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## INTRODUCTION

This book is for *you* to help you understand what it means to be “gifted.”

When was the first time you knew that you were “gifted?” You may have heard your parents talking, or you may have always secretly known that you were different. Most young people first hear about it in school, when they are being considered for a “gifted” program. How you learned about it isn’t important. Now that you know, it’s important to find out what it means and what it doesn’t mean.

There is much *confusion* about the word “GIFTED.” When you study its significance, you quickly learn that all the “experts” disagree. Even so, there are similarities in characteristics and traits that most “gifted” persons exhibit and common problems and thoughts that they experience. I will share these with you in this book.

To find out what other “gifted” young persons were thinking, I solicited poetry from all over the country. “Gifted” students from Montana to Arizona, Virginia to Ohio shared their concerns and thoughts about being “gifted.” From seven to seventeen, they shared their joys and fears, their fantasies and disappointments, their confusion and their understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.

I am sure that many of their thoughts will be your thoughts. Many of their fears will be things you have feared. Many of their ideas will be ideas similar to those you have had.

This book is designed to help you understand how you are “like” everyone else, and more importantly, how you are “different.” And, to help you understand that to be “different” is *okay!*

This book is also designed to help you understand what being a “gifted” person means, which should help you better understand who you are and where you fit in.

### CONFUSED

Is it true that I am gifted; isn't everyone?  
I think everyone should be their own person.  
When I leave for gifted class  
Kids look through the bus window staring at me.  
It seems they envy me.

When I am in school, teachers may call on me  
To help them more than others.  
Sometimes I feel my friends are mad at me.  
Sometimes I am really confused.

**JASON JONES**  
Age 10, Grade 5

Before we talk about what “gifted” is, let’s talk about what “gifted” is not.

**Gifted is NOT:**

- A PERFECT person who always gets all “A’s;”**
- A person who never makes a mistake;**
- A person who is always mature;**
- A person who is always polite;**
- A person who walks around with a book all the time;**
- A person with thick glasses and curly hair;**
- A person who is terrible at sports;**
- A person who thinks they are better than anyone else.**
- A person who always has the “right” answer;**
- A person who gets special privileges;**
- A person who only thinks about school subjects;**
- A person who KNOWS better.**

Now we can all sight examples of persons we know who are “gifted” and do exhibit some of the things mentioned above, but for the most part, “gifted” persons aren’t like that. Many of the concerns or problems you will have as a “gifted” person will come to you not because you are doing anything wrong, but because those around you will not understand what “gifted” people are all about. The most important thing you can do for yourself is to learn all you can about the “gifted” so you, in turn, learn more about who you really are. Once you understand yourself, it becomes easier to deal with those around you.

**You are GIFTED!**

- You have been given a mind that learns differently, often faster than others your age.**
- You are not better or smarter than anyone else.**
- You are not gifted because you took a test.**
- You have been given the ability to see and understand things beyond your years.**
- You have the same responsibility as everyone else ... to develop your talents and gifts to the fullest and to utilize these gifts for the good of mankind, be that your immediate family, your community, your country, or your world.**

## PARENTS

Have you ever felt frustrated and at your wit's end trying to understand your gifted child? Well, you are not alone. Most parents of the gifted have felt that way.

### MY CHILD

My child was different than the other pre-schoolers on our block.  
When he started to read at three, did math and told time,  
We were proud, yet baffled and shocked!  
He was sensitive, imaginative with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge.  
He approached Kindergarten with great anticipation, and came home in despair.  
You see, they didn't do math, real math, addition and subtraction, or read  
Novels, study electricity or the planets in Kindergarten.  
My child asked, "Why Mommy, why?"  
The teacher said, "Yes he's bright, but we have to work on his social maturity,  
After all, if he can't relate to five year olds, he's going to have trouble  
The rest of his life."

My child was channeled into a program which met his unusual needs.  
He blossomed and bloomed.  
In one year he built a computer, and a dinosaur, and studied the brain cells.  
He learned to use the library and did a research project once a month.  
He was only six years old!  
We moved and the program is gone now.  
Today my child is eight.  
His teacher says he doesn't know his vowel sounds and has a great deal of trouble reading  
She put him in the lowest reading group, four years behind what he was reading

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## CHAPTER I

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### BEING GIFTED

#### BEING GIFTED

When you're *gifted*, it's like opening a treasure chest,  
Because you're special from the rest.  
You learn in a great and special way,  
Which makes it different every day.  
You open a door to a creative place  
With horses and demons and queens with lace.  
So if you're *gifted*, you should try  
To set your *goals* up to the sky.

JILL CARR

Age 11, Grade 5

Being *gifted* is like opening a "treasure chest." A chest filled with wonderful things which can never be enjoyed unless someone cares enough to explore, find, open and free what's inside.

#### AM I GIFTED?

Am I *gifted*?  
Why am I here?  
Am I really special?  
I'm not really sure.

I get F's,  
And that's just a start.  
I get A's;  
I don't feel smart.

Am I *gifted*?  
Is that why I'm here?  
I really don't know.  
I really don't know.

RANDY DAYKIN

Age 12, Grade 6

Gifted persons share many common characteristics. That means they are alike in many ways. Here are a few characteristics that I think will help you understand yourself better. You may not see yourself in all of these characteristics, but I am sure you will see yourself in some of them.

### **COMMON CHARACTERISTICS SHARED BY GIFTED PERSONS**

1. Lots of energy
2. Large vocabularies
3. Extreme sensitivity
4. Emotionally sensitive to the world around
5. Enhanced ability to interact with themselves, abstract concepts, physical objects and others
6. Advanced powers of concentration and intense curiosity

Now let's take a closer look at each of the ways that gifted persons are alike.

Have you ever been caught reading under the covers with a flashlight when you were supposed to be asleep? Well, that's your high energy level working for you. In fact, many gifted persons need less sleep than others their age. This comes in handy when you have diverse interests.

Have you ever wanted to do three things at the same time and felt really sad that you could do only one? That happens when you have so much energy and not enough time to pursue all your interests. You're not alone if it's hard to make choices.

### **THE SORCERER**

I am a great sorcerer.  
I become animals, you see.  
Never do I know next  
What shape will come over me.

Once I was an eagle.  
Nothing could escape my eye  
I would soar forever ...  
My head up in the sky.

I wanted to be an eagle forever!  
To glide in the sky with all my feathers ...  
But it was not to be,  
And you can guess what happened to me.

Slowly I became a deer,  
Running at everything  
I learned to fear.