

Gift Rap Newsletter

A Division of DiscoverTeenergy.com

December 2010 Volume 10 Edition 12

High-Octane Enrichment for Gifted Children

(by O.S.)

All children's lives should be enriched. Gifted ones especially.

1. Children need adults to set the example of engaging, interacting, wondering, noticing, delighting and asking questions about life and learning with passion and intensity - attitude and energy. Children copy this behavior as they are reassured that it is okay to do the same thing. If parents set the example, then curiosity is strengthened. Everything new, inviting, scary and/or daunting to young children can be the source of positive interaction if parents model positive interactive behavior.

2. Interactions with the environment should be multi-sensory. Help children to use all five senses when exploring, investigating, enjoying something. Be careful of sensory overload, especially with very young children. Do sensory exploration slowly and consciously using one of the senses at a time. Not all the senses have to be used each time, e.g., a walk in the woods by touching, smelling, listening, examining closely.

3. Encourage interaction with adults in groups as all are talking and sharing learning and wisdom. Many people remember sitting in on adult conversations when they were little

and learning about life. Let children in on the wisdom of the ages—all ages.

4. Have children explain what they are doing when playing and value what they say and do. Play is the work of children, so value their "work." By listening to them describe or express confusion, it gives them a chance to think out loud. How many times have you figured something out only after you've said it out loud.

5. Expose children to a great variety of experiences - festivals, presentations, parks, concerts, people, specialty shops, etc. They may not remember the details but what they do take in does add up and will be the food for future creative thinking.

6. Provide the raw materials for active, creative play that is under the full control of the child. Our own children spent countless hours outdoors playing with leaves, mud, seeds, bark, grass, insects, etc. They made their pies, works of art, collections, and creative foods for fictional animals. Adding a tree house and large boxes and sheets of cardboard added to their imaginative play. A nearby ravine and meadow provided exploration and play with nature.

7. Choose games and toys carefully and look for "open-endedness" - endless ways the child can use the same thing, e.g., Scrabble for Chil-

dren encourages vocabulary development and building with tiles. A Mechano Set, decks of round and rectangular cards have endless games possibilities. A coloring book is not open-ended because of the limits and restrictions of staying inside the lines. A blank sketch pad along with a challenge to draw and color new, never-before-seen animals or new plants in nature can be more enriching.

8. Show children how to look at the ordinary in an unordinary way. Instill a sense of awe and wonder. Look for the hidden in everything. Find something that causes the child to see things differently, e.g., looking at a bike shows that it has colors and parts but what about the incredible relationships between the parts. Try drawing it realistically.

Enrichment is fun too!!

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Awesome Websites

Tech Tools for Presentations/Workshops (Wow ! Add polls, calendars, blogs, videos, and more)

<http://newtoolsworkshop.wikispaces.com/>

Everything About Clocks and Watches (great reference site) <http://www.cuckooclockdoctor.com/Links.html>

Build a Model Solar System (great idea for an Xmas present) http://www.build-solar-system.com/usa/index_usa.html

What the Internet Will Look Like in 2020 (predictions) http://www.intac.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Internet_In_2010.jpg

Best Children's Magazines

<http://www.modernmom.com/article-4938-the-best-childrens-magazines/>

Uncommon Gift Ideas (creative, all occasions)

<http://www.uncommongoods.com/>

Activities of the Month (by topic, month, alphabetically, interest)

Visit: <http://www.DiscoverTeenergy.com> "Activities Database"

News and Views

Year-End Examination of the Heart

(by O.S.)

Each year end, this list is presented to our readers. It gives all an opportunity to reflect on the year past. It is important to go on another inner journey of examination. Realize your humanity and humanness in all you do.

Here are some suggested introspective questions:

How were my aims, goals and objectives this year. What will they be for next year?
Who am I growing to be?
What are my strengths and weaknesses that I need to work on? Be honest.
What am I doing to still be worthy of my life?
How am I loved and show love in return?
How do I show gratitude for all I have?
How do I show respect for the rights and dignity of others and for all life?
When do I show awe and wonder at the forces of the universe?
When do I show humility and realize that I am not a god?
How am I dependent on others in the world? How do I reciprocate and do for others?
How do I show a zest, zeal and passion for living a good life?
How do I show charity toward others and love them as I love myself?
How do I help, volunteer, show mercy, reach out to show that I am a participant and not a spectator in life?

