

GIFT RAP

NEWSLETTER

"enrich and enhance your life and learning"

January 2009 Volume 9 Edition I

A Division of DiscoverTeenergy.com

The Perfect Gifted Program Facilitator

(by O.S.)

In an ideal world every gifted child would have a perfect facilitator who knows exactly what to do and when to do it. Let's imagine what that facilitator might be like.

Understands Giftedness. Knows basics and intricacies of giftedness. Works at developing giftedness as a way of life, not an add-on.

Understands Social & Emotional Needs.

Many gifted children find it difficult to accept or deal with their giftedness. The facilitator appreciates intelligence and encourages interaction with other gifted people.

Programs Effectively. Gifted students need

more than entertainment, simulations and busy work. Teaching them skills makes them independent, self-directed learners and producers of new learning, not just consumers.

Notifies and Nurtures Gifted Children from Pre-kindergarten to High School Years.

The facilitator is willing to teach and assist gifted and high achieving children at any age and nurture fully—even those not formally tested.

Differentiates Learning. A great facilitator is able to provide at a custom level for students.

Collaborates with Others. Teaching is a communal effort. The facilitator

brings in the right people to do the right job for the right students.

Establishes Program and Performance Goals. Despite school board controls, the ideal facilitator still nurtures and helps students strive for their personal goals and performance standards.

Administrates a Business. Programs have legal and administrative paperwork to show accountability. The "employees" have a say in what is learned and delivered. Educational profits and losses are counted.

Includes Parents. A circle of support is strongest. Parents are known and often participate in activities of the program.

Develops Professionally. Reads, studies, discusses, attends conferences about giftedness. It is not about the program and facilitator. It is about the gifted child and what he/she needs.

Challenges Abilities. Wants learners to be wise thinkers not just vessels full of knowledge and facts.

Stimulates New Interests. Goes beyond what he/she knows and stretches into new territory even if it ends up that the student teaches the teacher at the end.

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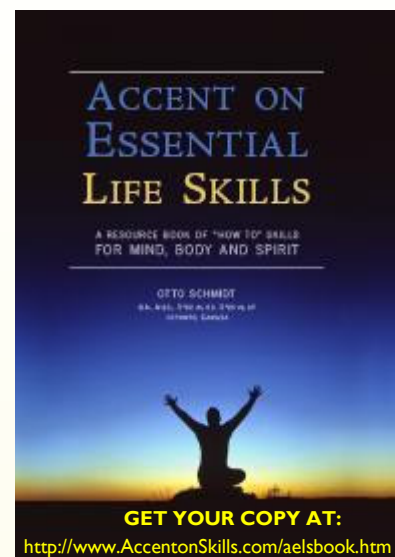
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Heavy Equipment Playground (move dirt and dig holes with real bulldozers, cranes, etc. For adults.) <http://www.20tonsoffun.com/>
World-wide Ride Share Program (find others who are going to the same place, share costs, save gas and the environment) <http://www.pickuppal.com>
Fastest Evolving Creature on Earth <http://www.livescience.com/animals/080326-fastest-tuatara.html>
Top 10 Declassified World Secrets <http://listverse.com/miscellaneous/top-10-declassified-secrets/>
G-Wiz City Car (no advertising or hype. People just buy and use this electric car in the UK) <http://www.goinggreen.co.uk/store>
Bubble Wrap Bubble Bursting Page (just for fun, no fuss, no mess!) <http://fun.from.hell.pl/2003-11-24/bubblewrap.swf>
Do-It-Yourself Body Wrap Instructions (for health, detoxification. Cheaper than a spa) <http://www.fromnaturewithlove.com/soap/BodyWrap.asp>



Activities of the Month details at <http://www.DiscoverTeenergy.com> "Activities Database"

News and Views

Let's Celebrate!

