age 12 one girl wrote, "I dream of being an adult," and similarly at age 14, "I dream about how my life will be when I grow up. I dream lots and lots of ways I could be."

In response to the question about what attracts his attention in books, a boy of 17 expressed an intense inner push for emotional growth: "I want to be moved, changed somehow. I seek change, metamorphosis. I want to grow (not just in relation to books, either)."

Awareness of feelings and emotions gains importance. In reply to the question about who they are, several youngsters described themselves in distinctly emotional terms:

[I am] A person who needs attention and a person that needs to be accepted. He can't be turned away because he gets hurt easily. (Male, age 16)

I am a very misunderstood person. . . . People think that my life is easy because I am talented, but I have a lot of problems of my own just be-

Table 30.3
Parallels in Emotional Growth and Emotional Creative Life

<i>Characteristics of Emotional Growth of Introspective Gifted Adolescents (Piechowski, 1989)</i>	<i>Steps Toward a Creative Emotional Life (Averill & Nunley, 1992)</i>
1. Awareness of growing and changing; awareness of many possible developmental paths	1. Making a commitment to one's possible self
2. Awareness of feelings and conscious attention to them, interest in others and empathy toward others	2. Acquiring knowledge of emotions and how they can be developed
3. Feelings of unreality occasionally present, marking periods of particularly intense emotional growth	
4. Inner dialogue and self-judgment, at times quite severe	4. Setting goals
5. Searching and questioning—problem finding; asking basic, philosophical, existential questions	5. Achieving results
6. Awareness of one's real self	3. Gaining self-awareness

cause of these talents. I often even get cut down for something good that I do. This is very hard to cope with. I am a very sensitive and emotional person. I get angered or saddened very easily. I can also get happy easily. I think I like this part of me. All these emotions somehow make me feel good about myself. . . . I am not a very confident person, though people think I am. (Male, age 16)

I am a person who has feelings. . . . I have friends. I love life. . . . NOTE: I HAVE FEELINGS. (Female, age 12)

The note of insistence on feelings shows at once the frustration when they are ignored by others and also how important they are to these gifted children's self-definition.

Empathy and understanding of others can be quite conscious as for the girl just quoted, who two years later at age 14 said: "I can see myself in other people, I can see things I've done in what other people do. I really understand people's thoughts and actions because I think of times I was in their place." Expressions of understanding and caring for others are frequent in the responses of these youngsters.

Although developmentally adolescence is a time when interest in one's own and others' feelings comes to focus, the articulateness and insight of these gifted youngsters are rather exceptional. The emotional maturity and sensitivity that some youngsters achieve in late adolescence appear in the gifted—those en-

gaged in emotional growth—in early adolescence.

Periods of intense emotional growth can bring on such sudden inner shifts as to produce moments of disequilibrium and estrangement. One feels at odds with the surroundings, as if suddenly alien to what was familiar before. Such feelings of unreality are not necessarily a cause for concern. What calls for concern is the fact that great emotional intensity and sensitivity combined with high intelligence make a youngster acutely aware of the precariousness of human existence and of the precarious condition of our world. Because of this, and because others understand it so little, gifted children can be extremely vulnerable and at risk (Leroux, 1986; Roedell, 1984; Silverman, 1993, 1994).

Feelings of unreality are the natural product of great emotional intensity and of feeling "different." For example, "Sometimes I think I am going insane and I wish I had someone intelligent to talk to" (female, age 16). In the next excerpt the feeling of unreality is combined with emotional experimentation and a shift in a perspective—thinking of parents as strangers: "When I ask myself who I am, sometimes I wonder if I'm really here. Or, I'll look at mom and dad and ask myself, who are these people, and I try to picture them as total strangers" (female, age 15).

To be self-critical is common among the

gifted. To some it spells the danger of developing a negative self-image. However, in each case one must try to distinguish if the self-criticism is a spur toward growth or an obstacle in the person's inner growth.

Here are some examples of how these youngsters monitor themselves. Their sensitive conscience is fitted with a spur to self-correction—the opposite of most adolescents who, paradoxically, can be very critical of everything and everyone and yet be lacking in self-judgment (Elkind, 1984). The following inner dialog was a response to the question, "Do you ever think about your own thinking? Describe."

When I take a stand on something, I later wonder why I did that. I think about how I came to that conclusion. I think about if I was right, according to the norms of society. I think about my friends and other people I know and wonder if I really feel the way I let on, and if I am fooling myself by thinking things I really feel. (Male, age 17)

Issues of right and wrong figure prominently here, in itself not unusual, but the process of sorting them out is already strongly autonomous. He examines the origin of his convictions and asks himself whether they are genuine or perhaps just self-deceptions.

Here is a response to the question "In what manner do you observe and analyze others?" from another 17-year-old youngster.

Critically. I have an unusual ability for finding people's faults and discovering their vulnerabilities. I use this knowledge, too—sometimes even unconsciously. . . .

I am a manipulator, and it sometimes bothers me. I know how to handle friends, family, teachers, etc., which makes things comfortable for me but does sometimes bother my conscience. (Fleetingly, though.)

One might be inclined to wonder whether future development of this boy will lead him to continue to muffle his conscience and become an even more skillful puppeteer pulling the strings in others to his own advantage, or if this awareness will help him to transcend it. In answer to the question about what attracts his attention in a book, he wrote that the char-

acters were important and that he wanted "to be able to understand them and relate to them—to sympathize with them." A person to whom such feelings are important is not likely to ignore them in others nor the impact of his actions on others.

