

**Conceptual evolution of overexcitability: Descriptions and examples from the work of
Michael. M. Piechowski**

Christiane Wells

Data set compiled for NAGC 2017

<http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/twh24m9gvn.4>

Suggested APA citation:

Wells, C. (2017). *Conceptual evolution of overexcitability: Descriptions and examples from the work of Michael M. Piechowski* [Data set]. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/twh24m9gvn.4>

Table of Contents

Psychomotor Overexcitability	3
Examples of Psychomotor OE	8
Sensual Overexcitability	11
Examples of Sensual OE.....	16
Intellectual Overexcitability.....	21
Examples of Intellectual OE	27
Imaginational Overexcitability	33
Examples of Imaginational OE.....	41
Emotional Overexcitability.....	49
Examples of Emotional OE	66
References.....	88

Data retrieval from QDA Miner, February 25-26, 2017.

PSYCHOMOTOR OVEREXCITABILITY

Descriptions

The psychomotor dimension is one of motor energy, agitation, need for action (Piechowski, 1974, p. 91).

Psychomotor overexcitability appears to be a function of an organic excess of energy, or simply of an excessive excitability of the neuromuscular system. It manifests itself, for example, in rapid talk, violent games, intense athletic activities, pressure for action (typical, for instance, of delinquent behavior). Enhanced neuromuscular excitability facilitates transfer of emotional tension to psychomotor forms of expression. Emotional excitement or distress is converted into gesticulation, pacing, throwing objects, wanderlust, rapid talk, chain smoking. (Piechowski, 1975, pp. 256-257)

The manifestations of psychomotor overexcitability are essentially of two kinds: surplus of energy and nervousness – a psychomotor expression of emotional tension. In nervousness, the emotional tension is translated into psychomotor activity such as tics, nail-biting, or impulsive and violent behavior. (Piechowski, 1979, p. 30)

The surplus of energy can be observed in animated gestures, taking on self-imposed tasks, participation in violent games and sports. *Enthusiasm*: "explosions of joy and exuberance" (SE); "Apparently I talked so much and displayed so much enthusiasm about everything that I was a source of annoyance;" "I practiced the piano until my family begged me to stop;" "I helped do a number of extracurricular activities such as dances and plays." (1979, p. 30)

Games: "He directed the games, tyrannizing over others" (SE); he was "fond of violent games ... liked climbing trees and building houses in the branches" (SE); "Antoine would refuse to take his bath ... without a stitch he would gallop up and down making fun" of the governess (SE); "I remember doing such things as running away from the nurses in my wheel chair, blocking the doorways to rooms so that the nurses couldn't get out;" "A really good gig – I feel really happy;" "I practiced all the fighting skills I could remember when I had taken Karate." (1979, pp. 30-32)

Sports pursued actively and with determination as a primary source of satisfaction or as a source of pride are another indication of psychomotor overexcitability. (1979, p. 32)

Pressure for action can be observed in verbal expressions or in the way actions are taken by a person, for example when decisions are made without much reflection: "I know what I want to do and anything aside from that, anything that conflicts with that, I get rid of or get out of the way somehow, even if it's something that I want to do. I just say, well, your decision is this, you can't do that. I am always happier for being able to make the decision like that;" You have to keep building new things for yourself to get into and to but there's no sense in setting goals that you'll never reach; "I figure the only way to look at death is just to get as much done that you want to do in this life as possible." "If I don't get into the fighting I'll have a breakdown. I have a lot to say about what's happening in this war, and I can say it only as a combattant, not as an onlooker" (SE). It is also characteristic that inactivity brings about annoyance and irritability. (1979, p. 32)

Delinquent behavior without evidence of emotional tension: "I was somewhat of a juvenile delinquent. I was stealing cars and bikes and eventually got caught for it" (1979, p. 32).

Impulsive actions: as a reaction to injustice—"on being compelled to kneel as punishment (which he considered undeserved), a dictionary in each hand, he immediately rose to his feet and in exasperation threw the dictionaries in the midst of the class, then left the room slamming the door behind him" (SE); fights with siblings, fights with parents, running away from home, blow-ups, brawls. (1979, p. 32)

Delinquent behavior: stealing candy, pop, chewing gum—"I only saw stealing as a way to get to those things that my parents could not get me and to get things like gum and candy" (1979, p. 32).

