Emotional Giftedness: The Measure of Intrapersonal Intelligence

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n 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 (over-excitabilities), self-evaluative processes, and inner transformation. A further 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, Alvin, & McDonell, 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.

Dabrowa (1967, 1972) studied the mental health of intellectually and artistically gifted youths. Recognizing that creative individuals tend to live more intensely, Dabrowa took the intensity of their emotions, their sensitivity and mind's extremities 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 Dabrowa the seemingly typical signs of morbidity and neurosis spelled genuine potential for advanced development. Dabrowa's (1967) 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 intense inner turmoil as 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 individuals find themselves in a climate of misunderstanding and alienation, without emotional support.

Dabrowa's concept of developmental potential includes some importance, specific abilities, and intelligence, plus five primary components of psychic life: psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginative, and emotional overexcitabilities (see Table 30.1). To varying degrees, these five dimensions take their power (Piecuchowski, 1979, 1986). They may be thought of as modes of experiencing or channels through which flow the colors, textures, insights, visions, currents, and energies of experience. These channels can be wide open, narrow, or barely present. Dabrowa called them "forms of psychic overexcitability" to emphasize the intensification of felt experience much beyond the ordinary.

Overexcitabilities can relate to the individual's psychological development, and their strength can be taken as a measure of developmental potential. They are normally observed in children, and they stand out loud and clear in adult persons. Kurcinka (1991) had the faculty of calling them spirited—children who are more intense, sensitive, perceptive, persistent, energetic, and so forth. It is unfortunate that the stronger these overexcitabilities are, the less peers and teachers welcome them, unless they, too, are gifted. Children experiencing 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 that something wrong with them. Sometimes they learn to disguise their intensity, sometimes they seek refuge in overexcitability, sometimes tectonic worlds of their own invention, sometimes they try to "normalize" it and, as a result, suffer depression and 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 oversensitivity comes from the child's sensitivity and need for his or her own order of things to be preserved. That children need order and predictability routines is well known. To a sensitive child, an intense child who may be disoriented, 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, 1979; Piechowski, 1979; Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985; Piechowski, Silverman, & Falk, 1985). Positive feelings take the form of being "flooded by unexpected waves of feeling," "incredibly alive—every cell, muscles, 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 shut out all the same time. The beauty of the music or nature can move a person to tears. Pain can have a different aspect: "Even the greatest pain I have felt has been beautiful." 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.

Intrigued 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

Psychomotor

Surplus of energy:
- Rapid speech, marked exciton, intense physical activity (e.g., fast games and sports), pressure for action (e.g., organizing), marked competitiveness

Psychomotor expression of emotional tension:
- Compulsive talking and chattering, impulsive actions, nervous habits (tics, nail biting), workaholism, setting out

Sensual

Enhanced sensory and aesthetic pleasure:
- Seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, hearing, and sex; delight in beautiful objects, sounds of words, music, form, color, balance

Sensory expression of emotional tension:
- Overeating, sexual overindulgence, buying sprees, wanting to be in the limelight

Intellectual

Intensified activity of the mind:
- Curiosity, concentration, capacity for sustained intellectual effort, avid reading; keen observation, detailed visual recall, detailed planning

Pensive for probing questions and problem solving:
- Search for truth and understanding; forming new concepts; tenacity in problem solving

Reflective thought:
- 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)

Imaginational

Free play of the imagination:
- Frequent use of image and metaphor, facility for invention and fantasy, facility for detailed visualization, poetic and dramatic perception, anomic and magical thinking

Capacity for living in a world of fantasy:
- Predilection for magic and fairy tales, creation of private worlds, imaginary companions; dramatization

Spontaneous imagery as an expression of emotional tension:
- Anomie imagery, mixing truth and fiction, elaborate dreams, illusions

Low tolerance of boredom

Emotional

Feelings and emotions intensified:
- Positive feelings, negative feelings, extremes of emotion, complex emotions and feelings, identification with others' feelings, awareness of a whole range of feelings

Strong somatic expressions:
- Tense stomach, sinking heart, blushing, flushing, pounding heart, sweaty palms

Strong affective expressions:
- Inhibition (timidity, shyness); enthusiasm, ecstasy, euphoria, pride; strong affective memory; shame; feelings of inferiority, fears and anxieties, feelings of guilt, concern with death, depressive and suicidal moods

Table 30.1 (Continued)

Intercourse. 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 (Larson & Danziger, 1987).

Emotional sensitivity is another matter. Emotionally insensitive 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 of 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 Roeppe (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-
impressed everyone. His brother, a year younger and also highly gifted, was, by contrast, considered "average." His great imagination and unusual creativity attracted little 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 the zoo-keepers, 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 focused 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, 1995a, 1995b; 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 the self in development. By multi-level, 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 internalized 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 cannot 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 gift is described as an "extremely shy" person endowed with rich imagination, and engaged in vigilant intellectual and spiritual inquiry. In other words, his experiential channels—overexclusivities—were widely open.

In the life of Eleanor Roosevelt we get a close look at the inner workings of emotional giftedness per excellence. (Piekloewski, 1990; Piekloewski & 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 slightly timid, 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 serve today's society? 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 directions 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 Piekloewski (1991) and Grant (1988) described persons who were taught, as it were, by an "inner voice"; their spiritual growth was guided almost entirely from within.

