The Quest for Understanding...
- What is wrong with my child?
- Why isn't my child like other kids?
- My child is different, but I am not quite sure how
- My child has amazing abilities, but...
- Why are simple things so hard for my child and hard things so simple?

Looking for Answers
- Teachers
- School Counselors
- School Administrators
- Pediatricians and Family Practitioners
- Therapists
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists

Tipping Points
"Tipping points come at odd moments but in talking with other moms they seem to almost always come while trying to intervene or figure out their child."

- Gifted mother of gifted son

“Your child is gifted”

“I think the tipping point is visceral. For me, I was in a meeting with a rather close minded teacher about (Nathan). She said something, and though I held it together on the outside, inside there rose a rage at a level I had not felt before and an estrogen motivated voice wanted to scream at the top of my lungs 'this is NOT going to happen to my kid.' The subsequent reflection was because I totally understood what he felt and how she and the world viewed him."

- Gifted mother of gifted son
**Swirling Questions...about your child**
- How do I help my child fit?
- How do I help my child accept who he is?
- How do I protect my child from the world?
- How do I make sure my child does not experience what I experienced?
- How do I nurture my child’s abilities?

**Parallel Paths**

**Swirling Questions...about yourself**
- How can I help my child figure things out if I wasn’t able to?
- How can I help my child figure things out if I still am not able to?
- Can I meet my child’s needs if I don’t know how to meet my own?
- How can I meet my own needs?
- How do I even know what my needs are?

**Simultaneous Processing**
- Helping your child (yourself) find meaningful relationships
- Helping your child (yourself) feel and be successful
- Helping your child (yourself) find meaningful activities and endeavors
- Helping your child (yourself) understand the rules of the game
- Helping your child (yourself) learn to cope with life
- Helping your child (yourself) understand her (your) strengths and weaknesses

**Taking Inventory**
- Who let you down?
- Who supported you?
- What did you need and didn’t get?
- What did you get that you really needed?
- How did your giftedness (identified or not) effect your childhood and school experience?
- Were you identified and supported?
- Were you identified and ignored?
- Were you missed and/or misdiagnosed?

**Coming to terms...**

“...with spending a lifetime trying to fit into the ‘normal’ then being given a quirky kid where as a parent you know your job is to help them become comfortable with themselves just as they are. Therein sets the stage for a great deal of inner conflict...The starting point which is self-recognition. This conflict is incessantly fueled by the Mommy (or Daddy) drive to do everything you can in the best interest of your child...and so walls fall and the façade crumbling begins!”

-Gifted parent of gifted child
Deep Emotions

- Guilt
- Shame
- Depression
- Worry
- Fear

Positive Disintegration...

The Journey Begins...

Tasks

- Accept your own giftedness in the process of accepting your child’s
- Separating your child’s needs and experiences from your own
- Allow your child to have her own experiences and path
- To understand yourself with your new awareness
- Look back in order to move forward

Searching...

- Who am I?
- What do I really care about?
- What do I really like to do?
- How can I find meaning?
- How can I make a difference?

“Unless gifted adults learn to value themselves and find support, identity conflicts and depression may result. Emphasis on self-growth through knowing and accepting self leads to the discovery of sources of personal power. Nurturing relationships through realistic expectations and learning to share oneself provides a supportive environment in which gifted adults can grow and flourish.”

-Dierdre Lovecky (1986)
Characteristics of Gifted Adults
Dierdre Lovecky (1986)

- Divergency – A preference for the unusual, original, and creative
- Excitability – High energy level, emotional reactivity, and nervous system arousal
- Sensitivity – A depth of feeling that results in a sense of identification with others
- Perceptivity – An ability to view several aspects of a situation simultaneously; and ability to understand several layers of the self within another
- Entelechy – Motivation; inner strength; "vital force directing life and growth to become all the self is capable of being"

Characteristics and Emotions of Gifted Adults
Annemarie Roeper (1995)

Gifted adults:
- often have strong feelings encompassing many areas of life
- search for meaning in both the inner world and outer world
- are often confronted with the problem of having too many abilities in too many areas in which they would like to work, discover and excel

Characteristics and Emotions of Gifted Adults
Annemarie Roeper (1995)

Gifted adults:
- often have feelings of being misunderstood, of being outsiders, and of being unable to communicate
- have difficulty understanding the seemingly inconsistent and shortsighted behavior of others
- may find it more difficult than others to take risks because they realize more what is at stake

Mahoney’s Identity Formation Model

- Validation – Acknowledgement of gifts
- Affirmation – Interactive acknowledgement of the gift; a seconding of the motion
- Affiliation – Alliance with others of similar interests, passions, and intensities
- Affinity – Something larger than oneself; a mission or calling

Self-Exploration
Dierdre Lovecky (1986)

- What are my strengths?
- What are my passions?
- What are my weaknesses?
- What do people like about me?
- What do people find frustrating or annoying about me?
- What are my overexcitabilities or sensitivities?
- How is my perfectionism getting in the way?
- Where are my people?

Ingredients for Self-Growth
Dierdre Lovecky (1986)

- Nurture the self
- Know oneself
- Accept oneself
- Find sources of personal power
- Nurture interpersonal relationships
### The Ultimate Motivation

- Figure out how to be yourself and value yourself in order to help your child do the same (at a much earlier age)
- Use YOUR wisdom to teach your child about how life works (and often doesn’t work)
- Experience the freedom of feeling comfortable with your essence, your abilities, and your quirks
- Enjoy being connected to yourself and others
- Allow yourself to actualize and find meaning

### “Giftedness is an ongoing process and not a product.”

- AnneMarie Roeper

### References