

Problems that Gifted Girls Face

(by O.S.)

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work with some very special gifted girls. Here are some of the issues and problems they face and what the education system might try to do to nurture them more effectively. Many of the points to be made also apply to boys but the focus will be on girls. These insights are from personal experience and are presented as a catalyst for further discussion.

Problem: More is expected of girls than of boys, especially in elementary school. They are often more disciplined compared to peer boys, do neater and more precise work in the general

school population and if highly gifted can be far more mature than peers.

Solution: They are still children! Nurture abilities of all regardless of sex. This can take the form of mentoring, skills training, ongoing emotional support, provision of activities that nurture growth BUT allow them to choose whether to do them or not. Don't just expect gifted girls to automatically do "giftie" things.

Problem: The urge to "dummy down" in order to be accepted and blend in. Giftedness is sometimes seen as a threat to non-gifted peer girls. There can be ostracism, jealousy if a peer is seen to be too intelligent. The reverse can also hap-

pen and the gifted girl is "adopted" by a group that sees the person as a novelty and makes the group appear to be smarter. Boyfriends are sometimes intimidated by a too-smart girlfriend. The expectation is that the gifted girl should find other gifted girls to hang with.

Solution: It is most important to be true to oneself. It's okay to have few but solid, good friends. The search for companionship should be encouraged. Socialize by joining clubs, associations, debates, etc.. Often it is as easy as telling the girl that it is okay to be intelligent.

Problem: Gifted girls internalize their problems whereas boys tend to be more extroverted about them.

Girls can become lonely, "quiet no-names" walking the halls and eating alone at lunch. Some are suicidal.

Solution: Girls need to boost self-esteem and confidence by enhancing: social skills, communication skills, leadership skills, and the ability to deal with boyfriends. Teachers, especially, need to celebrate intelligence and show they accept and honour it fully.

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Amazing Websites

Marla Olmstead (5-6 yr. old artist and her amazing paintings) <http://www.marlaolmstead.com/>

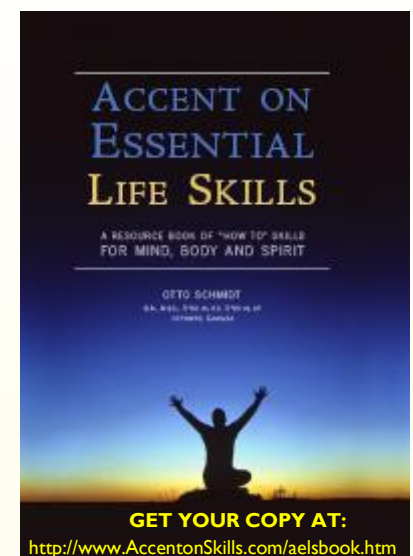
Sing-Along Songs by the Hundreds with Lyrics & Musical Accompaniment (extraordinary!!)

<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/music.htm#index>

Royalty Free Music and Sound Loops for your Films and Videos <http://www.partnersinrhyme.com/>

Electronic Museum of Stamp Art (beautiful!!) <http://www.actlab.utexas.edu/emma/>

How to Cross Your Eyes (hey, a skill is a skill!) <http://www.wikihow.com/Cross-Your-Eyes>



News and Views

Let's Celebrate!

- Feb 1-7 - White Cane Week
 - Feb 2 – Groundhog Day
 - Feb 7 – Chinese New Year (Year of the Rat)
 - Feb 8—Nirvana Day
 - Feb 9 – Full Moon
 - Feb 12 - Sexual/Reproductive Health Awareness Day
 - Feb 14 – St. Valentine's Day
 - Feb 15—Canada Flag Day
 - Feb 16—Heritage Day, Family Day
 - Feb 25 – Ash Wednesday, end of Mardi Gras
- This is also Psychology Month, Nat'l Pet Dental Health Month, Black History Month

Beating the Depressing February Blues

Here are some suggestions on how to make the dull days of February more tolerable:

- Go to a greenhouse and wander in lush greenery
- Take up a vigorous winter sport
- Enjoy a weekly "do it yourself" new exotic meal
- Buy a bouquet of flowers for your kitchen weekly
- Go swimming at a local hotel or municipal pool
- Go skating on an outdoor rink or make your own
- Go to a zoo to watch polar bears, wolves, seals
- Do something nice for somebody each day
- Give away clothes you don't wear anymore
- Have a carpet picnic with Hawaiian music
- Watch all the Oscar-nominated movies
- Go to a comedy club
- Set up a tent in the living room and sleep out
- Decorate a wallboard with pictures of flowers
- Wear bright summer clothes around the house
- Read a newspaper from another country
- Plant and nurture flower seedlings in a pot
- Read a previously unheard-of magazine
- Browse in new unknown sections of a library
- attend a high school play or other amateur play

Thoughts on Teaching From: <http://www.cleanjokes4u.com>

"Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids and fill their every waking moment with a love for learning. And I'm supposed to instill a sense of pride in their ethnicity, modify their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse and even censor their T shirt messages and dress habits. You want me to wage a war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, check their backpacks for weapons of mass destruction, and raise their self esteem. You want me to teach them patriotism, good citizenship, sportsmanship, and fair play, how and where to register to vote, how to balance a checkbook, and how to apply for a job. I am to check their heads for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of antisocial behavior, offer advice, write letters of recommendation for student employment and scholarships, encourage respect for the cultural diversity of others, and, oh yeah, always make sure that I give the girls in my class 50 percent of my attention. My contract requires me to work on my own time after school and evenings grading papers. Also, I must spend my summer vacation at my own expense, working toward advance certification and a Master's degree. And on my own time you want me to attend committee and faculty meetings, PTA meetings, and participate in staff development training. I am to be a paragon of virtue, larger than life, such that my very presence will awe my students into being obedient and respectful of authority. And I am to pledge allegiance to family values and this current administration. You want me to incorporate technology into the learning experience, monitor web sites, and relate personally with each student. That includes deciding who might be potentially dangerous and/or liable to commit a crime in school. I am to make sure all students pass the mandatory exams, even those who don't come to school regularly or complete any of their assignments. Plus, I am to make sure that all of the students with handicaps get an equal education regardless of the extent of their mental or physical challenges. And I am to communicate regularly with the parents by letter, telephone, newsletter, and report card. All of this I am to do with just a piece of chalk, a computer, a few books, a bulletin board, and a big smile AND on a starting salary that qualifies my family for food stamps! You want me to do all of this and you expect me NOT TO PRAY?"

Teaching Awards (although British, it can serve as a model for all countries) <http://www.teachingawards.com/>

Computer Top Tip

Cleaning out Mistakes in the AutoComplete URL History in MS Explorer

Autocomplete allows you to type in a letter or two and the computer then tries to complete the word for you. If you type “a” into the URL address line in MS Explorer, you might get a dropdown list of mistakes you have made over time as well as the actual URL address you are seeking. E.g. www.discoverteenergy.com is okay but Discover Teenenergy may still be there in the list when you typed it in incorrectly.

Here is how to clean out all the useless stuff. Open Internet Explorer. Go to **Tools** and click **Internet Options**. In the **General** tab, find **Browsing History** and click **Delete**. Select what you want to delete or go to the bottom and click **Delete All**. If you select **Delete All** another window will open and tick the box to clear all the addressees stored by add ons (this is the autocomplete part). This now clears the list of all urls visited. However, there may still be lines that don't have www or a .com ending, etc. To get rid of those, go to **Internet Options** again and click to open the **Content** tab at the top. Click **Settings** in the Autocomplete section and remove the checkmark for Web Address and Forms only. Click **OK**. The URL line should now be clear of all contents.

- the U.S. has less than 5% of the world population but has almost 25% of the global prisoners—2.3 million, higher than any other country.
- 37% of Canadians believe in the devil.
- like classical music lovers, metalheads tend to be gentle and introverted. Metalheads, however, tend to have low self-esteem. Indie music fans aren't particularly gentle and have poor self-image.