Intraperonnel growth and transformation, as we are beginning to discover, can follow different paths. The moral exemplars of Colby and Damon (1992) appear to tread the path of increasing moral certainty; those studied by others show growth through inner struggle and self-choosing for transformation (Dabrowski, 1967; Nixon, 1994; Piekloewski, 1990, 1992, 1993). Nevertheless, moral exemplars are not entirely free from inner conflict generated during their quest for un questioned 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 refused to fight back and strike back in size and strength, Gandhi's submission to his inner voice, Eleanor Roosevelt's own self-knowledge of self and her life of service, are outstanding examples of emotional-experiential and intrapersonal intelligence in its full sense. They are strongly empathic, introspective, self-
Clark (1983, p. 126) noted that an intense sense of justice and unerring 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 so blatantly wrong and unfair in the world. Surprisingly, 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. Specifically, they recommend 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 vegetarians 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, and considering all forms of violence—including self-defense—morally wrong, writing letters to the President to try to end real War, and writing poems of an anguish at the cruelty and murder in the world. By far the one fact that stands out is 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 Huling-Hall. The most plain, unadorned facts of the case come 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.

acavalry, 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, 1967; Dabrowski & Pichowski, 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 conclusions exist (Nelson, 1988; Pichowski, 1975, 1997.)

Emotional giftedness grows out of emotional overexcitability when there is a will to change and enough help and to help others, whether this be in a material, emotionally, or in the realization of their potential. Naturally, intellectual and imaginative 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 theme of original sin is a quest about the point. It 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.

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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. 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, discontent, alienation).

**Video meliora proboque deteriora sequor**—Marcus Tullius Cicero

**Level II: Unleveled 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. They lack what they call "inner order." They are not self-directed individuals. Inner conflicts are horizontal, a contest between equal, competing values.

**A reed shaken in the wind**—Matthew, XL, 7

**Level I: Primary Integration**
Ego-centrism 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-scrutiny is not encountered here. What nothing within himself nor without. His ambition, 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).*

"I regard the better but follow the worse."

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Emotional Growth of Gifted Children and Adolescents

In a two-year follow-up study conducted in collaboration with Nicholas Dolancho, 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 evoke in them strong positive feelings, what stimulate their mind, what is their conception of self, and so on. The items were designed to tap the five overexcellencies 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-autistic because it closely fits with the type of character development described by Peck and Havigston (1960). For example, a female high school student gave this reply, prompted by the question 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 needs to be cultured and who wants 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. 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 rational 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 "door" (Maslow, 1971), and, although we do not see here a high degree of emotional intensity, rich imagination, or intellectual thrust 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 introspектив-emotional. Emotional growth that we see the potential for advanced development as described by Dabrowski's theory. Several characteristics emerged (see Table 30.1). By a striking coincidence, Avverill 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 personality growth and its numerous possibilities—an eager anticipation and making ready for what is to come. At age 12 one girl wrote, "I dream about 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 of 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

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<tr>
<td>1. Awareness of growing and changing; awareness of many possible developmental paths</td>
<td>1. Making a commitment to one's possible self</td>
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<td>2. Awareness of feelings and conscious attention to them, interest in others and empathy toward others</td>
<td>2. Acquiring knowledge of emotions and how they can be developed</td>
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<td>3. Feelings of unreality occasionally present, marking periods of particularly intense emotional growth</td>
<td>3. Gaining self-awareness</td>
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<td>4. Inner dialogue and self-judgment, at times quite severe</td>
<td>4. Setting goals</td>
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<td>5. Searching and questioning—problem finding; asking basic, philosophical, existential questions</td>
<td>5. Achieving results</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Awareness of one's real self</td>
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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 foolish myself by thinking things I really feel. (Male, age 17)

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Issues of right and wrong figure prominently here, in itself not unusual, but the process of sorting them out is already strongly autonomous. From the origin of his consciousness, the child sees himself as capable of autonomous action, as the creator of the situation, 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 discussing their vulnerabilities. I use this knowledge, too—sometimes even unscrupulously. 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 not always bother my conscience. (Holding, age 16)

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 his awareness will help him to transcend it. In answer to the question about what attracts his attention in a book, he wrote that the characters 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-reflective, 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 me. I wish I could talk to somebody who would have the same questions I do, and the answers to them. Maybe instead of being where I am, I would have somebody inside. (Female, age 16) (Piaget, 1968)

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 to live like everyone else but I am continuously 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) (Piaget, 1968)

To be self-critical is common among the gifted. It smells 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 self-consciousness is fitted with a spur to self-correction—the opposite of the most adolescents who, paradoxically, can be very critical of everything and yet become in self-judgment (Elkind, 1984). The following gifted youngster 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.
We see in these excerpts keen questioning and self-awareness. We can recognize the expression of Dabrowian dynamics 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 side of me. Yes, you're right. 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 accelerated 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.

Finali: 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 developmental processes to individual giftedness and other aspects of intrapersonal intelligence. Three theories are the principal sources for this synthesis: Dabrowa'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.

Dabrowa's theory grew out of his desire to map 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. Dabrowa'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 in which one can control their own 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 specialties 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 overestimations that impart characteristic traits, interests, and inclinations of inner life but also create problems of experiential overload and disequilibration

2. Self-awareness and self-regulation of emotions in children and adults

3. Positive maladjustment that creates an inner imperative to correct social wrongs

4. Self-evaluation processes that move from self-judgment to self-evaluation in the emotional and moral sphere

5. Introjective 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

REFERENCES


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