Nervous habits: tics, nail-biting, suicidal attempts of physical nature, wanderlust, frequent changes of jobs, working in spurts, workaholism, chain smoking are common manifestations of the transfer of emotional tension to psychomotor forms of expression. However, by itself, wanderlust or frequent changes of work are not evidence of emotional tension since such general restlessness is characteristic of psychopaths who are very low in anxiety and lack other signs of strong feeling (Cleckley, 1964; Hare, 1970). (1979, p. 32)

In the above, delinquent behavior is placed twice, once as an expression of surplus energy, then as an expression of emotional tension. It is important to distinguish the two different sources of delinquent acts. In the first case there is no emotional frustration and no guilt feelings are present, in the second case there is an expression of emotional deprivation and of feelings of inferiority. The distinction of the two types of delinquent acts rests on the presence or absence of emotional overexcitability: it is absent in the first case but present in the second. The

combination of psychomotor and emotional overexcitability brings about emotional outbursts, violent conflicts with siblings and parents, etc. It also enhances the likelihood of violent suicide. (1979, pp. 32-33)

In its positive manifestation, psychomotor overexcitability appears as organizational ability, great capacity for work and sustained effort, and seemingly inexhaustible energy. For example, several gifted high school students when asked when they feel the most energy said that they always have it, they do not know where it comes from, but they do not seem to ever run out of it. (1979, p. 33)

Psychomotor overexcitability may be viewed as an organic excess of energy or heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system. It may manifest itself as a love of movement for its own sake, rapid speech, pursuit of intense physical activity, impulsiveness, restlessness, pressure for action or drivenness; the capacity for being active and energetic. (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983, p. 272)

Psychomotor overexcitability (P) may be viewed as an organic excess of energy, or heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system. It may manifest itself as a love of movement for its own sake – rapid speech, pursuit of intense physical activity, impulsiveness, restlessness, pressure for action, or drivenness; the capacity for being active and energetic. (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984, p. 81)

Psychomotor overexcitability is an organic excess of energy or heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system. It may manifest itself as a love of movement for its own sake, rapid speech, violent or impulsive activity, restlessness, pressure for action and drivenness. It may be viewed as a capacity for being active and energetic. (Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985, p. 154)

Psychomotor (P) – movement, restlessness, drivenness, an augmented capacity for being active and energetic (Piechowski, 1986, p. 191; 1989, p. 88; 1991, p. 287; Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 176).

Psychomotor hyperexcitability is often expressed through general hyperactivity, domineering, discord, antagonistic attitudes (Piechowski, 1995, p. 4).

Psychomotor "The best physical activity is climbing the ropes at school (1; girl, age 9); "I feel active after lunch. I run around a lot right after lunch" (2; boy, age 9); "I feel the most energy when I am about to go swimming. I feel as if I could go on forever and make higher limits" (3; girl, age 11). The first example expresses an occasional energetic exercise; the second, a regularly arising surge of energy and impulse to discharge it physically; and the third, an intense drive. (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 177)

Thus, the psychomotor mode is one of movement, restlessness, action, excess of energy seeking an outlet (Piechowski, 1999, p. 326-327).

Psychomotor overexcitability describes the surplus of energy characteristic of gifted and creative people as well as the funneling of emotional tension into psychomotor forms of expression. As shown in Table I, the heightened energy of a person can find expression in speaking rapidly, outward gestures of excitement, intense athletic activity, physical work, pressure for action, and strong competitiveness. Emotional tension can be funneled into actions that help discharge it through compulsive talking and chattering, engaging in impulsive actions, displaying nervous habits, working compulsively, or acting out destructively. The higher energy level of creative people is readily noticed, though it is not universal. (1999, p. 327)

Some creators were highly spirited and energetic when they were young but were not so in their adult years. Chopin did not have a strong constitution to begin with and it was later weakened by tuberculosis. Once she returned from boarding school, Emily Dickinson gradually became so agoraphobic and fearful of strangers that she never left her family house. Richard Wagner, Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Thomas Alva Edison are a few examples of the many creators who as children were impetuous, hard-to-control bundles of energy. Today highly spirited gifted children are often mistakenly labeled as hyperactive or having attention deficit /hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). (1999, p. 327)

