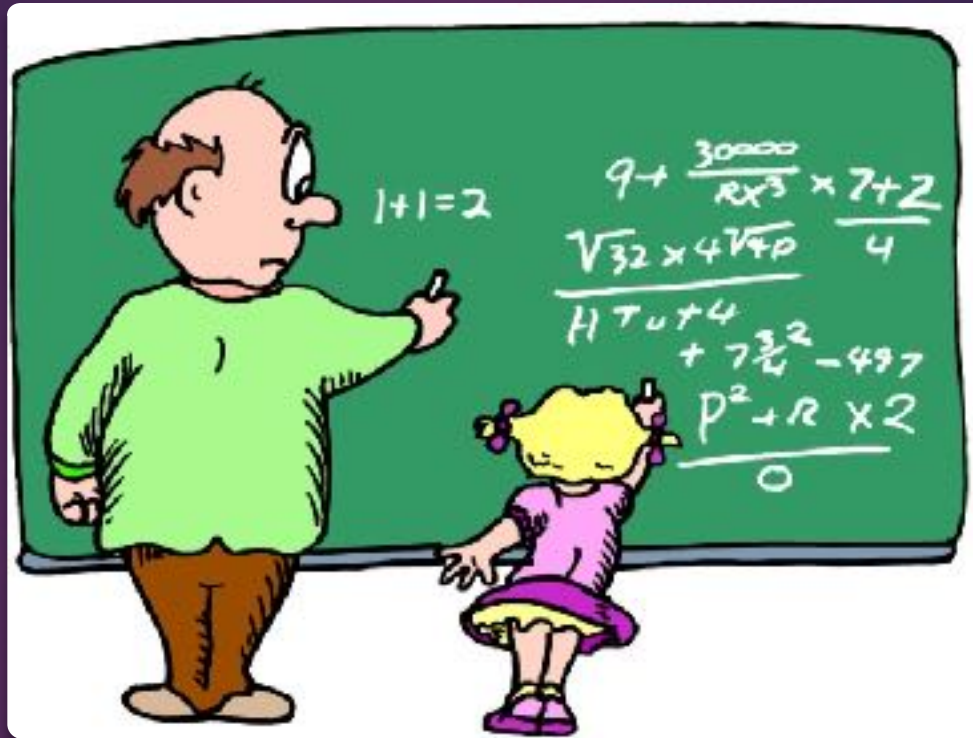




Parenting the Gifted Child

DR. YARIV DORON, 2018



Congratulations. You have a gifted child ... Now what ?!

Parenting the gifted




Parenting is
not easy.



It is definitely
not a reflex.
It is a skill



Parenting the
gifted child, is as
challenging as
raising any other
child with special
needs.

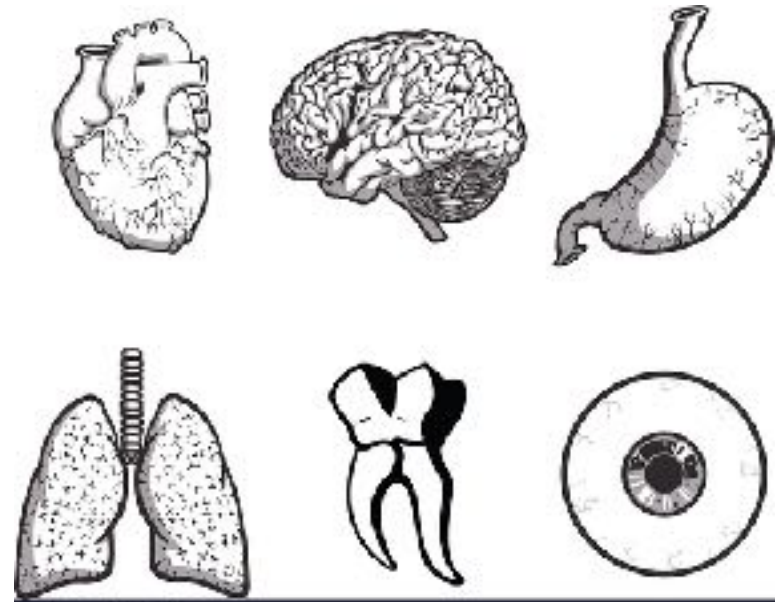


What's unique
about me ?