Jan 1 – Happy New Year
Jan 7 – Orthodox Xmas
Jan 10 – Full Moon tonight
Jan 11 – Sir John A. MacDonald's birthday (1st Cdn Prime Minister - 1867)
Jan 14 - Orthodox New Year
Jan 18-24 National Non-Smoking Week
Jan 21 - Weedless Wednesday
Jan 23 – Saddest Day of the Year (winter, Xmas bills in, and more)
Jan 25 – Robbie Burns Day (Scotland)
Jan 26 - Chinese New Year begins
Jan 26-30 - No Name-Calling Week
Jan 27 - Family Literacy Day
This is also Alzheimer's Awareness Month, and March of Dimes Month

THE FUTURE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT IS HERE (by Dr. Ron Rubenzer, Greensboro, North Carolina. USA www.drrubenzer.com)

People can learn to relax themselves but it takes discipline and effort. How about making it easier with technology?

21st century technology offers very effective relaxation devices for those who like high tech AND high touch.

Handheld, state of the art biofeedback devices take the guess work out of detecting and reducing excess stress. One such handheld device ([emWave www.emwave.com](http://www.emwave.com)) provides pleasing-tone and visual feedback to gently guide people to recognize and deepen a refreshing calm within minutes.

As part of a formal test-anxiety management program teachers and students can learn how to lessen test anxiety using biofeedback devices. <http://store.heartmath.org/store/school-programs>

Anxiety significantly dampens test performance and imprints even more damaging test anxiety for future tests. Reducing stress decreases impulse control problems. Reducing stress-related over-activity will lower the stress level of the workplace.

Eye Glasses/Sound and Stress Management

<http://www.patentgenius.com/patent/5064410.html>

Personal Temperature Control Device

<http://www.wipo.int/pctdb/en/wo.jsp?IA=WO1996031136&DISPLAY=DESC>

God's Own Children: Sri Lanka's Great Hope (by O.S.)

Imagine a country that is just now starting to openly acknowledge and help children with special needs and challenges! Dr. B. Anandkumar is the catalyst for this in Sri Lanka. His three schools are the first special education/needs schools in the country. The focus is on the many needy children who have been orphaned, have physical/mental challenges and/or who have been traumatized by a tsunami and the ongoing civil war.

Anand and I met in September 2004 when he arranged to visit Canada to learn about special education. We spent three weeks together visiting special education classes, alternative schools, consultants, etc. I was to go to Sri Lanka to in-service his teachers who would be the first to work with special needs children in Colombo. Before January of 2005, the civil war broke out again and our plans were cancelled. Too dangerous. His plans to start the schools were postponed.

Over the years, Anand has been relentless in opening the desperately needed schools, providing meals for the children, accumulating learning materials and assistive devices for them and lastly finding the funding to keep the whole thing going. He was finally able to open three centers on shoe-string budgets from the generosity of local people who rent or lend him the facilities at minimal cost or for free. His teachers are largely volunteers. Materials and furniture were donated.

During all these years we have kept in touch, many road-blocks and difficulties have been overcome. Lack of funding was

obviously the largest problem. Being here in Canada I could only watch as Anand used his incredible energy and positive attitude to drive his project forward. I lost touch with him for months and when we reconnected I found out he had been near a bomb explosion and had been in hospital for several months. People near him died. He was badly burned from shrapnel but has recovered.

I was privileged to help guide one of the most rewarding successes which was an art auction held as a fundraiser in Sept-Oct. 2008. Many paintings by students were on display and almost all were sold. Key ones were purchased by a company that makes calendars. Keep an eye out for these! The story and photos are at: <http://accentonskills.com/GOCReport08.pdf>

Anand's next project is an Employment Skills Training Centre.

I know there are countless causes that need support and financing. This is one that I would highly recommend to our "Gift Rap" readers as another very worthy one. If you can assist financially or by sending materials to his schools, please get in touch with him. God's Own Children is a legal not-for-profit organization and a Princess Diana Institute of Peace award winner.

Update: Sri Lanka is now having to recover from a devastating typhoon that struck in November. More young casualties.

