

# **GATE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**- February 27, 2018 -**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
Approval of Minutes	9:00	
Wonders Assessments	9:15	Lisa Green
Middle College	9:45	Cathleen Corella
Social & Emotional Health	10:00	Laura Kresl
Discussion	10:15	



# Social & Emotional Health

Resources from:  
[SENGifted.org](https://www.sengifted.org)

# Controlling Emotions

**De-Escalating:  
Helping Gifted  
Children  
Identify Their  
Emotions &  
Regain Control**

**Motivation**

**Motivation:  
Recapturing  
the Joy of  
Learning**

Twice  
Exceptional  
Children

The  
Dichotomy of  
my 2e Child



13



3



# Motivation: Recapturing the Joy of Learning

Mar 6, 2014 | Articles, For Families, Needs: Emotional, Needs: Intellectual

## Motivation: Recapturing the Joy of Learning



Molly Isaacs-McLeod

I frequently field concerns expressed by parents of gifted children and teens regarding motivation and underachievement. There are common threads in the many stories I have heard. At one time their child was fully engaged, joyous, and nearly insatiable about learning. Over time they notice that the child is less excited to learn.

The child who at one time made weekly trips to the library to check out “literally every book” about one topic and then another seemingly loses interest. Eventually the child, or teen, is doing the minimum to get by; sometimes the minimum is a good day!

For some, this phenomenon seems to crop up shortly after the transition to middle school. I have had parents say their heretofore curious, straight-A student came home and announced that he is “not smart anymore.” From there, the student seems to give up. Often what has happened is that after years of exposure to spiraling curriculum, the student has tuned out, having grasped the content the first time she saw it. Middle school presents not only more challenging content, but the demand for organizational and study skills. If the student has not had to study and has not needed to develop time management and other organizational skills, it is easy to see how the student might feel “less smart” and overwhelmed.

As high school begins and college nears parents become very concerned. What will this mean for college acceptance? What opportunities will be missed if students are not “giving their all?” What about post-baccalaureate opportunities and career options? Will she ever be able to move away and have a self-supported life of her own? It is easy for parental anxiety to spiral.

So what is a parent to do? How can the parent support the child, offer appropriate guidance and structure, while not compromising the relationship? While there is no “sure fire” approach (you probably already knew that!), there are strategies that can work. You, as the parent and as the person who knows your child and your family best, are the one best suited to sort through ideas and determine what is most appropriate.

Consider environmental factors:

- Health (lack of sleep, nutrition, substance abuse, latent learning disability).
- Family stress (expectation levels, move, divorce, chemical dependency of a family member).

- Relationships (dumbing down to fit in, parental modeling of hard work, zest for learning, mutual respect between parents and child/teen).
- School (lack of challenge and opportunity to work at appropriate level).

For more detailed discussion, please see *A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children*, Webb et al, p. 58.

f



in



13



3

•••

If a review of these considerations does not point to there being an issue that might dampen motivation, you might look at the situation from the perspective of your child. What is important to her? What is her current area of interest? You may have to look outside school subjects to find an area of passion. When possible, even if it is a stretch, try to transfer the level of passion and interest your child has in one area to the ones for which she is less enthusiastic. Try to link the interest to the desired behavior in some way. Depending on the student's school setting, you can sometimes successfully enlist the aid of a teacher.

Some additional things to consider:

- Build a healthy and supportive relationship. Often, by the time the spiral of underachievement begins, parents are at odds with their children. Put the relationship first. Begin by modeling respect and caring. If you can't remember the last time you and your child did something for fun together, wholly unrelated to academics or performance, make sure you arrange an enjoyable activity.
- Consider how you would want to be treated in a similar situation. If you were struggling at work would you prefer a supervisor who offered specific constructive criticism with support and guidance in resolving the issue, or one who berated you for your shortcomings with no offer of a path for improvement?
- Discuss the issue with your child at a time when the discussion is not a prompt for completing an assignment or a response to poor performance.
- Educate yourself about the role that giftedness plays in underachievement and lack of motivation. Share with your child that these issues are not uncommon, that she is still capable, and that you are there to support her through rediscovering her interests.
- Consider enlisting the aid of a college and career counselor. Sometimes a third party can be heard in a way that a parent simply cannot be by a child, especially an older one.
- If you have a sense of what might be interesting to your child, try to arrange for a mentoring relationship with someone who works in that field. This could involve anything from an informational interview to an internship.
- Acknowledge the successes. Parents of gifted children tend to focus on the lowest grade, much like the children themselves. You may need to provide a reality check for your child by reflecting the facts of the situation back to her.
- If you have experienced a period of "being stuck," not being sure what you wanted to do, or being challenged (in school or work) and not knowing how to move forward, share that experience with your child. If someone close to your child (family friend, godparent, etc.) has gone through something similar, ask that person to intervene.

It is crucial to be patient, not only with your child, but also with yourself! As adults, with some experience of the world, we know the pitfalls of not working hard or making the grade. We have appreciation of the

long-term consequences of decisions made (actively or by default) at this crucial time.

By putting the relationship first you are letting your child know that she, as an individual, is what is important to you. You are saying you love and support her no matter what. Does this mean you disregard the need for guidance in the academic and career area? Absolutely not, as that is part of the parenting role. However, your child will be far more receptive to your suggestions and offers of assistance if she knows that you love and support her, unconditionally.



13



3



For more information on this topic, please visit the SENG website, where you can search our [database of articles](#) and other resources by topic. You might also consider finding a [SENG Model Parent Group \(SMPG\)](#) near you or sign on for [SENG Online Parent Support Groups \(SOPS\)](#), where we discuss these issues.

## Trackbacks/Pingbacks

1. [Asynchronous Development Impacting Learning – Ars Doctrina](#) - [...] You can also access more articles by clicking on the link below. Motivation and Learning: <http://sengifted.org/motivation-recapturing-the-joy-of-learning/> To access more...

## Search

Search

## Follow SENG



## Article Categories

## Recent Posts

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT): Evidence-based Stress and Anxiety Management for Gifted Students February 22, 2018

Change, Loss, and Giftedness: A Counselor Examines the Intersection February 15, 2018

Fostering Self-Compassion in Gifted Individuals – Heather Boorman February 13, 2018





5



27



# De-Escalating: Helping Gifted Children Identify Their Emotions and Regain Control

Jan 26, 2018 | For Professionals, Needs: Emotional

by Sarah Young

It's the week before winter break. Utter chaos reigns. Every day there is a condensed schedule, an assembly, or other interruptions that distress my anxious, perfectionist, or autistic gifted kids. In the 3.5 minutes before students come pouring into my classroom adorned in ugly sweaters and crazy hats, I receive an email that says: *Matthew is crying on the floor uncontrollably because he didn't make math competition. Help.*

When I arrive, our behavior interventionist is sitting next to Matthew, trying to calm him but getting nowhere. Sometimes, what we say to a child in crisis harms our relationship with them and prevents them from processing their emotions. Here are some of the unhelpful things I heard:

What Not to Say	Example	Why Not to Say it
I know (exactly) how you feel.	I was so upset when I didn't make the math Olympiad team in fifth grade.	Right now, the child needs you to help them sort through their own emotions. They don't need you focused on yourself and how you feel. Instead, identify and communicate the child's emotions, not your own. (Not to mention, you might not <i>actually</i> know what the child is feeling—their view of the situation might not match your own.)
At least...	At least you made the team; some kids didn't.	You are trying to gloss over their problem. You are saying the child shouldn't feel upset or frustrated because <i>at least</i> something good

happened. Even if this is true, it's not helpful.

Don't reward the child for ignoring or pushing down their emotions.

The emotions are still there, and they will probably rear up later. This doesn't process any feelings or teach the student any coping strategies.

How about you get up, and we'll (reward you). Stop crying, and we'll get you some tickets for being in control.

Okay, so what should I say to my student who is sobbing on the floor, unwilling to move or speak to anyone? Start with this:

What to Say	Example	Why to Say it
I bet you are feeling...	I bet you are feeling really disappointed after not making the math club.	This one seems counterintuitive, but helps to identify and communicate the child's emotions. It is important to know what they are feeling and show that you are hearing them. They will tell you if you've misidentified their emotions.

Now, it's time to implement what I call a "new thinking" strategy. Not every phrase works in every situation or with every child. You have to choose the phrase that fits based on what the child is feeling, be it disappointment, anxiety, nervousness, guilt, etc.