And what's not
?

Today's goals

- ▶ We will explore various aspects of a gifted child and how to approach them.
- ▶ There are probably 1,000 additional topics we could talk about.





Let's start with the kids

AND SOME OF THE THINGS WHICH MAKES THEM UNIQUE



Asynchronous Development

Asynchronous Development

Asynchronous development means that a child may harbour different levels of capacities at the same time.

- ▶ Be chronologically 6 years old
- ▶ Has the reading level of a 12 year old
- ▶ Achieved Math level of a 9 year old
- ▶ Has writing abilities of a 6 year old

Asynchronous development

- ▶ This phenomenon might be frustrating and sometimes confusing for parents since these children don't always **act** their chronological age.
- ▶ For example: seconds after explaining how the UN protects the rights of immigrants across the globe, your child might burst into tears because he has to brush his teeth.

Asynchronous development

- ▶ Asynchronous development is **hard for the child as well as for the parent**.
- ▶ The fact that you can talk as if you are 15 years old, does not mean that you can behave as one.
- ▶ “Advanced intellectual ability simply does not enable a child to manage **emotions** any better than any other child” .
(Carol Bainbridge, the Indiana Association for the Gifted)

Asynchronous development

- ▶ Emotionally and socially these children may struggle as well, mainly due to their confusing presentation.
- ▶ It might take years for the emotional and social abilities to catch up with their cognition and intellect 😞

Asynchronous development

- ▶ So what can you do about asynchronous development ?



But I will give you an important tip for those explosive moments... :

- ▶ Before you tag your child as immature, stop for a moment and ask yourself : Which part of my child am I talking to now ?

Shhh.

My multiple personalities are sleeping.



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user card



Over-excitability

The image features a stylized illustration of a person with long, dark hair, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and dark pants. They are depicted in a dynamic pose, with their mouth wide open as if shouting or singing. The background is a dark purple checkered pattern. A signature 'Surya M. 7/15/2012' is visible on the left side of the illustration. The text 'Over-excitability' is overlaid in a large, white, sans-serif font. A solid red vertical bar is located in the top right corner of the image.

Over-excitability

- ▶ Over-excitability are inborn intensities indicating a heightened ability to respond to stimuli.
- ▶ Found to a greater degree in creative and gifted individuals.

Over-excitability

1. Intellectual Overexcitability

- ▶ Curious, non-stop questioning, and sharp, a child with intellectual overexcitability asks the **questions** that flummox you, makes the **connections** that amaze you, and arrives at understandings that leave your curriculum in the dust.
- ▶ They will want to go deep into interesting topics, **talk** about theoretical concepts, and move faster through content than you can handle.

Over-excitability

2. Imaginational Overexcitability

- ▶ Fuelled by creativity, a love of stories and drawings, and fictional worlds, children with this overexcitability might daydream, doodle, or otherwise occupy their minds while a dull teacher drones on.

Over-excitability

3. Sensory Overexcitability

- ▶ Essentially the **five senses**.
- ▶ This could show up as a strong reaction to sounds, light, and textures, or tastes. This reaction could be **positive**, with a desire to continue experiencing a sensation, or **negative**, driving the student away from the stimulus.

Over-excitability

4. Psychomotor Overexcitability

- ▶ Children with psychomotor overexcitability appear to simply have too much energy.
- ▶ It might manifest as **fidgety** behaviour, rapid, excessive talking, and overactive physical behaviour. It sounds an awful lot like **ADHD**, and might easily be misidentified as such.

