

Catalyst

Catalyst is published every two months, for alumni of our seminars and workshops to remain connected, and for coaching clients, prospective clients, and other interested parties to learn about who we are and what we do. Also available electronically in Writings at www.DancingStar.com

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The Role of Multiple Intelligences in Leaders

This newsletter begins a more in-depth exploration of giftedness, high sensitivity, and multiple intelligences in the business arena.

Human capital is a core business resource. As a recent issue of *Human Resource Executive* says, "...such capital and its nourishment are essential to competitive advantage and, ultimately, survival".

Energizing and freeing your people to do their best thinking is key to corporate success. This concept is not new. What may be new is understanding that, as Harvard Professor Howard Gardner says, it's not how smart someone is that matters, it's the ways in which they are smart.

Jim Earley (*V614*) identified the impact misunderstood giftedness can have in the office, as evidenced by otherwise highly talented employees who are a personnel challenge.

Laura Gilbert, Ph.D., a former VP of Organizational Effectiveness, agrees. "Successful gifted adults know how to 'fit with' their workmates, not just 'fit in'. 'Fitting in' often requires the gifted adult to be less of who he/she is. The gifted adult who 'fits with' their workmates remains psychologically whole while adapting his/her behavior to the situation."

Understanding giftedness helps foster more creative, productive relationships in the workplace. So where do multiple intelligences fit?

Mary-Elaine Jacobsen explains it best in **The Gifted Adult**, incorporating Howard Gardner's studies of multiple intelligences into the work of identifying, understanding, and creating action plans for giftedness.

Gardner's 20 years of research at Harvard has identified eight types of "smart" – relationship, self, music, nature, math, logic, spatial, and body. There may be others – these he has documented most thoroughly.

It's not how smart you are, but how you are smart

Seeing ourselves from the perspective of *how* we're gifted shifts the belief many hold that IQ is the key measure of intelligence. The IQ test is primarily a linguistic and mathematical measurement developed to predict how children might perform in school. Using Gardner's framework, that reflects at best two of eight possible intelligences.

Jacobsen says "Everyday geniuses are an invaluable natural resource *because* of their differences". They see things differently than others, and when freed up to do so, find solutions in unexpected places. Think, for instance, of Steve Jobs (can you call a company "Apple"?!). Bill Gates. Henry Ford. People who saw and pushed for solutions at which others initially scoffed.

Gifted people want and need to use their gifts – all of them. It is what feeds them, helps them stay on task, keeps them productive.

Understanding multiple intelligences fine-tunes our understanding of giftedness, increasing productivity in the workplace. Suppose, for instance, you have a talented musician with orchestral training on staff. How might that gift fit with your manufacturing organization? Well, consider how much teamwork goes into creating a finished piece of orchestral music. How important is teamwork to your organization?

Increasingly companies are bringing diverse disciplines such as the arts into professional development sessions for top talent. Understanding all the ways a person is smart identifies new sources of creative solutions to thorny problems.

Many gifted people, asked if they consider themselves gifted, reply "who, me? No!" In part this is due to that common misperception about IQ mentioned above. Yet in addition to Gardner's work, others – like Dana Zohar with spiritual intelligence, and Daniel Goleman with emotional intelligence – are exploring the many and varied ways people are gifted. Recognizing and appreciating these differences can lead to better performance from your human capital, and hence greater profitability for the organization. What would that be worth to you? – Deborah Huisken

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

If you and your company are committed to having an impact in the world, and can use the services of a block-busting coach, consultant, or team facilitator to help you stay on target amid myriad demands, contact Dancing Star International, US landline: +1 413.367.9416; UK cell: +44 798 521-4520; e-mail: info@DancingStar.com, or find us on the web at www.DancingStar.com.

To talk to someone who does not listen is enough to tense the devil. - Pearl Bailey



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*One must embrace the chaos within to give birth
to a dancing star – adapted from Nietzsche*

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clarity, and readability.

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RESOURCES

Resources for adults in business:

– **The Gifted Adult**, Mary-Elaine
Jacobson, Psy.D. ('99).