Saint-Exupery as a boy was wild and fearless, fond of violent games in which he tyrannized over others. Edison was always getting into scrapes because of his inquisitiveness. One day, he attached wires to two large cats and then attempted to rub them vigorously to produce static electricity. The scratches and claw marks he got were deep. Rachmaninoff's favorite sport was to jump on and off horse-driven streetcars in motion, even in winter on icy pavement. In response to the question "How do you act when you get excited?" a poet wrote, "I wave my hands, stumble over my tongue & yak at hyperspeed until my lips are ready to fly off" [pi]. A dancer said, "I feel the most energy in the a.m. Or during or immediately following dancing. I try to 'stay with it,' ride the wave as long as it lasts." The question "What kind of physical activity gives you the most satisfaction?" evoked this response from a young writer/actress, "Swimming but most of all water skiing. It's the most exhilarating sport I've done the feeling of movement, water

and wind against my body all at once." These examples illustrate high energy that finds ways to be discharged physically. (1999, p. 327)

Psychomotor (P) – movement, restlessness, drivenness, and augmented capacity for being active and energetic (Piechowski, 2002, p. 28).

The psychomotor mode is one of movement, restlessness, action, excess of energy (Piechowski, 2003, p. 299).

The excess of energy Dabrowski called psychomotor overexcitability because it has to be discharged using one's muscles whether, for instance, to release the bottled up steam after sitting still or throwing oneself into action. For example, a gifted 16-year old girl said: "I get filled with energy when I need that energy. And, of course, I release it by doing the thing that got me excited in the first place" (Piechowski 2006, p. 40). Psychomotor overexcitability differentiates between gifted and nongifted students (Ackerman 1997; Bouchard 2004; Tieso 2007). Overexcitability stands for the capacity of being stimulated to a high degree and sustaining it for extended period of time. (Piechowski, 2009, p. 178)

Psychomotor Overexcitability (P) may be viewed as an organic excess of energy or heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system. It may manifest itself as a love of movement for its own sake, rapid speech, pursuit of intense physical activity, impulsiveness, pressure for action, drive, or the capacity for being otherwise active and energetic. (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 2)

Heightened Psychomotor Excitability. Katrina was a lively little dynamo in constant motion. Her teachers noted that she learned by being physically active. If an activity was stationary, she didn't stay long with it. If the activity involved movement, it engaged her for a much longer time. She learned best by absorbing information physically. In order to focus their mind and pay attention, highly active children need to be in motion: walking, swinging or tapping their feet. Though the need for movement is natural to children, it is often irritating to adults. Maureen Murdock, an author and psychotherapist, describes how her son in fourth grade was memorizing vocabulary words by drumming on his books, tapping his feet, and marking each beat with a loud hoot. Thanks to this method he got perfect scores on spelling tests, but the family had to endure the noise. (Piechowski, 2014, p. 24)

Psychomotor overexcitability is more than just an abundance of large-muscle physical activity. It includes nervous habits, constant motion, fast talking, chattering when anxious, etc. Rather than being negative, it indicates a child's boundless energy and stamina. Often, however, a gifted child with psychomotor overexcitability is mislabeled with ADHD. (2014, p. 34)

Examples of Psychomotor OE

When I go into a class with a lot of enthusiasm and energy but the class is slow and boring I come out with two times as much energy ready to explode. Unfortunately I usually let this energy out by talking or goofing off in class resulting in trouble. [M age 13] (2014, p. 45)

Sometimes in class (it happens quite often) I get bored because I understand what is being taught, and get a lot of energy. This energy is used to goof off, even though I know I shouldn't. The energy seems to just swell up inside of me, then just flows over. Honestly, some classes are boring and I wish those who understand could go ahead and work. [F age 13] (2014, p. 46)

It's hard to describe but it seems like I want to release all the tension stored in me with one big thrust. Explode until all my energy runs out, but when you feel this way you seem to think your energy won't run out. (If I could only do this before a track meet I'd be in good shape.) [M age 15] (2014, p. 46)

Pretty vague question, sí? things that get me moving include hard driving music and getting behind the wheel of a car. Put them together, dynamite! [M age 17] (2014, p. 46)

Often I get bursts of energy that make me twitch or jump as if suddenly shocked with a high dosage of electricity. [M age 17] (2014, p. 46)

I enjoy physical activity and playing games, but only when the skill of the performance is not important. If winning becomes important, the joy of the thing leaves. I enjoy playing baseball, basketball, football, and almost any other sport as long as no one cares who will win. Once someone cares, I lose interest. [M age 18] (2014, p. 47)