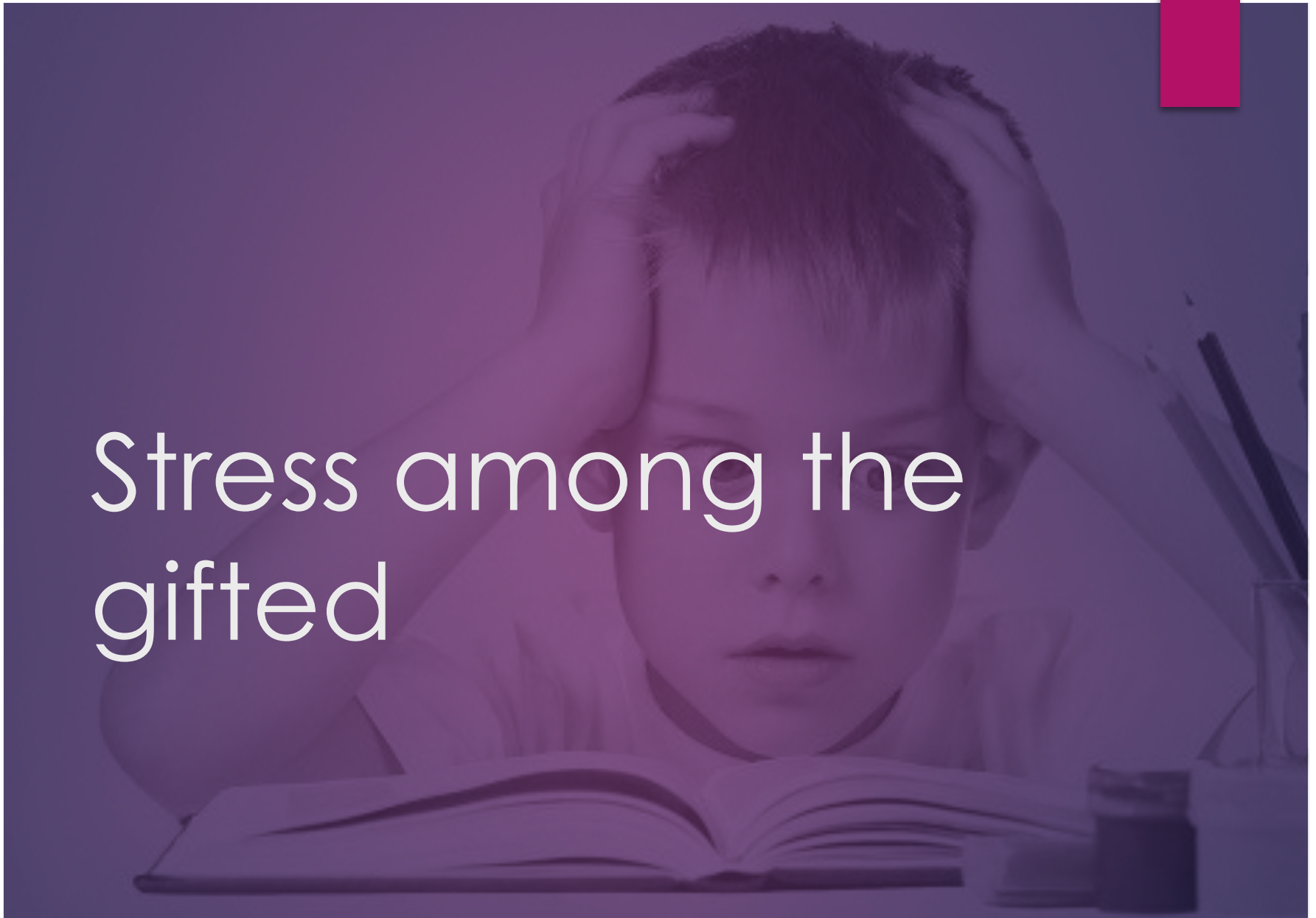
Over-excitability

5. Emotional Overexcitability

- ▶ Tragedies, injustice, and reminders of mortality might trigger an unexpectedly emotional response from children who experience emotional overexcitability.
- ▶ It might appear that they are **over-dramatic** or seeking attention. However, these children simply feel emotions more intensely, whether joy or sadness.