Searching, inquiring, and problem finding are those special abilities that enable one to discover things that need discovering, questions that need to be asked, and problems that have yet to be conceived (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Questioning, self-scrutiny, and the search for truth go together. Gifted youngsters often ask philosophical and existential questions and ask them early (Hollingworth, 1942). Somehow they develop not only a sense of objective truth but of inner truth as well:

Lots of times I wish I wouldn't think so much. It makes me very confused about a lot of stuff in the world. And I always wish I could think up answers instead of just questions. . . . My parents and all my adult friends don't understand. I wish I could talk to somebody who would have the same questions I do, and the answers to them. Maybe instead of somebody intelligent, I need somebody insane. (Female, age 16) (Piechowski, 1989)

In Delisle's (1984) extensive collection of responses from younger children, one can find similar responses about arguing with teachers or persistence in asking questions. But moral evaluations and issues of personal responsibility are more typical of adolescents. Colangelo (1982) found this to be prevalent in moral dilemmas voiced by gifted adolescents.

I think about my morals and what I really think is right and wrong. I often find that how I feel is a contradiction of what society thinks. This makes me wonder if there is something wrong with me. I concentrate on why and how I became this way and if I will always be this way. (Male, age 17)

I live day to day like everyone else but I am continually frustrated with the shallowness of how we live and relate to one another.

Sometimes I hate myself because I am lazy and I feel unable to change. (Female, age 16) (Piechowski, 1989)

We see in these excerpts keen questioning and self-scrutiny. We can recognize the expression of Dabrowskian dynamisms of astonishment (first excerpt), dissatisfaction with oneself (second excerpt), and "positive maladjustment" (in both). These youngsters are gifted not only in terms of their talents and abilities but also in terms of character growth—they sincerely want to become better persons. Their self-knowledge is impressive for this age.

Awareness of one's real self appears early in those engaged in intense emotional growth. Gifted youngsters quickly realize that their self-knowledge, the way they know and understand themselves, differs from the way others see and know them. They thus realize that their real self is hidden from others, and they can even be aware of keeping it hidden.

I'm somebody no one else knows. Some people see one part of me, others see other parts, it's like I'm acting. The real me is the one inside me. My real feelings, that I understand but can't explain. (Female, age 14)

The development of self-awareness and self-understanding of these gifted youngsters traces the general direction of most adolescents. What is distinctive in the gifted is an acceleration of development and a greater intensity of existential questioning. Importantly, they value their emotional side. These young people not only are aware of their moods, feelings, and emotions, but they also realize that the emotional sphere is an essential part of their selves.

Finale: Off to a Good Start— the Budding Cartography of Intrapersonal Intelligence

We are just beginning to pull together insights and observations from different sources into a coherent picture relating emotional development, emotional giftedness, and intrapersonal intelligence. Three theories are the principal sources for this synthesis: Dabrowski's theory

of emotional development, Bandura's social cognitive theory of thought and action, and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. These three theories have very different origins.

Dabrowski's theory grew out of his desire to map out the types of personality development from the most emotionally limited and deficient to those most advanced and altruistic, motivated by a powerful pull toward the ideal of becoming a better human being, perhaps even a Mother Teresa or an Albert Schweitzer. Dabrowski's theory encompasses both the emotional and moral aspects of personality development.

Bandura's theory grew out of his interest to delineate the social foundations of how we think and act. Bandura's theory describes a self-system and its main moving gears—that is, self-evaluation processes.

Gardner developed his theory out of curiosity about how children develop their abilities to draw, sing, think metaphorically, and use symbols, and out of his urge to find an alternative to the psychometric definition of human abilities. This he found in the functions and specializations of the brain that define the core skills of distinct talent domains, or intelligences, and which are particularly valued in one culture or another.

I have attempted to present an expanded view of the development of intrapersonal intelligence. In doing so a number of observations, concepts, and developmental processes have been brought head to head:

1. The concept of developmental potential—the overexcitabilities that impart characteristic intensity, sensitivity, and richness of inner life but also create problems of experiential overload and disequilibrium
2. Moral sensitivity and moral emotions in children and adults
3. Positive maladjustment that creates an inner imperative to correct social wrongs
4. Self-evaluative processes that move from self-judgment to self-correction in the emotional and moral sphere
5. Introspective emotional growth that encompasses all of the above
6. Inner transformation, which is the essence

of emotional growth on the path toward a transcendent self

7. Inter- and intrapersonal intelligences

It is good and right that flowerings so diverse can be brought together into one luxuriant landscape. The blank areas stretching in the initial outline of intrapersonal intelligence become filled with specific emotional, evaluative, corrective, and creative processes.

Intrapersonal development, the true knowledge of self, is thus not a domain apart, the way musical or spatial intelligence can be, but in the deepest and ineffable sense the development of a person as a whole being. Although Gardner (1983, p. 274) realized that perhaps a knowledge of self is a "higher level, more integrated form of intelligence, . . . one that ultimately comes to control and to regulate more 'primary orders' of intelligence" he did not develop the idea further. The elaboration presented here complements Gardner's original thought by putting advanced development and emotional giftedness on the map of intrapersonal intelligence.

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Handbook of Gifted Education



Second Edition

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1997/1991

Allyn and Bacon
Boston London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore