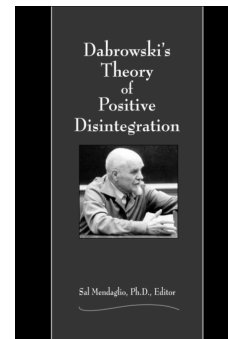
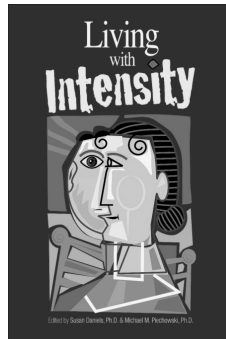


Adult Gifted: You Don't Just Outgrow It!

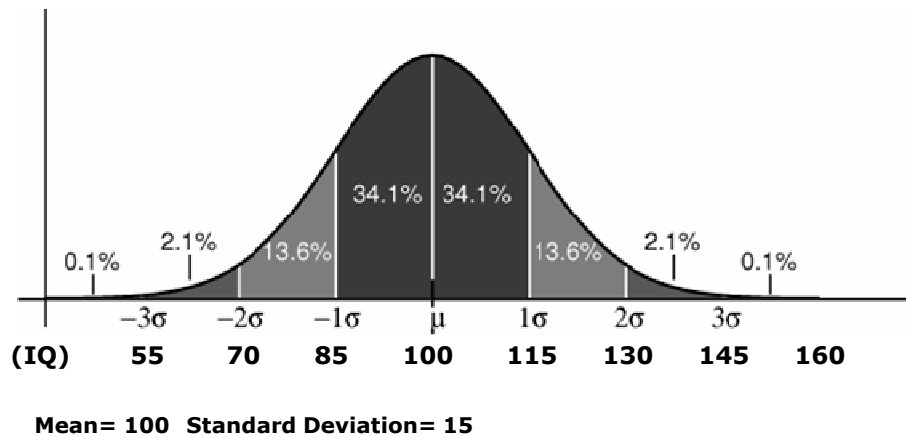
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“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Socrates (469 BC – 399 BC) in Plato, *Dialogues, Apology*

Historically, the intellectual and academic achievements of gifted children have been emphasized, with less emphasis on adults.



Average IQ Scores of Selected Groups

- IQ of 130 – Research scientists, professors, senior executives
- IQ of 120 – Persons graduating from college
- IQ of 110 – Persons graduating from high school
- IQ of 100 – Average of total populations
- IQ of 70 – Mildly mentally retarded
- IQ of 55 – Moderately mentally retarded

Presidential Scholars Research

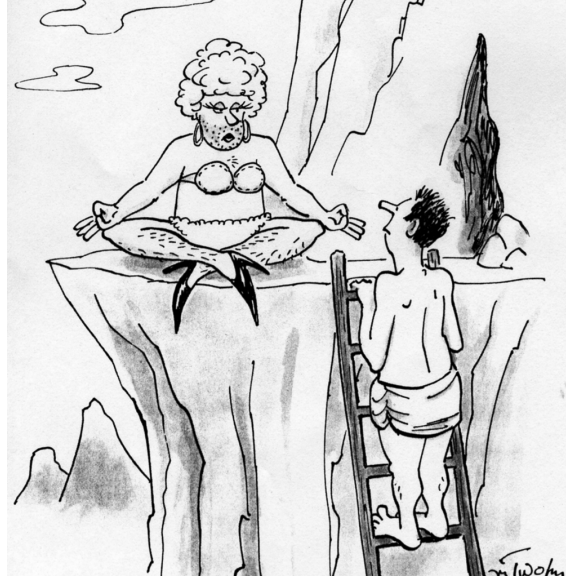
Simpson & Kaufmann, F. (1981). *Journal of Career Education*, 38-45

- **IQ Ten+ year follow-up study of 1964-1968 Presidential Scholars**
- **322 Presidential Scholars; 53% male, 47% female; all areas of U.S.**
- **All in top one-half of 1 percent of national merit Scholars**
- **97% were college graduates; 61% had graduate degrees**
- **55% changed majors; 33% changed majors two or more times**
- **29% doubted they had made the correct career decision**
- **23% had received special awards since graduating (vs. 89% awards in college)**
- **67% reported no participation in organized activities ("lack of time; no interest")**



Well, I'm 21. I guess I'm through with all my stages.