I have the most energy when I'm doing something I'm interested in, particularly when I don't have to do something else and I don't have any deadlines to meet. [F age 16] (2014, p. 48)

I am filled with energy just before I am going to do something I am interested in. This is, of course, the adrenalin effect. Anyway, I get filled with energy when I need that energy. And, of course, I release it by doing that thing which got me excited in the first place. [M age 18] (2014, p. 48)

Dance, most definitely – also pantomime and creative movement – all three are very related to one another. As far as sports are concerned: tennis, because it's very demanding (in that aspect it's like dancing). I really don't strive for performing in dance, just an outlet of energy and expression-I find it very satisfying but also private. If it's exhausting, I usually find it satisfying. [M age 17] (2014, p. 49)

Probably when I sit around too much. If I sit around for more than a day I'll usually feel filled with a lot of energy. To discharge it I'll either run or ride my bicycle. Also, sometimes I unconsciously discharge my energy on my little brother in the form of fighting. [M age 15] (2014, p. 49)

Any type of physical activity that leaves me exhausted makes me feel great, it makes me get a feeling of well being. Things like gymnastics, biking, running or jogging – or really anything that's strenuous is fun to me. [F age 17] (2014, p. 49)

It would be easier to tell you when I don't feel the most energy. [M age 17] (2014, p. 49)

Mild vandalism, and games of chance” [M age 17] (2014, p. 49)

“All sports, practical jokes – extravagant thought out ones” [M age 14] (2014, pp. 49-50)

When I get excited because I am scared, I start getting physical and making jokes. If anyone scares me just for a second, I would probably pick them up and spin them around 'till they get dizzy. If I am excited from a long-term scaredness, I will start making jokes, which my companions get tired of, and I impersonate comedians. When I get excited because I am happy, I get all hot and spastic. I flutter all over the place and don't get anything done. In extremely excited states, I will start shaking and tapping my fingers and toes and I can't hold my legs still. [M age 17] (2014, p. 50)

Either sexual intercourse or playing music. I'd be hard put to choose between the two. Or perhaps, the time spent with my girlfriend after sexual intercourse – the warm, soft moments spent just holding and cuddling. [M age 15] (2014, p. 50)

If I said sex would you die laughing or just be shocked? [F age 16] (2014, p. 50)

I bite my nails. I get nervous stomach aches. My knees shake. I pull on my fingers. Tap my feet. [F age 17] (2014, p. 51)

1. I pace when waiting for the bus in the morning. 2. I rattle my fingers on desks. 3. When standing in front of a crowd I [w]rest my hands together. 4. I twiddle my thumbs. [M age 16] (2014, p. 51)

Rattled nerves launch pencils and rap dental rhythms: I can't think of any nervous habits except one. I have a habit of clicking my retainer for my teeth on and off my teeth. [M age 15] (2014, p. 51)

Playing with my pencil. I don't know how many times it's flown across a room during class. Biting my lips. Fiddling with my hair. Eating. [F age 18] (2014, p. 51)

I bite my pencils and pens – especially during school – I also tend to tear up things like paper napkins at the dinner table – if you call that a nervous habit – I don't know! Question: Did I pass? I know I'm strange! [F age 17] (2014, p. 51)

Yes – I'm a nail-biter and after my nails are chewed to a pulp, I start in on my split ends (I break'em off). Lately – when I'm extremely nervous and I must speak (forensics) or play flute, my mouth dries up and it's like I have cotton balls in it. (Quite horrible!) I think I've lost a lot of confidence and am more insecure when it comes to speaking. It might be 'cuz my best friend and I, who are competing against each other a lot, sort of “out shines” me and where once I was in the “front seat,” now it's like I'm in the trunk! She does everything so damn good! [F age 17] (2014, pp. 51-52)

My biggest nervous habit is an internal one. I become acutely aware of everything I am saying and doing, and try to avoid doing anything embarrassing almost to the point of absurdity. I stop

talking, stop acting, and try to sometimes stop moving to avoid attracting unfavorable attention to myself. This nervous habit probably keeps me from developing any nervous mannerisms, such as drumming my fingers, straightening my tie, or developing a nervous twitch. [M age 18] (2014, p. 52)

SENSUAL OVEREXCITABILITY

Descriptions

The sensual dimension is one of surface interaction through sensory inputs of pleasure and displeasure (Piechowski, 1974, pp. 91-92).