Tidbits of Trivia

- Okinawa, Japan has the highest rate of centenarians (100+ yrs old) - about 50 per 100,000 residents.
- the most expensive T Shirt went at a charity auction for \$42,000 in 1996. (now did the person wear it???:)
- Bruce Springsteen, the rock artist, did not establish fame until he started to write songs that were more for women.
- Oxford University's choice of most annoying expressions: “at the end of the day”, “fairly

uniquely”, I personally”.

- cancer, heart disease and stroke are the biggest killers in the developed world.
- the average life expectancy today for Canadian men is 82 and women 85.
- 65% of women feel they have too much debt, 27% of men
- 14% of women worry about losing their job, 10% of men
- the first copyright law was enacted on 1709 with the Statute of Anne in England.

Cross Writing (by O.S.)

In the early 1800's, paper was very expensive. Letter writing, even by the rich, was a costly thing to do. The postage was charged by the page in some cases.

In order to use the writing space more fully, creative approaches were taken.

The letter was written normally. The margins would then be filled. If the letter was longer, then the paper was turned ninety degrees and more lines were written across the original. In some cases, the paper was turned 45 degrees and the letter continued. In this way, the same piece of paper could hold up to six pages of writing.

There are many examples of this method still found today in museums. A big problem is bleeding of ink into other words and even pictures.

Consider how much paper is wasted because of computer printers the print only on one side. Can we change this? Go to Google Images for visual examples (“cross writing”)

http://everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1460407

Interesting Reading

Loneliness as a Way of Life by Thomas Dumm. Accepting loneliness can help us better learn to connect with others.

Bumping into Geniuses: My Life Inside the Rock and Roll Business by Danny Goldberg. A music industry insider talks about producing and developing iconic artists.

Hockey Books

The China Wall: The Timeless Legend of Johnny Bower by Johnny Bower and Bob Duff.

McCown's Law: The Hundred Greatest Hockey Arguments by Bob McCown.

Patrick Roy: Winning, Nothing Else by Michel Roy.

Black & Gold: Four Decades of the Boston Bruins in Photographs by Steve Babineau.

Wendel and The Great One by Mike Leonetti. Wendel Clark and Wayne Gretzky playoff memories.

Reflections of a Teenage Mind

by Megann Ford-Licskai, London, Ontario, Canada

There is a particularly virulent pandemic, affecting the teenaged female demographic most severely. It is characterized by swooning, breathlessness, insomnia, and decreased appetite. And it is bringing about the death of decent literature as we know it.

Perhaps you know somebody who has been “bitten” by the Twilight series by Stephanie Meyer? Often called Fanpires or Twihards, their appreciation of the series teeters hazardously on obsession.

In a nutshell, Bella, an average human girl, meets Edward, her unbelievably gorgeous lab partner. They fall in love. But *gasp*! Edward is secretly a vampire who would like nothing more than to bite Bella for breakfast. Then werewolves? Chaos!

Twilight is the victim of an unimaginative plot, and commits some of literature’s cardinal sins.

1. Nearly the entire book is written in “Purple Prose”. It is possible to have too much detail, especially in describing the flawless contours of Edward Cullen’s chest. Also, a note to the author- an intelligent reader can tell when you look up half the words at thesaurus.com. Your work doesn’t flow, and you won’t sound smart just by using big words.
2. Some people relate to the Twilight characters, but I think that they are just familiar ones. They are the same ones we have been reading about since age 3 - stereotypical, cookie-cutter personalities. Throughout the entire series, there is little character development. In the first book, Bella is irritating and selfish. Three books later, she’s basically the same.
3. It is impossible to get through Twilight without falling into “plot holes”. They weren’t well thought out. Stephanie Meyer often breaks her own rules she created for her fantasy universe. The occurrences in the story are not consistently logical or believable. Maybe that’s what happens when thousands of pages are based upon a dream.

Twilight is the latest rage, but then again, so were those palm-sized glasses my father used to wear. Fads don’t last. Save yourself some time, money, and brain cells and leave Twilight on the shelf. Opt for more intelligent literature, like Philip Pullman’s His Dark Materials trilogy. Or, if you’re into them, Anne Rice’s vampires make Meyerpires look like bunny rabbits.