The first step toward enlightenment is disillusionment



Stages of Moral Development

(Adapted from Kohlberg, 1964)

Stage 1 - (Selfish Obedience)	Rules followed to avoid punishment; obedience and concern for physical consequences
Stage 2 - (Selfish Obedience)	Doing things for others because it will result in others doing things in return; concern for reward, equal sharing, and benefit to self

Stages of Moral Development

(Adapted from Kohlberg, 1964)

Stage 3 - (Conforming to Traditions)	Whatever pleases the majority is considered morally right; other viewpoints can be seen; conformity is prized; desire to do things for others
Stage 4 - (Conforming to Traditions)	Group authority, law, duty and rules of society are prized; concern for maintaining social order for its own sake; social disapproval avoided; emphasis on the inherent “rightness” of rules and

Stages of Moral Development

(Adapted from Kohlberg, 1964)

Stage 5 - (Beyond Conformity)	Internal commitment to principles of personal conscience; concern with individual rights within standards set by consensus; emphasis on fair procedures for reaching consensus and for evaluating principles and rules
Stage 6 - (Beyond Conformity)	Concern with universal ethical principles and abstract morality affecting all beings regardless of conventional views;

ADULT LIFE STAGES

(adapted from Erikson (1959), Levinson (1986) and Sheehy (1995, 2006))

Age 18-24	“Pulling up Roots”	Breaking away from home
Age 25 – 35	“Trying 20s”	Establishing self as an adult; career choices; coming to grips with marriage, children, society

ADULT LIFE STAGES

(adapted from Erikson (1959), Levinson (1986) and Sheehy (1995, 2006))

Age 35 - 45	Deadline decade	“Authenticity crisis,” halfway point of life; re-evaluation of self and relationships; choices about pushing harder vs. withdrawing vs. change

ADULT LIFE STAGES

(adapted from Erikson (1959), Levinson (1986) and Sheehy (1995, 2006))

Age 45 - 55	Renewal or resignation	Further redefinition o priorities; relationships are renewed or changed; roles change; children leave home; parents age or die; physical changes of self; further realization of own mortality

ADULT LIFE STAGES

(adapted from Erikson (1959), Levinson (1986) and Sheehy (1995, 2006))

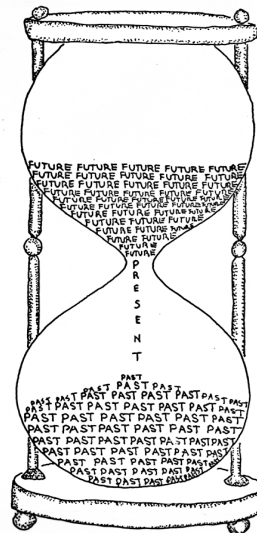
Age 55 +	Regeneration	Acceptance/rebellion at prospect of retirement; friends/mentors die; evaluation of life's work; new relationship with family; physical changes; self- acceptance or rejection

SOME MYTHS ABOUT BRIGHT ADULTS

- Bright adults are aware of their intelligence, and know how it impacts their lives.
- Their intelligence gives them everything they really need to succeed.
- Their brightness is always prized by their families.
- Their intellectual abilities are always an asset with their coworkers and supervisors
- They should succeed in all areas of life they enter.
- They have personal, family, and social lives that are more stable and satisfying.
- They naturally enjoy being leaders and assuming extra responsibility for others.

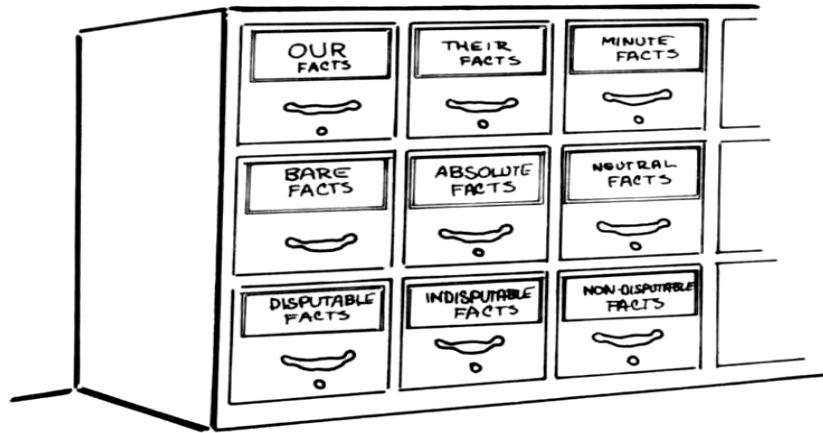
TYPICAL PROBLEM ISSUES FOR BRIGHT ADULTS