Stress among the gifted



Stress amongst the gifted

- ▶ Gifted children are particularly susceptible to stress, which, if not checked, may result in a “burnout” (Fimian, 1989).
- ▶ This is characterized by *a state of mental and physical exhaustion* from prolonged, unrelieved stress, which can further lead to withdrawal, hopelessness, and inactivity.

Stress amongst the gifted

Main reasons for stress are:

- ▶ **Perfectionist Tendencies**
(→ a constant state of frustration)
- ▶ **Excessive Achievement Demands**
(→ “achievement/performance anxiety”)
- ▶ **Intellectual/Social Development Gap**
(→ blocked by the older children and rejected by the younger ones)
- ▶ **Heightened Sensitivity to Adult Problems**
(→ worry about problems that may not affect them directly)

Stress amongst the gifted

Ways to manage / avoid stress:

- ▶ Guide the child from negative to positive attitudes (for instance, from pessimism to optimism, from disbelief in self to belief in self)
- ▶ Good old-fashioned exercise!

Stress amongst the gifted

Ways to manage / avoid stress:

- ▶ Encourage “one-thing-at-a-time” thinking.
- ▶ Kids who are allowed to choose their own activities and paths feel empowered rather than stressed.
- ▶ Allow the “space” for daydreaming
- ▶ Be a role model



I wish we had
even a clue as to
what we're doing.

someecards



Parents'
turn..

Parenting the gifted

- ▶ Parents of gifted children often feel an almost overwhelming sense of responsibility after learning their child is gifted.
- ▶ Then comes the **dialog**:

To push them , pr to allow them “to be children” ?!

Parenting the gifted

- ▶ Some parents even talk to me about the **Stress factor** and quote difficult concepts, such as:

“ .. first three years of life are crucial, to the point in which if you have missed out on it, the train has already left the station..”



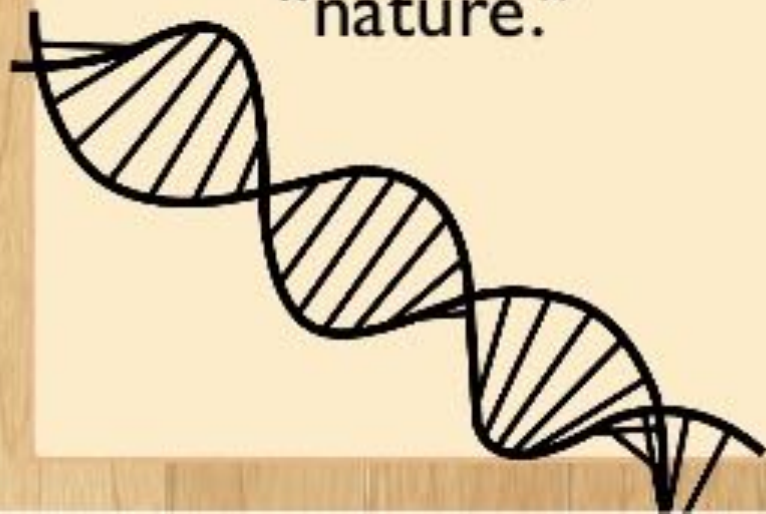
Up-to-date research

- ▶ The truth is a bit broader....
- ▶ While the first three years are important in a brain and psychology development, a child is not doomed to mediocrity and failure if certain experiences did not occur during that phase.
- ▶ The brain continues to develop through adolescence up to the age of 21... at least.. And our psyche until the day we die.
- ▶ **Genetics** plays a major role in intelligence, and it is much more powerful than our guilt..

Nature vs. Nurture Debate

Nature:

Our genetics determine our behavior. Our personality traits and abilities are in our “nature.”



Nurture:

Our environment, upbringing, and life experiences determine our behavior. We are “nurtured” to behave in certain ways.



Nurturing

- ▶ A simple way of looking at Nurturing is as provision of:
 - ▶ Supportive and positive environment
 - ▶ Opportunities of exposure to a breath of ideas/disciplines
- ▶ In other words: if you can challenge their thinking AND facilitate opportunities to explore and develop – you are pretty good at this 😊

The balance

- ▶ **But**, with the promise of exciting activities, also comes a house rule :

We expect you to commit.