Buddhist Examination of Conscience

<http://www.hackwriters.com/Nirvana.htm>

Examination of Conscience based on 10 Commandments

<http://www.theworkofgod.org/library/examine.htm>

Islamic Examination of Conscience

<http://www.islaam.net/main/display.php?id=649&category=>

Ethicability (how to decide what is right and then do it)

<https://www.ethicabilitytest.org/prod/user/welcome.php>

Readers: What else would you like to add to the list? Send us your ideas.

Thinking Dynamics

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Original Photo Art



Blessings to all of you. Happy New Year!
Thanks for being a GR reader!

Trivia

- Black Peter is Santa's helper in the Netherlands. He judges which children were bad during the year and leaves a bundle of sticks or salt in their shoes instead of candy if they have been bad.

- "Wassail" comes from the Old Norse "ves heill"--to be of good health. This evolved into the tradition of visiting neighbors on Christmas Eve and drinking to their health.

- According to a 1995 survey, 7 out of 10 British dogs get Christmas gifts from their doting owners.

- According to the National Christmas Tree Association, Americans buy 37.1 million real Christmas trees each year.

- After "A Christmas Carol," Charles Dickens wrote several other Christmas stories, one each year, but none was as successful as the original.

Computer Tip

When you create a textbox and put writing in it, you often want to move it, but it is so very slow and time consuming. Try this. Highlight the text box (little circles in corners), hold down the "Shift" key and then use the arrows to move the box. Watch how it speeds right up. Release "Shift" and the box moves slowly again.

When finished moving the box and you want to get back into the document quickly, save that second or two going to the mouse and press the "Ctrl" key and then touch any of the arrow keys.

Now is the time to try this great time saving tip.

Nibbling vs. Eating "3 Squares"

(from an article by Art Carey, Philadelphia Inquirer)

Bob Kay, a retired and single psychiatrist, had it with making big meals. Instead, he started noshing and grazing throughout the day. He eats up to 15-20 times a day without any particular diet or regimen and feels great.

His way of eating is documented in The New England Journal of Medicine and the study done on him showed that nibbling reduced his cholesterol, discouraged overeating large meals, and he lost over 25 pounds. He is now a trim 152 which he maintains with regular exercise. His blood pressure went down and his angina attacks are reduced in frequency.

His meals include: breakfast-coffee, orange juice, egg, 11 AM-lettuce, wheat germ with honey mustard sauce, 2 PM- cooked fish, broccoli and an egg, 5 PM-slice of turkey ham, baked potato, 8-10 PM- snacks every 15 minutes: hummus, broccoli, dried fruits, seeds, nuts, yogurt, ice cream. Other foods are quite normal. Twice a week he has a full meal at a restaurant buffet. He avoids animal fats. Hey, it works. Try it?

Good Reads

The Year of Fog by Michelle Richmond. This horror story is about a young girl who disappears and her mother searches for her fruitlessly. When she moves to another country, she discovers the astonishing reason for the disappearance.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie. This is Rushdie's first children's adventure book.

Luka and the Fire of Life by Salman Rushdie. Magic, fantasy and an adventurous quest for a young boy.

Mudlarks (by O.S.)

The term "Mudlark" comes from the 18thC and was a slang word for "pig." Today, Mudlarks are not animals but a valued part of urban archaeology.

Many people have a hidden desire to go out and find hidden treasure. However, where does one go and what are the chances of finding anything? After reading this article, you may want to renew your dreams of doing this. Imagine taking the family out to a special site, digging and finding all kinds of interesting artifacts from the past.

The first thing is find out where in your city or out in the country people used to bury their garbage, etc. My uncle, for instance, owned a farm and they used to dump all their stuff in a big pit at the end of one of their fields. It is easy to find in records the sites in any city that people used as dumps, and collection points.