- Keen awareness and impatience with time and space limitations; frustration with multi-potentiality



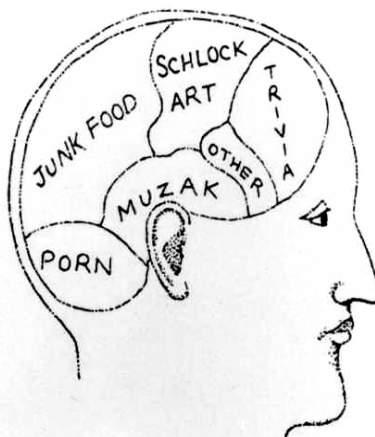
TYPICAL PROBLEM ISSUES FOR BRIGHT ADULTS

- Dissatisfaction with standards of achievement; always looking to improve



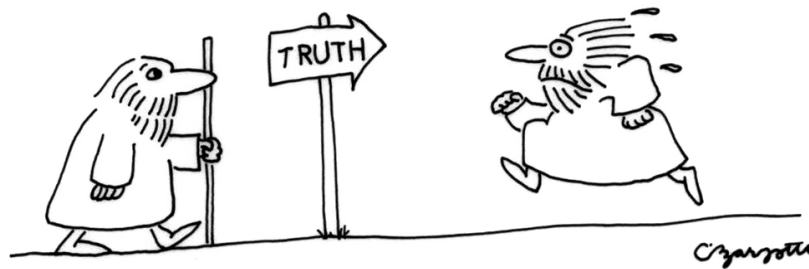
TYPICAL PROBLEM ISSUES FOR BRIGHT ADULTS

- Dissatisfaction with others and the world around them



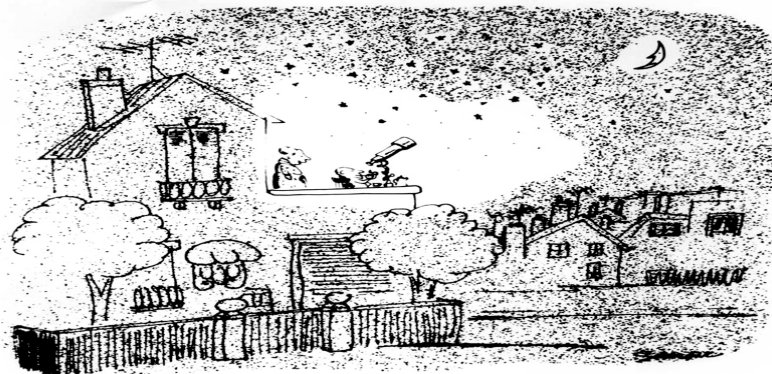
TYPICAL PROBLEM ISSUES FOR BRIGHT ADULTS

- Searching for personal meaning



TYPICAL PROBLEM ISSUES FOR BRIGHT ADULTS

- Relations with others



Think for a moment, Armand. If there really are beings endowed with a superior intelligence why would they want to send signals to you?"

WHERE PROBLEM ISSUES OCCUR

- **Marital expectations and communications**
- **Expectations and relationships with children**
- **Dissatisfaction with co-workers**
- **Discontent with self**

**Positive Disintegration Is Likely
to Result, with Existential
Depression as a Main Component**

Bright ≠ Successful, Happy, Content
Strengths Possible Problems

- Able to see potential; has high expectancies of self and others; thinks critically
- Acquires and retains information quickly
- Need for success and recognition; intolerant of others; may seek excessively high standards; ahead of the times
- Impatient with slowness of others; may be seen as “know it all”

Bright ≠ Successful, Happy, Content
Strengths Possible Problems

- Large store of information in advanced areas; diverse interests and abilities; multi-talented
- Intense and intrinsically motivated; high energy level; persistent, goal-directed behavior
- Career decision problems; frustrated over lack of time; feeling different from others; existential aloneness; may be seen by others as always in control
- “Type A” personality; difficulty relaxing; resists interruptions; may neglect others during periods of focused interests; stubbornness

Bright ≠ Successful, Happy, Content

Strengths	Possible Problems
------------------	--------------------------

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Independent and self-reliant; creative and inventive; likes new ways of doing things | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Difficulty in delegating and trusting others' judgment; rejects what is already known; disrupts customs or plans of others |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Seeks consistency and meaning in value systems and behaviors of self and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Overly self-critical, perhaps depressed or cynical about others; sometimes bossy or domineering |