Sensual overexcitability appears to be a function of heightened experiencing of sensory pleasure, which may be manifested as a need for comfort, luxury, stereotyped or refined beauty, fashions, variety of sexual experiences, numerous but superficial relationships with others. Overeating or excessive sexual stimulation are the most common examples of transfer of emotional tension to sensual forms of expression. (Piechowski, 1975, p. 257)

Sensual overexcitability is expressed in heightened experiencing of sensory pleasures and in seeking sensual outlets for inner tensions (Piechowski, 1979, p. 33).

Seeing: beautiful women and beautiful men, "groovy chicks," sunsets; blue skies and puffy clouds; tiny waterfalls; autumn leaves; starlit nights; fog over meadows; fireflies; melting snow, icing on trees; first snowfall" (1979, p. 33).

Smelling: "I love dark, musty smells and earthy smells, herbs and things like that. I love the smell of clean air in spring and tree blossoms and the smell of clean bodies and especially hair" (1979, p. 33).

Tasting: "I like tastes which are mixtures of different elements. Like mixtures of sweet and sour, creamy and crunchy, foods which have the both present in the one. In drinks I like those which don't muck up your mouth, like milk does." (1979, p. 33)

Touching: "I like dough. I like to work in it with my hands. I like the feel of textures like flannel or warm water on my face. I like slick surfaces like slides. I like to walk on carpets instead of

bare floor, except linoleum is nice in the summer when the sun coming through the window warms it..." "Animal fur, provided its on a live animal really turns me on. Physical contact with another person really turns me on – hands, faces, hips, backs and being touched." (1979, p. 33)

Hearing: "I like voices with accents. I like cars going over gravel" (1979, p. 33).

"My mornings were difficult, for my clothes had to exert the same pressure on both sides of my body. One stocking had to be exactly as tight as the other or I couldn't function." "I get pleasure from eating, especially when I am sad or depressed, and this is a terrible way to get pleasure, but sometimes I can't help it!" Overeating, masturbation and sex in general are the most common ways of a sensual release of tension. (1979, p. 33)

Other manifestations of sensual overexcitability include sexual promiscuity, buying sprees, marked interest in clothes and appearance, fondness for jewelry and ornaments, narcissism, frequent changes of lovers and objects of desire, avoidance of reflection (Dabrowski, 1959) (1979, pp. 33-34).

Sensual overexcitability provides for an intensified sensory experience which, if isolated from other modes of experiencing stops at the surface of life. Sensory enrichment and gratification do not contribute to psychological growth because they lack the link with processes of inner psychic transformation. In the absence of emotional overexcitability – which is the mode of relating to others and to oneself – sensual overexcitability is, perhaps, the closest to a stimulus-response mode of functioning. For a purely sensual person, sexual relations do not become personal relations. Psychopaths, for instance can be charming and clever but are deficient in feeling – the feeling of relatedness and identification with others. (1979, p. 34)

The manifestations of sensual overexcitability bear similarity to the Freudian concept of oral traits. But the difference is that oral character is supposed to represent an arrest at the oral stage of development, while sensual overexcitability is simply a category of enhanced responsiveness of the individual to sensual experience. (1979, p. 34)

Sensual overexcitability is expressed in the heightened experience of sensual pleasure and in seeking sensual outlets for inner tension. Beyond desires for comfort, luxury, stereotyped or refined beauty, the pleasure in being admired and taking the limelight, sensual overexcitability may be expressed in the simple pleasure in touching things, such as the texture of tree bark or the pleasure of taste and smell, for instance, the smell of gasoline. In short, it is the capacity for sensual enjoyment. (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983, p. 272)

Sensual overexcitability (S) is expressed in the heightened experience of sensual pleasure and in seeking sensual outlets for inner tension. Beyond desires for comfort, luxury, stereotyped or refined beauty, and the pleasure in being admired and taking the limelight, sensual overexcitability may be expressed in the simple pleasure of taste and smell, for instance, the smell of car exhaust. In short, it is the capacity for sensual enjoyment. (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984, p 82)

Sensual overexcitability is expressed in the heightened experience of sensual pleasure, the seeking of sensual outlets for inner tension. Beyond desires for comfort, luxury, stereotyped or refined beauty, the pleasure in being admired and being in the limelight, sensual overexcitability may be expressed in the simple pleasure derived from touching things, such as the texture of a tree bark or the pleasure of taste and smell, for instance the smell of gasoline. In short, it is a capacity for sensual enjoyment. (Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985, p. 154)

Sensual (S) – enhanced differentiation and aliveness of sensual experience (Piechowski, 1986, p. 191; 1989, p. 88; 1991, p. 287).