Over time, many creeks and rivers that get filled in often with garbage, covered with soil and after settling for many years, built upon. You may not even realize that your home has been built on a former dump site!! City archives often have early maps of your area that indicate landfill sites.

Start by digging in your the back yard or in empty fields (if allowed only). Go down fairly deeply, not just below the surface. I once found a 1950's Pepsi bottle left by our house builders about 2 feet down in dirt beside a window. Dig carefully so the artifacts aren't damaged.

If you were "lucky" enough to discover that your school was built on a landfill site, organize expeditions to dig up the past—with permission of the school and district authorities of course.

If you are lucky enough to live in London, England, Mudlarks know that the shores of the Thames river have changed because the city dumped garbage into it for centuries. There are tons of artifacts and goodies to be discovered even close to the surface.

Check out this AMAZING site and be astonished by the INCREDIBLE stuff that people threw away over time.

<http://www.thamesandfield.co.uk/>

Tell Us About It: Let GR know what you find!

Gift Rap is now on Facebook! Become a fan. Invite your friends!
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gift-Rap/115877201770108>

Reflections of a Teenage Mind

by Megann Ford-Licskai

The Holiday Guide to Effective Regifting

Life can be rough when you're a student on a budget. This is never truer than during the season of giving, receiving, and spending way more money than you should. When it comes to getting a little something for all of the important people in your life AND paying for university, it may be wise to consider the time-honoured tradition of regifting. A few simple guidelines can make this a fulfilling and cost effective solution for all involved.

For the Little Ones:

- Your old technology. They'll be so thrilled with their "new" cell phone or laptop that they probably won't even care about the cracked screen and the virus that makes your system run about as quickly as a tree. (Warning: they probably don't want your Gameboy Colour, Nintendo 64, or that funny Mario game that you got in a Happy Meal.)
- Fashion. Styles change. You get newer, cooler, more flattering clothes. But your little cousin who thinks that you are a god will be proud to sport your old handbag, or the leopard print overalls that your best friend bought you as a joke.

For an Academic-minded Friend:

- A book! This is a great one. Buy/ask for a book that you really want to read. Read it (take care not to crack the spine, dog-ear the pages, or drop it in your bathtub). Then, wrap it up and pass it on.

For that weird-guy-who-you-don't-really-know-but-who-bought-you-a-present-anyway - Candy! Everybody loves candy. And with Halloween a few months behind us, you have a pillow case full of whatever leftover candy that you don't really like and are probably not going to eat. Throw it into a gift bag and tell him that you made a special stop at the Bulk Barn, just for him. Then tell him to please leave you alone, because he's kind of creeping you out.

Your Grandma:

- Soap. Maybe it's just me, but I always get soap for Christmas. So much soap that I have a stock pile that's testing the limits of my bathroom closet shelf (do I really smell that bad?). Grandmothers, on the other hand, love using soap. Probably. Throw a school photo into the equation and you have a winning combination- think of how thrilled she'll be when she's showing everybody in her bridge club what a thoughtful and hygienic grandchild that she has.

A Twilight Fan:

- Sorry. Can't help you. Because you are reading Gift Rap, you have good taste. It follows that you will have received tasteful presents. In other words, nothing that a Twihard will like or understand.
- Alternatively, the tacky body glitter left over from your little sister's dance recital will keep them busy for hours.

A Teacher:

- Try to regift the D that they graciously gave you on your essay about the history of the electric toothbrush. Tell me what happens.

The Caffeine-addicted Friend:

- Remember when you were at Starbucks and the barista gave you the wrong order? And then she gave you a voucher for a free drink? This is exactly what this friend wants and needs. Perfect!

Caveat: Remember that regifting is a subtle art and should be approached with the utmost caution. Keep a list of where everything is coming from. People rarely appreciate it when you give them back the gift that they spent 4 hours shopping for in the Walmart during the Christmas rush (brutal!). However, if this unfortunate situation does occur, never fear. Simply say "Well, Aunt Sally, I loved the monogrammed reindeer sweater that you gave me so much, I couldn't possibly think of a gift that would compare. I got you the same thing so that you can enjoy it just as much as I do!"