Bright ≠ Successful, Happy, Content

Strengths	Possible Problems
------------------	--------------------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Sensitive to others; desires intense emotional relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Oversensitive to peer criticism; intense mentor relationships result in keen disappointment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Focuses on cause-effect relations; insists on supporting evidence and proof | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Difficulty with non-logical human aspects, such as feelings, traditions, or matters to be taken "on faith" |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Strong sense of humor; able to laugh at self | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Humor may not be understood by others; may focus on absurdities of situations; humor may be used to attack others or hold them at a distance |

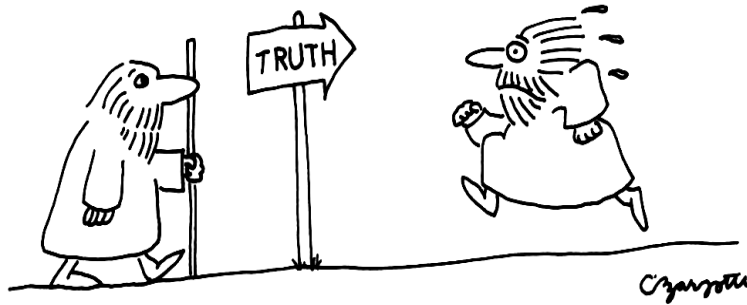
CONFLICTS FOR BRIGHT ADULTS

- **Acceptance of others vs. disappointment and cynicism**
- **Acceptance of self vs. excessive self-criticism and depression**
- **Necessity of feelings vs. the efficiency of logic and rational approaches**
- **Finding personal meaning vs. tangible achievements**

Tasks for Bright Adults

- **Know yourself**
- **Accept yourself**
- **Find sources to nurture yourself**

**The Truth Is —
We Often Shy Away from Examining
Ourselves and Our Lives**



Johari's Window

(Luft & Ingham, 1955)

	Known to Self	Unknown to Self
Known to Others	A	B Decrease our "blind spot" through feedback from others
Unknown to Others	C Decrease this cell through self-disclosure	D Decrease this cell through introspection

Basic Coping Styles

(Dr. Karen Horney)

- **Moving Toward** – accepts society's traditions; conforms; works the system to become successful
- **Moving Away From** – rejects traditional society via withdrawal; non-traditional; arcane
- **Moving Against** – rebelliously rejects society; openly non-conforming; angry

An Advanced Coping Style

- **Self-Actualization** - rising above the basic three styles, yet integrating all three.
 - Life focus is on principles and values, rather than people
 - Little personal narcissism or egotism
 - May involve “positive disintegration”
 - May make others very uncomfortable

_____ Personal Coat of Arms

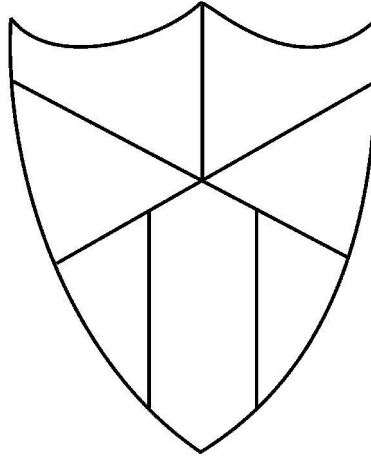


Figure 1. Personal Coat of Arms

Your Personal Coat of Arms

- **Each of us has a shield to protect us and to represent our values**
- **Title your shield by putting your name on the top of the page**
- **In each section of your shield, put the following:**

Your Personal Coat of Arms (continued)

- Think of one that describes you, and draw a small picture to represent that word
- Make a drawing to represent the social or political cause that you have done the most for during your lifetime
- List two things you have been struggling to become better at.
- Symbolize or write a major fantasy of what you yearn to do, or would do, if you had no restrictions.
- Select three words by which you want people to describe you, and write (or symbolize) them.
- Make a drawing to represent what caused the greatest change in your way of living.
- Symbolize the most important person in your life.