History of the Sri Lanka Project

<http://accentonskills.com/srilanka.htm>

God's Own Children <http://www.godsownchildren.com>

Computer Top Tip

Using Your Mouse More Effectively (left and right buttons and the wheel)

A mouse is an incredibly useful tool on a computer but many people don't use all of its features and waste considerable time. It is important to open up a word processing or spreadsheet blank sheet and practice these shortcuts.

1. **Inside the words of documents.** Click once to place the cursor, click twice to highlight a whole word, click three times to highlight the paragraph. Use the right button menu to cut or copy and then paste
2. **Outside of the margins of a document.** Move the cursor to the left and outside of the written text so it becomes an arrow tilting right towards the words. Click the left button once to highlight a line, twice to highlight a paragraph and three times to highlight the entire document. Now right click and cut or copy, find a new location and right click to paste. This becomes a very fast process without always going to the top menu bars.
3. **Learn to use the wheel effectively.** Click to activate it and click again to deactivate. Activate the wheel and roll the mouse back and forth slowly to see the action. Replaces the use of the long side scroll bars. Don't move the mouse and click the wheel once and a set of directional arrows appears. If the mouse is moved just slightly, a ghost image appears. The scrolling can now be controlled in any direction. Great for slowly moving the words of a document along as you read it hands free. Place the scroll ghost anywhere in the document and out of the way.
4. **Other operations.** a) Hold down "Ctrl" and spin the mouse wheel to enlarge or reduce text. b) To move files and documents, highlight the title, hold down the left button and drag it to the new location. c) Highlight text, picture or text box. Hold down the "Ctrl" button and note the cursor has a + sign attached. Hold down the left mouse button and drag the cursor across the picture to any side. When you release there is a second copy.
5. Highlight a word or text. Hold down the left button with the cursor over the words. Drag the word(s) to any location.

- a U.S. Innocent Project study showed that of 218 wrongful convictions uncovered by DNA evidence about 25% were caused by false confessions.

- a study of 9,000 Canadian allergy sufferers showed the prevalence of severe aller-

Tidbits of Trivia

gies to these "Big Five": peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, sesame seeds.

- the world record distance for dwarf tossing is 12 feet, 9 inches.
- Arabic numerals originated in India.
- there is no such thing as

refried beans. They are "frijoles refritos" which means "well fried."

- a peanut is neither a pea or a nut. It is a legume.
- dry cleaning is done with a liquid solution.
- apple butter is made with apples, sugar and spices—not butter.

Kinds of Memory

The Toronto centre, Baycrest Rotman Research Institute has done extensive work on the brain - plasticity, adaptability, flexibility, learning capacity. Here are some of the kinds of memory that they determined we all use:

Remote Memory - significant events of the distant past e.g. weddings, major world events

Procedural Memory - physical skills such as bike riding, knitting.

Semantic Memory - knowledge and insight.

Episodic Memory - details of recent events - days/weeks

Working Memory - organize, plan and problem solve in the present seconds/minutes

Prospective Memory - remembering to do something in the future e.g. appointments

Review how you and your loved ones, especially the elderly, handle these. There are ways to help with weaknesses.

Improving Memory

http://www.web-us.com/memory/improving_memory.htm

Interesting Reading

- The Well-Fed Backpacker** by June Fleming. How to dehydrate foods.
- Hot, Flat and Crowded** by Thomas Friedman. Advocating for a new "green economy". Clean energy, green job creation within a new green economic movement.
- Alex & Me** by Irene Pepperberg. A determined teaching experiment with a parrot lasted over many years. Her research throws new light on animal intelligence.
- Wondrous Strange: The Life and Art of Glenn Gould** by Kevin Bazzana. Definitive biography on the life of one of the greatest pianists.
- The Theory of Clouds** by Stephane Audeguy. Fact and fiction about those whose lives are consumed by the study of clouds and meteorology in general.

The Other View by Ahmed Sheta, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

MONEY: Who Should Bail Out Whom?

I was born and grew up in Egypt. My parents were advised to save money for the future according to folk wisdom that said: "a white penny will be of value on a black day". They did manage to save some money when the Egyptian pound was worth \$2.50US. Due to political reasons, the currency devalued so much over the years that now the Egyptian pound is worth about .20US. Many people asked themselves why they bothered to save?