Luckily, there is a cure for this ailment. A simple and free vaccine. THINK about the novel you’re reading, and you’re sure to realize that Twilight is more than slightly overrated.



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

“Are we beasts?” asked Churchill...., are we taking this too far?

The following is from [MACLEAN'S Magazine Oct. 27, 2008] ". By the time the Second World War ended in Europe, in 1945, some 60 cities had been obliterated and 593,000 people had been killed on the ground. Dead too were 81,000 young airmen, more than 10,000 of them Canadians. And through it all, until late in the war, German war production kept rising. ... it was only a year ago that outraged veterans forced the Canadian War Museum to remove a plaque that juxtaposed the carnage with the small reduction in German war production. To the veterans, it seemed to negate the entire basis for their suffering...turning their lost comrades into war criminals, or perhaps worse, victims of a useless strategy".

Deaths in WWII:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties

Military deaths: 25,280,100 Civilian deaths: 41,756,400

Monetary cost:

http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_much_did_World_War_2_cost

According to the Oxford Companion to WWII:
UK-Pounds 20,500,000,000 US-\$306,000,000,000
Germany-Reichmarks 414,000,000,000 Japan-Yen 174,000,000,000
Italy- Lire 278,500,000,000 USSR-Ruble 582,000,000,000.

WW2 was a European war. It was about the redistribution of wealth and domains of influence. But those who died and suffered the most got nothing out of all it. Was this massive destruction of cities, buildings, resources, human lives and families justified? Did it make any sense to anybody then and can we justify it today? These were real people that died - husbands, wives, children on both sides.

I have mentioned the shocking statistics because Canadians and other Westerners should be more aware of them and relate more to them.

Seventy years later, we have still allowed and engage in large scale wars all over the world - Asia, Africa, Middle East. Shouldn't we do more within our power to stop the senseless destruction that creates endless pain, suffering and poverty for all? Precious resources are lost and misused, the environment is destroyed, hopes and dreams are lost.

I just want to draw attention to the losses of human lives and the financial waste and flattened houses. Was there and is there now a better way? Do world powers do all they can to stop the killing?

The question posed by Churchill, "Are we beasts?" still seeks a definitive answer.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dy-60zSKiGE>

<http://ca.youtube.com/watch?v=uWP0GU0wVSk&feature=related>

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Jokes of the Month

There was a farmer who raised watermelons. He was doing pretty well, but he was plagued by local kids who would sneak into his patch at night and steal them. After some careful thought he comes up with a clever idea that he thinks will scare the kids away for sure. So he makes up a sign and posts it in the field. The sign says, "Warning, one of the watermelons in this field has been poisoned." The farmer goes to inspect his field the next morning and finds a new sign that says, "Warning, now two of the watermelons in this field have been poisoned."

A boy frog telephones the Psychic Hotline and his Personal Psychic Advisor tells him: "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you." The frog is thrilled, "This is great! Will I meet her at a party?" "No," says his Advisor, "in her biology class."

Mixed-up Max walked into a store to buy curtains. He went up to the salesman and said, "I want those plaid curtains to fit my computer screen. The salesman mentioned, "Computers don't need curtains." He replied, "Hellooo.... I have Windows!"

What Will They Invent Next?

Add on Fizz Cup

Take a bottle of your favourite soda pop and fill this innovative container full of ice cream. Voila! You can make instant fizzy ice cream sodas. The soda travels up a straw and creates a mini volcano of soda as it fizzes through the ice cream.

<http://www.firebox.com/product/2098/Fizz-Cup>

Wise Words of Wisdom

Those who have succeeded at anything and don't mention luck are kidding themselves.—Larry King

The harder I work, the luckier I get.—Thomas Jefferson

A faith that cannot survive collision with the truth is not worth many regrets.—Arthur C. Clarke

Doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother.—Kahlil Gibran

All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.—Ralph Waldo Emerson