Phrases that Promote New Thinking	Why I Love It	Tips
What would you tell your best friend if they were in this situation or had this thought?	We are most critical of ourselves. By asking what they would tell their best friend or sister or teammate, we allow them room for empathy and take away self-criticism.	Get as specific as possible. Name their best friend or most loved family member. You may even change the situation to fit the person—"What if your sister didn't make cheer competition?"
Will this bother you in an hour? What about tomorrow?	Sometimes, we blow things out of proportion and we can only focus on	If you see this one heightening their fear, back off and try a new strategy. This phrase is





5



27



What about next week?

the present. By looking at the future, we can give students hope. If this won't bother me in an hour, should I really be this distressed?

great, but only works for certain children.

Example: Student gets a cut and is worried it will get infected.

What is the chance that this fear will come true?

Usually, students are focused on the 0.05% chance, rather than the 99.95% chance. They are seeing the worst outcome, rather than the most likely. This helps shake that thinking.

I would ask:

- How many times have you gotten cuts?

- How many have been infected?

- Did you clean the cut?

- So, how likely is it that it will get infected?

What is the worst case scenario? What about the best? The most likely?

This one seems counterintuitive as well, but often by naming our worst fear, we tame it. When I actually say my worst fear aloud, it's no longer in my head, circling around, gaining momentum.

May need to help the child reach the conclusion that the scenarios described are not catastrophic—e.g., "In the worst case, my friend will be upset with me." "And then?" "Then they won't talk to me for a while." "And then?" "Well, we'll probably be okay again."

So, which phrase should I pick for my student? Well, the "worst case scenario" has kind of already happened for this child. He didn't make the team. So, that eliminates the bottom two phrases, which help more with fear and anxiety. So, let's try one of the top two phrases. Here goes.

**Me:** Matthew, why are you crying?

**Matthew:** I didn't make math competition, and it was the only thing that I wanted this year. It was the only thing that was for me, not my parents.

**Me:** Wow, that sounds really frustrating. I bet you are really disappointed.

**Matthew:** Yes, I can't believe it. I got 15th, and I needed to be top 8.

*(Resist the urge to say: Holy moly! You got 15th out of 50 gifted students. That's pretty amazing. You should be proud of that.)*

**Me:** Gosh. I'm so sorry. What would you tell your best friend if this happened to them?

**Matthew:** I don't know.

**Me:** Seriously, what would you tell Ben if this happened to him? Would you be frustrated with him?

**Matthew:** No. I don't know. He could probably still go to practices and hang out. And there's math team next year.

**Me:** Okay, so that's great. You can still have all your math club friendships. What if we practice the problems you got wrong during your free choice time with me, so that you feel more confident next year?

**Matthew:** Yeah. That'd be good.

A few sentences later, and Matthew is okay. We go to the bathroom, get him cleaned up, and he returns to class in a good mood.

It's not always this easy, but it is so important to hear our gifted kids, communicate their emotions, and then help them learn how to process those emotions and find healthier ways to deal with them.

Eventually, students can internalize this process and need us less and less.

I have one student who still carries around a dingy, no-longer-sticky, post-it note with her "new thinking" phrases on it that help calm her anxiety. Her mom says she looks at it daily. What tools will you give your students to help them be healthier, happier, and learn to regulate their emotions?



## 1 Comment



**Shannon** on January 28, 2018 at 8:40 pm

Very helpful ... Going to try with my son who is gifted and can get overwhelmed with emotion too.

Reply

### Search

Search

### Follow SENG



### Article Categories



f

3

in

3

16

...

...

# The Dichotomy of my 2e Child

Apr 18, 2017 | For Professionals, Twice Exceptionality, Voices

by Julie F. Skolnick, M.A., J.D.

Your child is amazing. Your child is disrespectful.

Your child is bright. Your child cannot write.

Your child has such empathy.

Your child does not know how others feel.

Your child will change the world. Your child does not know how to behave.

A breath of fresh air. Annoying.

Fun. Challenging.

Creative. Stuck.

Out of the box. Black and white.

Joyful. Weird.

Helpful. Inappropriate.

Parents of 2e children hear these adjectives simultaneously on any given day. Their kids know others think these things. The concern is that 2e kids doubt the positives and self-define as the negatives.

How is it possible such diametrically opposed descriptors are used to define the same person? Does the child change like a chameleon in different settings? Sort of. Does the child want to be "good" sometimes and want to be "bad" other times? Never. The child always wants to be liked, always wants to be "good."