- ▶ Gifted children are easily bored and will happily jump around between half-baked ideas and experiences. Commitment is a good lesson to their adult form.

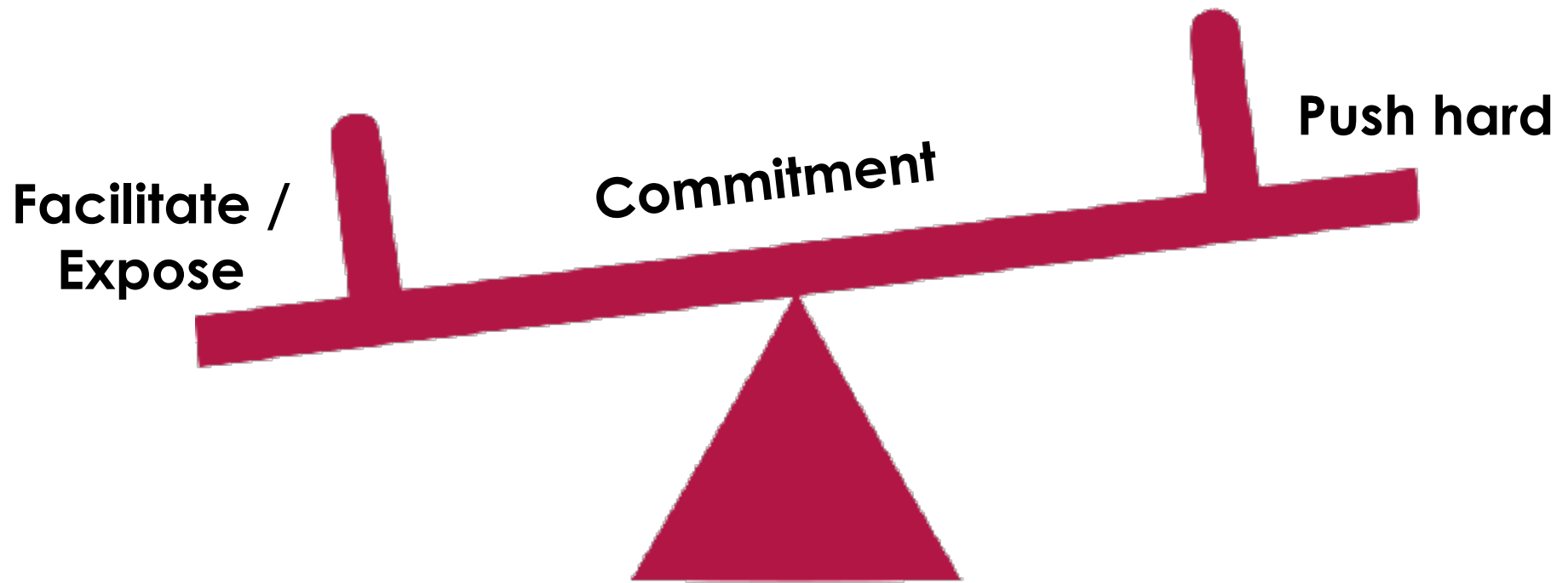
But also be reasonable about it..

A photograph of a woman and a young girl on a swing set, overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The woman is in the background, and the girl is in the foreground, looking towards the camera with a serious expression. A solid magenta vertical bar is located in the top right corner.

Pushing

- ▶ Pushing usually begins with the interests of the parents, which do not always correlate with the child's interests.
- ▶ While pushing may lead to some desirable results, it can also lead to resentment.

Balance



NURTURING IDEAS

- ▶ Provide opportunities, regardless of child's age (Museums, camps, special schools, parents' magazines, Mind-Plus).
- ▶ Provide opportunities for **socialization** with others of like ability or interests (a major experience enhancer..)