Sensual overexcitability can manifest itself through a need and active search for sensory experiences, gentle touches and caresses. This can later be developed into sensual emotionality and a strong sexual drive (Piechowski, 1995, pp. 3-4).

Sensual refers to an expanded and enriched sensory experience (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 176).

Sensual "I like to taste things, it's sort of fun" (1; boy, age 11); [Taste is special] "when [I taste my favorite food–lobster. It tastes luscious and juicy" (2; boy, age 9); [The pleasure of taste is] "a steak and having time to just savor every bite" (3; girl 15). The enjoyment of taste is present in the first example, but in the second it is richer and more vivid. The third and the stronger example was taken from an adult because sensual overexcitability is the least represented in responses of younger subjects (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984), and therefore hard to find at its most intense. (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 177)

The sensual mode loves surface contact, sensory delight, comfort and hedonism (Piechowski, 1999, p. 327).

In sensual overexcitability the pleasures and delights offered through seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, hearing, and sex, as well as multisensory experiences, become enhanced. Persons so endowed immerse themselves in the delight of beautiful things, sounds of nature, sounds of words and music; they note the form, color, and balance in anything around them. Specific aversions to certain tastes, smells, or touch, and the like are also common. Hedonism is often sensual. Sensual pleasure tends to be relaxing and temporarily satisfying. In contrast, when emotional tension is diverted to the sensual channel it may become excess in eating, smoking, shopping, sex, and a constant desire to be admired. For example, Tchaikovsky began smoking for the pleasure it gave him but soon found that it pacified his high-strung nerves – sensual pleasure combined with a reduction of emotional tension. (1999, p. 329)

Painters smell paint, feel the texture of their material, feel the brush strokes in a painting, just as potters feel the clay being molded in their hands, with heightened sensibility in their whole physical being. Many poets are acutely sensitive to the sound of words and their rhythms, the touch of paper, and the look of print fonts. Musicians are supremely aware of timbres of instruments and the distinct color and timbres of voices, sounds of nature, and of their everyday surroundings (e.g., John Cage). (1999, p. 329)

Chopin's description of Henrietta Sontag's singing – one of the greatest sopranos of the early 19th century – is extremely sensual: "You feel as if she was blowing at you perfumes of the freshest flowers and caressing you with the delicious pleasures of her voice, but she rarely moves one to tears." Chopin was making a distinction between a purely sensual delight and being deeply moved emotionally. Charles Darwin derived such intense pleasure from listening to music that his "backbone would sometimes shiver." (1999, p. 329)

The vividness of sensory experience and sensory imagination in highly creative people raises an interesting possibility of testing it. Recent reports show that the brain lights up differently when real memories are recalled than when imaginary memories are recalled. In real memories the sensory areas light up, in imagined memories they do not. Because people who have high overexcitability report experiencing their visualizations as real, one would expect their sensory areas to light up during their fantasizing. (1999, p. 329)

Sensual (S) – enhanced refinement and aliveness of sensual experience (Piechowski, 2002, p. 28).

The sensual mode – of surface contact, sensory refinement, comfort and pleasure (Piechowski, 2003, p. 299).

Sensory experience for gifted children, and adults especially, tends to be of a much richer quality because so much more detail, texture, contrast, and distinction is coming into awareness. What is pleasant is liked with a passion, what is unpleasant is disliked intensely. Dabrowski called it sensual overexcitability. For example, in the words of a 16-year old: “I seem to notice more smells than a lot of other people. I love dark, musty smells and earthy smells, herbs and things like that. I love the smell of clean air in spring and tree blossoms and things and the smell of clean bodies, esp. hair” (Piechowski 2006, p. 48). When sensual overexcitability joins with emotional overexcitability, the experience becomes much richer and more meaningful. For example, a 17-year old girl said, “I like yellow for it seems warm and full of joy” (Piechowski 2006, p. 46). In an intimate relationship sensual and emotional elements go together. (Piechowski, 2009, p. 178)

Sensual Overexcitability (S) denotes a sensory aliveness and heightened capacity for sensual enjoyment. It finds expression in heightened experiencing of pleasure through touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound, as well as in seeking sensual outlets for emotional tensions (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 2).