Megann is a high school student in London, Ontario, Canada



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Technology in the 21st Century

(special to GR by Peter Kondoff, former president of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers)

Both Canada and the United States must change their societal values and attitudes towards those who produce raw materials, grow farm commodities and manufacture products. These give us our strength and directly relate to our abilities as nations to innovate new and better concepts!

In North America, the United States has a larger population but Canada is much larger in area and has more natural resources. Yet both have reduced productivity over the years and their raw materials are being shipped half way across the world for processing that adds extra value. Why can't we do it here?

The role of manufacturers has been diminished as we outsource much of what we previously manufactured at home. Although shipping costs are bound to increase, our ability to compete in today's world markets is more and more questionable. Canada and the United States must seek alternatives that are unique to us. By working together more cooperatively, our chances of achieving strongly should improve greatly. Here are some ideas of what needs to be done:

1. Eliminate all local cross border restrictions which initiate animosity between the US and Canada. Let's move things around smoothly.
2. Work towards common goals and objectives that are mutually beneficial and develop cooperation that will motivate our societies to manufacture and innovate.
3. Stress the realities of global competitiveness at a very early age in the education of our youth.
4. Upgrade our educational systems to emphasize technical skills more throughout all the years.

The results of implementing the above will hopefully be new and better products and mass production techniques that are second to none!

We have ample commodities available in agriculture, raw materials, fresh water and an abundance of power generation in Canada and the US. Our need is to adjust the power of qualified men and women so we can satisfy our needs as a society!

Society of Manufacturing Engineers

<http://chapters.sme.org/>

A Healthier Way

by Eileen Fauster

Greening Your Bedroom

Although few pleasures in life can compare to sliding between clean, crisp sheets, and snuggling down for a good night's sleep, it may be time to consider the dangers this pleasure is actually exposing you to.

For eight hours a night, you could be breathing in fumes from glues, solvents, fire retardants, and other heavy toxins, so now is the time to consider more natural options.

Your mattress might be the first obvious target in detoxifying your bedroom, but what about the wood frame that supports it? Treated woods are likely to contain polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), a group of chemicals used as flame retardants in furniture, carpets and bedding. The health hazards of PBDEs are many, as they accumulate in living organisms. Better to replace your bed frame with one made from wood that is unfinished or one treated with natural waxes and oils.

Floating between the coils in your mattress are more PBDEs, as well as styrene, a suspected carcinogen. On the good side, organic mattresses with cores made of all-natural latex or wool, are antibacterial, antifungal, naturally fire retardant, and long-lasting. Beware of latex mattresses made with a combination of synthetic and natural latex. They may be marketed as natural, but the synthetic latex is a chemical derivative.

Wrinkle-free sheets are nice to sleep between, but they may be covered with a formaldehyde finish that does not wash out. Reported reactions include respiratory problems, headaches and rashes due to continuous exposure to chemically treated sheets. Use sheets made from bamboo or hemp fibre.

Picky about your pillow's loft (its ability to keep its volume and shape)? Then a hemp-filled pillow may be right for you. Loose buckwheat hulls allow your pillow to easily change shape for maximum comfort and support, allowing air to circulate more easily, and keeping mildew to a minimum. If you prefer a dense, firm pillow, then consider fair trade cotton. Cotton compresses, so it retains its shape. The tropical kapok tree provides seed pods filled with a fine, fibrous, cotton-like substance that can be used as an antibacterial filling and as a replacement for down.

Your mission this month: Take stock of the natural and unnatural items in your bedroom and begin the switch to more natural structures and fibers. Your future health may depend on it.

Eileen Fauster is a practicing *Holistic Nutritionist* whose passion is to empower people to consciously and holistically improve their health. Eileen's greatest reward comes from her clients' success in attaining their health goals and sharing with them her enthusiasm for healthy living. Trained in iridology, allergy recognition and elimination, emotional freedom techniques, cancer coaching and nutrition, Eileen can help you achieve the quality of life you deserve. *Essential Balance Holistic Health Services*, 7620 Yonge Street, Suite 300, Thornhill, ON, Canada L4J 1V9 416-885-5558

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The Other View by Ahmed Sheta

The Stranger is Back

A friend of mine who had been living here for the last twenty years told me that he is going back home to settle there. He said he was sick and tired of living here although admittedly there were many good things here that he enjoyed and benefited from.