Again, when we came to Canada, we were advised to save money and invest it in mutual funds in an RRSP account that would provide for our beautiful future retirement years. It would be safe and available and in abundance, if we saved regularly. Everybody knows how investments have gone over the years.

Each year we are supposed to be celebrating festive days. They are no longer as festive. The bad news keeps on flowing through the media about how many of us are threatened with loss of wealth and/or jobs. Adding more frustration and a sense of unfairness, we read that Madonna will pay her ex-husband fifty million pounds sterling for a divorce.

I wonder how is it acceptable that some people can make so much money in a society where many families live below the poverty line and have no medical insurance. Some people will no doubt see this as everybody's right to aspire to their own levels and goals. The strong shall survive. On the other hand, shouldn't we be looking out for each other more?

I look at the devastation in Detroit and Oshawa, Canada. The financial crisis threatens thousands of North American automotive jobs. This crisis will have a much wider impact and raises a lot of questions about how we look after each other: Where were the "power people" (like Allan Greenspan) that were responsible for directing and overseeing our finances? What did governments do or fail to do to bring on the crisis? Is anyone responsible? What exactly went wrong? Are we entitled to an explanation? Most of the questions are ignored and answers are twisted around to who to bail out and with how much money from peoples' pockets.

The big three automakers have been producing cars that fewer people want to buy. On their own turf, they cannot compete with imported cars, partly because of wages. The average hourly wage of autoworkers is over \$28US - more than US\$70 including benefits. Bailout programs try to include wage reductions. Unions, of course, disagree and they may have a point but is this fair?

I wonder how much pain the unemployed and those working for minimum wage feel as we subsidize and bail out the big three automakers just because they are big employers.

Bailouts are very difficult things to administer fairly. Morally and ethically, we obviously need to help as many people as possible.

Finding Reliable and Accurate Information on the Internet (by O.S.)

One of the biggest concerns on the internet is finding information that is accurate and reliable. So where is it?

Search engines are very sophisticated and users can learn to fine tune their search to get the best information.

One way to do this is by adding "pdf" to the end of the search request e.g. inventions pdf This brings up learned papers, research and also a surprising number of PowerPoint presentations.

A second way is to add "ppt" e.g. inventions ppt This brings up PowerPoint presentations which are often done by learned scholars, scientists, business professionals, educators, etc.

If you are looking for statistics, type: statistics.gov Use any of the following for specific countries: .ca for Canada, .us, for USA, .nz for New Zealand, and so on.

Many people go to Wikipedia but this is a questionable information source which has been developed and changed by many people in the general public. Who knows what errors lurk there.

As a viable alternative to Wikipedia, there is Veropedia which is more disciplined and has verified information only.

The internet is a great place to learn about everything in the world. Caution is, however, always advised when trying to find the "truth".

Truthsayer Project

<http://truthsayer.cs.ucdavis.edu/>

<http://www.cs.ucdavis.edu/~martel/main/truthsayerHK.ppt>



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**We welcome creative contributions to this newsletter.
Send us your articles or ideas, jokes, wise words, fun activities, letters, trivia.**

E-Mail to: GiftRap@DiscoverTeenergy.com

Editor's note: a big welcome is extended to our new teen columnist. Enjoy the humor, insights and edgy comments in the months ahead.

Reflections of a Teenage Mind

by Megann Ford-Licskai, London, Ontario, Canada

Okay Parents, Listen Up!

Perhaps the most intelligent and misanthropic, the most certain and misunderstood of all species today is the teenager. Perhaps, being a teenager myself, my views will be slightly biased. However, as the philosopher Maxwell Smart once said, "It takes one to know one".