NURTURING IDEAS

- ▶ Provide ways for the child to understand his/her own identity, strengths and weaknesses
(Home projects, private lessons, ethical discussions, bibliography reading).
- ▶ Provide a variety of experiences which also promote fine motor skills, dexterity, and spatial visualization
(Music lessons, painting and drawing, sport).

NURTURING IDEAS

- ▶ Teach your child how to **communicate** effectively and expressively (discussions, practice giving directions).
- ▶ Teach child a variety of **problem solving strategies** to help in social, real world, and academic situations.
(→ **increases stress tolerance**)
- ▶ Create a home environment which **respects questioning and learning**, and not just achievements.

A photograph of a man and a young child in a tense, face-to-face interaction. The man, on the left, has a beard and is wearing a dark t-shirt. The child, on the right, is looking up at the man. The image is heavily overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The text "How (Not) to Argue with your child" is centered over the image in white.

How (Not) to Argue with your child

How (Not) to Argue

- ▶ Gifted children commonly argue as if they are in court.
- ▶ They argue about the house rules, about given punishment, discipline, bedtime, dinner.
- ▶ Basically, they'll argue about nearly anything they don't like or they want to avoid.



How (Not) to Argue

- ▶ Above anything else – they often demonstrate a preoccupation with “fairness” and show sensitivity toward the plight of others



How (Not) to Argue



Although a gifted child can make excellent arguments, it's important for parents to make sure they remain in charge (!)



Gifted or not – children still need guidance and clear boundaries.



Gifted children should never be excused from bad behaviour only because they make a good case.

How (Not) to Argue

- ▶ **Make the Rules Clear.**
If you have to deal with a little lawyer, you'll have to [start thinking like one](#).
- ▶ [Anticipate](#) that your child will find any loophole you have left in a rule.
- ▶ For instance : “Go to bed” ≠ “Go to sleep” (hence: I can go to bed and still play on my device...)



How (Not) to Argue



- ▶ **Make the Consequences for Breaking the Rules Clear.**
- ▶ A gifted child may admit to breaking a rule, but he can still argue over the consequences.
- ▶ He/she may think the rule was unfair to begin with or that the punishment is unfair.

How (Not) to Argue



- ▶ **Make Consequences Reasonable and Enforceable.**
- ▶ It's not very useful to tell a four-year-old child that she won't be able to have friends over for three months.
- ▶ It is not enforceable to tell a child that if he does not go to bed, you will not feed him for the next 168 days (good luck with the counting..)

How (Not) to Argue

- ▶ **Avoid Negotiating Consequences *After* a Rule has been broken.**
- ▶ Negotiating after the rule has been broken is almost as bad as eliminating the consequence altogether.
- ▶ Remember – some kids are so good in arguing, that you may actually agree with them...



How (Not) to Argue

- ▶ **Keep cool and Don't Argue Back.**
- ▶ It is easy to get pulled into a debate.
- ▶ The best response *at this point* is to say something like:
"You knew it was bedtime, but you refused to go. We can talk about a different bedtime tomorrow".



How (Not) to Argue



- ▶ **Increase the Consequence if Your Child Continues to Argue.**
- ▶ Give your child a chance to stop the arguing by giving a warning first.
- ▶ If your child continues to argue – double the consequences (“now you cannot watch this TV show for two days”).
- ▶ Gifted kids are bright enough to know when they need to stop arguing.



Being with the gifted
child.

Is it any different?

YES AND NO ...

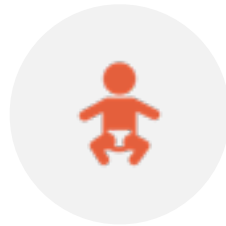
Love is essential

- ▶ Love is something too often taken for granted
- ▶ Spending time with the child is a very important factor.
- ▶ Remember that giftedness is nothing but a **potential**. You still need to be there.

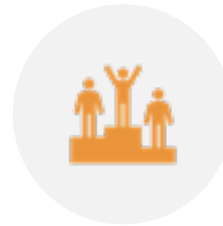
Praising the right way



PRAISE THE
PROCESS AS
WELL AS THE
PRODUCT



EMPHASIZE THE
CHILD'S
PLEASURE



DOING THE
JOB IS THE
REWARD



DON'T DENY THE
CHILD'S VERSION
OF REALITY. IT MAY
SEEM OFF AT TIMES,
BUT THAT IS HIS/HER
CREATIVITY.