Issue # 1 – Roles and Traditions

- How much of our identity and self-worth comes from the roles we play?
- Does my role define me, or do I define the role?
- Are my traditions and roles confining rituals, or do they give me meaningful substance?
- What would I be like without my roles? What value would I have?
- At some point, all of our roles will be stripped from us.
- A solid sense of self cannot be built on roles.
- There are three existential facts:
 - We are basically alone
 - We will die
 - We need others

ROLE-STRIPPING

- **Identify the five most central roles in your life (mother, son, teacher, civic leader, etc.)**
- **Rank these roles, with "1" being the most central to your life's activities**
- **Take "5" and throw it away**
- **Continue discarding roles until only one role is left**
- **Now discard that role. What of you is left?**

1 - Roles - What to take home; behaviors to try

- **Consider how much your roles define you, versus how much you define your roles?**
- **Reflect on what you would be like without my roles. What value would you have**
- **What would others be like without their roles? What value would they have?**
- **Are your traditions and roles confining rituals, or do they really give you meaningful substance?**
- **Ask family and co-workers how they perceive your major roles. Their ideas may be different!**
- **Temporarily take "time out" from each of your roles to enrich or enhance other roles**
- **Invent a new tradition for yourself or your family.**

Issue # 2 – Interpersonal Relationships

- **Do you have at least one person with whom you can be accepted without your roles?**
- **Are your relationships with others primarily authentic, or mostly roles?**
- **Do you really need to be in control of others so much of the time?**
- **Does your logic interfere with your ability to give and receive affection?**

2 – Relationships - What to take home; behaviors to try

- **Set aside 5 to 15 minutes special time each day to let someone else be in control**
- **As an exercise, convey and receive affection non-verbally**
- **Identify the “imperfections” in each of your relationships. How would your relationships change if *you* stopped trying to change these imperfections?**

Issue # 3 – Self Management

- **Can you accept yourself as valuable separate from your roles and separate from others' evaluations of you?**
- **Can you become more aware of your self-talk?**
- **Can you manage your self-talk?**
- **Can you allow yourself to become aware of yourself, even when it does not fit with your roles. Can you allow yourself to explore?**

3 – Self-Management – What to take home; behaviors to try

- **Meditate for 5 to 15 minutes per day**
- **Measure the amount of negative self-talk as compared with the amount of positive self-talk**
- **Minimize your self-control in selected situations**
- **Be aware of "HALT" and its relationship to depression and cynicism. ("When we are tired, we are attacked by ideas we conquered long ago." - Nietzsche)**

Issue # 4 – Life Meaning

- **The people who need meaning the most are usually so busy achieving that they have no time to search for it.**
- **Meaning comes from authentic relations with others. Are we just playing roles, or are our relationships real?**
- **Can you conclude that your life has purpose and meaning?**
- **Have you developed values and beliefs that go beyond your roles?**
- **What if you could start over? What would you do differently?**
- **Can you trust that there is some unity or harmony in life?**

4 Life Meaning – What to take home; behaviors to try

- **What meaning do you give your life? Ultimately, you have to give your own life meaning.**
- **Write a “last lecture” – a speech you would give if you knew you would die tomorrow. What have you learned about the meaning of life that you can share with others.**
- **Locate the five stories, poems, music, and/or works of art that have had the most meaning for you. Share them with a friend or a family member. How have they helped you find meaning?**
- **Describe your greatest accomplishment. Does it relate to the goals you set for yourself? To your purpose in life?**
- **Remember that your ideas may not be valued or recognized for quite some time**

**“The reasonable man adapts to the world
around him. The unreasonable man
expects the world to adapt itself to him.
Therefore, all progress is made by
unreasonable men.”**

George Bernard Shaw

Suggested Readings

Daniels, S. & Piechowski, M. M. (Eds.) (2009). *Living with intensity: Understanding the sensitivity, excitability, and emotional development of gifted children, adolescents, and adults.* Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Goleman, D. (1980). 1,528 little geniuses and how they grew. *Psychology Today*, 28 – 53.

Jacobsen, M.E. (2000). *The gifted adult: A revolutionary guide for liberating everyday genius.* New York: Ballantine

Levinson, D.J. (19867). A conception of adult development. *American Psychologist*, 3 – 13.

Mendaglio, S. (Ed.) (2008). *Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration.* Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Streznewski, M.K. (1999). *Gifted grownups: The mixed blessings of extraordinary potential.* New York: Wiley.

Valliant, G.E. (1977). How the best and brightest came of age. *Psychology Today*, 34-41, 107-110.

Yalom, I.D., (1980). *Existential psychotherapy.* New York: Basic books.

INVENTION AND PRODUCTIVITY

(From Inventors USA Ltd., Worcester, MA, June ,1983)

- **Time interval between when a product was conceived and when it was produced for the public:**
- **Zipper.....30 years**
- **Heart pacemaker.....32 years**
- **Fluorescent lighting.....33 years**
- **Radar.....35 years**
- **Helicopter.....37 years**
- **Silicone.....38 years**
- **Nuclear energy.....46 years**
- **Photography.....56 years**
- **Television.....63 years**