He was working, making a reasonable living and he managed to buy a house and almost finished paying his mortgage. He admitted he didn't have much to complain about. But somehow he was tired of living here and he planned to go back to his country of origin.

He also complained about his poor social life, very different from ways in the Middle East. People here keep their distance; they like to have larger spaces around them so they do not have to interact. They know very little about their neighbours, and they don't want and don't need to know. He said that he knew by accident, when he saw a for sale sign on the house lawn, that his neighbour passed away a few days ago. A rich life was reduced to a "sold" sign. He felt sorry he didn't know in time to offer his condolences.

Anyway, my friend sold his house and furniture and went back "home" where he came from. He wrote back to describe the warm emotions he enjoyed with family members, friends and even neighbours. What a contrast, even the weather was friendlier. Two years passed. He sent me an email telling me he was coming back for a visit. He missed his friends here; he missed the way of life he got used to. Somehow I sensed that the honeymoon was over.

After the initial curiosity and celebration, everyone went back to daily business. Hospitality dwindled, emotions faded and were replaced by emptiness and loneliness once more. Differences started coming up to the surface. He felt the differences in the ways of looking at things, thinking, understanding, and judging. His value systems were conflicted with the deeply-rooted local value systems. He started feeling rather alienated and alienating his family and friends. The returned person was not the same person who left 20 years ago.

He changed and all else did too. The society he went back to was not there anymore. He became the "stranger" at home.

It is true he spoke the same language they speak, but they could not communicate. Words were void and cold. Emotions became chilled as well. A whole world collapsed. Nostalgic memories evaporated in the heat of the Middle East. Disappointment and frustration settled in.

It was time to fly back "home". to Canada.

Ahmed Sheta is an immigrant Egyptian-Canadian journalist who has written for Arab newspapers. He lives in Toronto, Canada.

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- > Investors, backers

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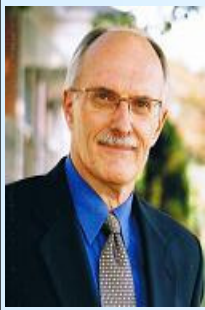
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Amanda Belzowski will attend and inspire you!



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*"Hi, I'm Amanda Belzowski, a 13 year old raising money to achieve with my brother Joshua (and your help) our Goal of \$200,000 to help create a brighter future for children who born and live with heart and stroke problems."
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Jokes of the Month

- A man died and went to hell for eternal punishment. He noticed that everybody was in pain and agony and suffering greatly. One day, however, he noticed a lawyer snuggled up against a beautiful woman. He went and complained to the devil that this was grossly unfair. "Shut up," said the devil. "Who are you to question the punishment I gave this woman!" (Editor's Note: no offence to lawyers. It's hopefully accepted as just being funny.)
- Two hunters are out in the woods when one collapses. He isn't breathing and his eyes are glazed. The other man calls the emergency line and gasps to the operator, "My friend is dead! What can I do?" The operator stays calm and replies: "Take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead." There is a silence, then a shot is heard. Back on the phone, the hunter says, "OK, now what?"

Amazing Invention

It's hard to believe another year has zipped past. We hope you have enjoyed reading about the creative, incredible new and unusual products and services in the world make our lives easier to live and more enjoyable, well, sometimes anyway.

Here are the top 50 Inventions of 2010 as listed by Time Magazine.

<http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/0,28757,2012721,00.html>

Wise Words of Wisdom

- You can fake being serious, but you can't fake being witty.—Oscar Wilde
- Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal. -Henry Ford
- One half of knowing what you want is knowing what you must give up before you get it. -Sidney Howard
- Goals are dreams with deadlines. ~Diana Scharf Hunt
- Great ideas need landing gear as well as wings. ~C.D. Jackson
- God gives us dreams a size too big so that we can grow in them. ~Author Unknown
- Life is full of obstacle illusions. ~Grant Frazier
- It is easier to go down a hill than up, but the view is best from the top. ~Arnold Bennett

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