The child is the same, but in each setting (read classroom or activity) the child knows the perception of the adult in charge. Whether the adult exudes a positive or negative vibe directly affects the child's behavior. There is an element of fulfilling the prophecy with bad behavior and making the experience less painful. In this vein, the 2e child, when he knows he's perceived negatively, behaves in the way he thinks is expected. Like ripping a band aid off quickly, the 2e child gets the label stuck on his forehead as soon as possible. It's too much pressure to wait and see. It's too difficult to change his reputation. It's easier to get it over with. Now he knows his role and will perform – it's much less disappointing than trying to meet standards he thinks will likely result in failure. If he doesn't try, he can't fail. Sabotaging himself is much more comfortable than putting forth efforts to no avail.

But in a different atmosphere-where the 2e child is understood and especially when he is appreciated, the 2e child makes every effort to impress, comply, participate, and adds to the depth and breadth of the experience for everyone including the adult in the room.

Fathoming his struggles and embracing his efforts allows the child to believe that he can do what's asked and expected.

Comprehending the marriage of ability and disability and the resultant frustration gives the child space to feel safe and take risks.

Happy. Angry. Helpful. Uncooperative. These adjectives fall under the categories of understood or misunderstood. Whose aim is it to change perception? Whose job is it to alter the environment; the frustrated child or the unenlightened adult?

-  f
-  3
-  in 3
-  16
- 
- 

**About the Author**



Julie Skolnick is the Founder of With Understanding Comes Calm, LLC supporting parents of, educators of, and adults who are gifted and distractible. Julie is an SMPG facilitator and SENG's Maryland liaison. She serves on the Maryland Superintendent's Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented and is the co-director of Camp Summit for the Gifted. Subscribe to Julie's monthly newsletter, "Gifted & Distractible" on her website [www.WithUnderstandingComesCalm.com](http://www.WithUnderstandingComesCalm.com) and

follow With Understanding Comes Calm on Facebook, her regular Facebook Live broadcasts "LET'S TALK 2E!" Instagram @letstalk2e, and Twitter @JulieSkolnick

## 8 Comments



**Kim** on July 7, 2017 at 2:21 am

This is my son... sadly, he was labeled behavioral and emotional, because he refused "unhelpful" help, especially people who passed judgement and told him he didn't do the work. We need a complete psychological evaluation. Any suggestions?

Reply



**Lisa Maletich** on May 22, 2017 at 9:13 am

This really hits home! Thank you for such an honest, accurate, and succinct description of what some of our children experience – and what we experience as well!

Reply



**Sarah** on May 22, 2017 at 4:24 am

Yes!!! That is exactly it! The attitude or vibe of the other person is an integral part of my child's performance with teachers, family members, etc. I have spent SO much time and energy educating my child's teachers every year in an attempt to set the relationship off on the right foot. If the teacher and my child are out of step in the beginning, there will be

problems all year. There are even family members who are doomed to have a poor relationship with my child because of this as well. I have one more dichotomy to add to the list in regard to my child's personality: compassionate/forgiving and unwaveringly judgemental. It just depends on the other person.

Reply



3



3



16



**Toi Gilbert** on May 11, 2017 at 7:25 am

My son is now 18 and he is miserable. He started doing his sister (3 years older) math homework faster and more accurate at the age of 4. He just picked it up one day and did it. Scored gifted in the 2nd grade and again in 6th grade (the schools never gave me his IQ score). My son is all of those adjectives and I know he can be difficult. In first grade he asked if he could quit "Reading Recovery" because he was too 'overwhelmed.' We would spend hours reading one 5 page book with 3-4 words of each page. Then he would pick up Sports Illustrated and read the back cover. I thought the score was my confirmation, I thought scoring gifted would mean he would be separated out. But he wasn't. His teachers were excited that they had a gifted student until they found out who he was. They were not expecting a black kid who they could get to do anything to be anything but the pain in the ass he was. My son is now a high school dropout with a 1.4 gpa. I know he will never be happy until his mind is stimulated by something that interest him. The problem is I too am smart but not like him. I have no clue how to introduce him to is brain. It just breaks my heart cause I know he feels like he doesn't fit in.

Reply



**Danny** on July 7, 2017 at 11:33 pm

Toi-

Thanks for sharing your experiences. As parents of a kid who is also a genius/ pain in the ass we feel your pain. It is so frustrating when the education system lets our kids slip through the cracks. I don't know what the answer is but I'll be praying for your son and just want you to know that you're not alone and that we all need to figure this thing out.

Sincerely

Danny and Lisa

Reply



**Chloe** on May 11, 2017 at 1:24 am

Very interesting article. How many are presumed to have 2E ? I have never heard of this before.. but it actually makes a lot of sense! I will now research it !