– **The Advanced Development
Journal** on adult giftedness, pub-
lished by The Institute for the Study
of Advanced Development
– kreimeier-smith.de/new.htm

Much of the currently published
research on giftedness centers on
children. Resources include:

– www.ditd.org/public/
– www.educationaloptions.com/
– [www.stephanietolan.com/nonfic-
tion.htm](http://www.stephanietolan.com/nonfiction.htm)

Deb's Corner



As part of my execu-
tive coaching practice I
offer a training module
to help clients under-
stand their Giftedness,
which includes high
sensitivity, and multi-

ple intelligences. Why? My own
experience is typical of my clients'.

I work with senior-level internation-
al executives, in part because changes
at this level impact so many people's
lives. This group comprises highly
gifted people – that's typically how
they have distanced themselves from
the pack and continued to the top.

When my colleague Jim Earley
(V614) suggested I was gifted, I said
"no way". However, curiosity
piqued, I took an on-line IQ test.
Since my IQ was not in the genius
range, I told Jim "see, I'm not gift-
ed". He suggested I keep looking.

So I picked up Mary-Elaine Jacob-
son's **The Gifted Adult**. I related to
most if not all of the characteristics of
giftedness. Hmm, could that be part
of why my clients are drawn to me?

When I read the part about multiple
intelligences, things started to make
sense. Only then did I start to accept
the idea that I might be gifted, as I
read about characteristics of non-IQ-
related intelligences which sounded
familiar to me.

Many forms of intelligence are sim-
ply not recognized as such. Think
about kids you knew from school
who got into trouble – how bright and
creative (albeit usually not in ways
valued by their teachers) they often
were. Perhaps they were hungry to

use their gifts, but stymied by the sys-
tem's limitations.

Carl Jung typifies a highly gifted
child unrecognized for his gifts. He
writes of how, once "shy, timid, mis-
trustful, pallid, thin, and apparently
unstable in health, I now began to
display a tremendous appetite on all
fronts", after finding like-minded
thinkers in the works of Schopen-
hauer & Kant. Many leaders speak of
difficult childhoods which shifted
once they found their gifts, found oth-
ers who understood and/or shared
those gifts, and started to utilize
them. Still, too many never discover
how to make that shift.

Humans seek community. Connec-
tion can free us to create and produce.
To feel isolated because we don't
"fit" is painful. Plus, cognition and
neurology research indicates that
there are chemical reactions related to
the use – or lack of use – of our
innate abilities. To not use our gifts
is to impact ourselves physically,
resulting in demotivation, depression,
addiction, even mental illness.

To 'fit in', many have denied their
gifts. Not understanding why others
don't see what they see, they look for
who's wrong, and there are usually
only two choices – themselves or the
other. What if we instead understood
different is not wrong, it is simply
different, and very likely valuable?

As the business world embraces
diversity in all its forms, its leaders
are starting to value and develop its
non-traditional
geniuses. Who
might yours be?

SIGNS OF GIFTEDNESS

Now that I know more about giftedness, I more quickly recognize the signs when I speak to gifted people. I see it when they speak of having too many choices, of having to say no to much that is compelling in order to stay focused on a main goal. Or when they speak of moving from job to job, often in a one- to two-year timeframe. Or when they mention having held big and exciting jobs without ever having finished college because college was too boring.

I corroborate my intuition by asking "Do you find that you understand things quickly, often before everyone else?" "Have you often had great business ideas that you discounted, only to have someone else take the same idea and achieve success with it?" "Do you put ideas together in ways others don't, then notice that it takes them quite a while to see what you're talking about?" "Have you stopped telling people your ideas because you're tired of being laughed at or misunderstood?" When I get yeses, and groans of recognition, I offer a sample session to discuss our three-month Giftedness in Business Training Module, or invite them to our 2-day Giftedness in Business workshop.

Understanding giftedness is a paradigm shift, a new way of looking at the world which holds great benefits for those who take the time. If it would serve you to learn more, contact me, deborah@dancingstar.com. – Deborah Huisken