After having conducted an extensive study with teens on this topic, I have managed to identify 5 general rules relating to dealing with our volatile breed:

Rule 1: We are smarter than you. We always will be. Don't question it. Take into consideration the example of N.D., a female teenager of average intelligence. In her 15 years, she has yet to be incorrect. Everything that comes out of her mouth is automatically a fact. *Global warming is NOT real. The U.S. is in ALL ways superior to Canada - medicare included. Whoever came up with that idea was clearly deranged. The Republicans are the ONLY option when it comes time to vote. It's a good thing that Bush won- Al Gore would have ruined the country.* And there you have it. She knows!!

Rule 2: Do not try to understand us. You never will. Parents - no offense - but you don't have a clue. Clearly, you have always been middle aged, and so cannot possibly relate to anything we might be feeling. When we respond with mumbles and one word answers, get the message and back off.

Rule 3: Sleep/School/Family/Socialization/ Vegetables/Physical Activities, etc. are overrated. Seriously. Lock us in a room with a computer, a television, and a fridge full of pizza pops and pogo dogs. We will get along just fine, and be happier for it.

Rule 4: Family time is just a euphemism for "Cruel and Unusual Punishment." Is there anything more painful than sitting in a car for 2 hours, listening to your little sister belt out an off-tune cover of Rihanna's *Unfaithful*? Maybe worse is arriving at the Family Christmas dinner and having distant relatives exclaim how much you've grown. Yes I have, Uncle Bob. Last time you saw me was when I was three. What did you expect?

Rule 5: Leave us alone. Period. Yes, we will tidy our desks. Eventually. And *why* would we make our bed when we're just going crawl back into it in a few hours? What? Unloading the dishwasher is our job? Well, we didn't ask to be born into this family. Actually, I think that that was *your* idea. Guess that it *is*, in fact, your job. You, the parents, are our personal maids, chauffeurs, cooks, and social planners, at least until we're 18 (maybe longer!).

Disagree? Guess you should have thought about that 16 years ago.



Educators for the Gifted Organization (EdGO)

- assisting ALL who educate gifted children in public, separate, private schools, home schooling.

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- attend our annual conference
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<http://www.edgo.ca>



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on the DT homepage

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Jokes of the Month

"A study in the Washington Post says that women have better verbal skills than men. I just want to say to the authors of that study: Duh." --Conan O'Brien

A group of elementary school students were on a field trip to the local police station. Several children were fascinated by the wanted posters on the wall. Little Billy raised his hand and asked a police officer who the people on the wall were. "Those are pictures of criminals we are looking for," answered the policeman. "We call those wanted posters." Little Billy looked puzzled. His hand shot back up into the air. "Well," he wondered, "why didn't you just keep them when you took their picture?"

Mensa is an organization whose members have an IQ of 140 or higher. A few years ago, there was a Mensa convention and several members lunched at a local cafe. While dining, they discovered that their saltshaker contained pepper and their pepper shaker was full of salt. How could they swap the contents of the bottles without spilling, and using only the implements at hand? Clearly this was a job for Mensa! The group debated and presented ideas, and finally came up with a brilliant solution involving a napkin, a straw, and an empty saucer. They called the waitress over to dazzle her with their solution. "Ma'am," they said, "we couldn't help but notice that the pepper shaker contains salt and the salt shaker..." "Oh," the waitress interrupted. "Sorry about that." She unscrewed the caps of both bottles and switched them.

What Will They Invent Next?

Solar Cell Tree

Not only is it artistically beautiful, this tree is also very practical. The tree is covered in "leaves" which are actually solar cells and the unit has plug-in connections to allow charging of phones, cameras, MP3 players, etc. Beautiful!

<http://www.reevoo.com/decidewhattobuy/2008/10/gadget-watch-charge-your-gadgets-on-trees/>

Wise Words of Wisdom

Journalism can never be silent. That is its greatest virtue and its greatest fault. It must speak, and speak immediately while the echoes of wonder, the claims of triumph and the signs of horror are still in the air.— Henry Anatole Grunwald

Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you.—Princess Diana

Kindness is loving people more than they deserve.—Joseph Joubert

There are two types of people in the world, good and bad. The good sleep better, but the bad seem to enjoy the waking hours much more.—Woody Allen