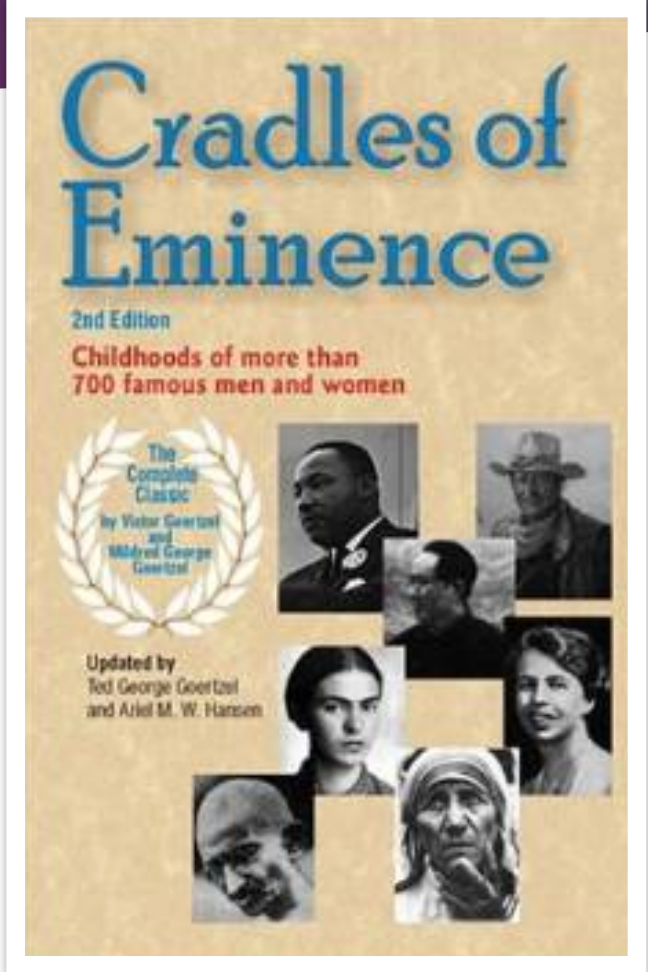
Love is essential

- ▶ Dedicate time for **family conversation**, where the children can express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.
- ▶ Navigate the conversation so the other children have some presence as well.



Some more tips

- ▶ By Victor Goertzel
- ▶ An older book which describes the life experiences of 700 gifted influential figures.
- ▶ Including experiences at school, home, family, etc.



Summary of the Findings About Those Who Became Eminent

- ▶ Most of these children were “allowed” to take a risk to develop their talent rather than pursue the traditional-university-world of work career path.
- ▶ Being in the **right place at the right time** accounts for some of the fame and eminence, but those who “cashed in” on this were **well prepared**, open to what they were offered, and persistent as well.



Summary of the Findings About Those Who Became Eminent

- ▶ These children learned to think and express themselves clearly
- ▶ All had learned to be persistent in pursuing their own visions and goals
- ▶ Their parents held strong opinions about controversial subjects
- ▶ The parents often were pressured by others to have their children conform to mediocrity

Recommended Readings

- ▶ A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children(Webb, Gore, Amend, & DeVries, 2007)
- ▶ Children: The Challenge(Dreikurs& Soltz, 1991)
- ▶ Cradles of Eminence: Childhoods of More than 700 Famous Men and Women(Goertzel, Goertzel, Goertzel, & Hansen, 2003)
- ▶ Dr. Sylvia Rimm's, Smart Parenting: How to Raise a Happy, Achieving Child(Rimm, 1996)
- ▶ Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Source for Parents and Teachers(Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan1982)
- ▶ How to Behave So Your Children Will Too(Severe, 2003)



Thank you
for
listening

NOW IS THE TIME FOR SOME
LAST QUESTIONS