Sensual overexcitability is also manifested as a desire for comfort, luxury or aesthetic delights; it includes the pleasure derived from being admired or being in the limelight. It may also manifest itself as intense sexuality. Sensual outlets of emotional tension include overeating, shopping sprees, and other forms of self-indulgence to soothe oneself. Sensual OE may also demonstrate itself as extreme sensitivity, and sometimes irritation, to sensory input. Examples include: I love to have something that tastes good in my mouth. I just really enjoy good tasting things. If I taste something I like I can't stop eating it. (Male, age 14) [What kind of physical activity (or inactivity) gives you the most satisfaction?] If I said sex would you die laughing or just be shocked? (Female, age 16) [Is tasting something very special to you?] Yes, it is. Maybe that's why I'm so "picky." Taste depends on flavor, texture, consistency, smell, color and appearance. Beans are so gross! They are just there, they don't do anything for you. Whipped potatoes in butter—they are fun! You can do anything with them! Not that food has to be fun—simply being good in flavor is all right, too! (I don't mean to sound like a jell-o commercial. Watch it shimmer!). (Female, age 16) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 2)

Heightened Sensual Excitability. Heather liked to spend her free time sitting in a costume trunk stroking the fabrics, putting on costumes and jewelry, or sniffing her scented magic markers before she decided which one to use. During story time, she sucked her thumb and pulled on her hair. It was her way of managing the emotions evoked by the story. When upset, she also sucked her thumb and pulled on her hair to manage tension and stress. The smells, tastes, and textures of food affected her. She described the sensuous qualities of an object or place: “The sky is really blue today,” or “Those flowers have a wonderful smell.” In describing her nanny's dog, she said, “It is very Fluffy, with white hair, and tiny.” (Piechowski, 2014, pp. 24-25)

Sensual overexcitability includes heightened sensitivity to sound, light, touch, taste, texture, or smell, which can be viewed in two ways: as difficulty (the excessive sensitivity associated with Sensory Integration Dysfunction) or as the capacity for aesthetic appreciation. In a supportive context, a child with sensual overexcitability may find a life of passion and artistic engagement. In an environment lacking sufficient stimulation or, conversely, with too much competing stimulation, the same child may become anxious, irritable, withdrawn, or even explosive. Here again, the source of the difficulty lies in the mismatch between temperament and environment and is not an inherent defect in the child. (2014, p. 34)

Examples of Sensual OE

When I experience pleasure, it isn't really in any of the five senses. It is a sixth sense [in] my mind. I get mentally happy which makes me physically happy. I hope this answers it, I can't do much better. [M age 15] (Piechowski, 2014, p. 54)

Sunsets; blue skies and white puffy clouds; smiling people; children playing together; tiny waterfalls; autumn leaves; starlit nights; weddings; whitecaps on a lake; babies; fog over meadows; fireflies; sea gulls; dark tornado sky with trees bent way over from wind; melting snow; icing on trees; first snowfall. (All things in nature). [F age 17] (2014, p. 55)

Clothes that match the person wearing them. Cleanliness. Female bodies just a tiny bit on the chubby side. Low cut gowns with breasty women in them. Bikini clad maidens (unless they look better fully dressed). Hair that looks soft and is easily stirred by a breeze (long, silky). [M age 16] (2014, p. 55)

Bright strong colors, seascapes, huge brown eyes, sea blue eyes, auburn-chestnut colored hair, strong solid bodies, firm arms, wide open hands, ... teaming metropolises. The shafts of light through broken clouds. [F age 16] (2014, p. 55)

In aesthetic appreciation, the sensual and the intellectual elements blend together: Anything with fluid, graceful lines, earthy or cool colors ex. Greek sculpture, a hand-woven rug, long hair. Things with character and individuality, even if not particularly beautiful, ex. old faces of people. [F age 17] (2014, p. 55)

Soft colors, such as light blues and greens, have a relaxing effect on me. Soft white clouds on an otherwise clear blue sky is the best example. Design of simple slow curves have a more pleasing effect than straight lines and angles. [M age 17] (2014, p. 55)

Looking may serve the quest for truth and honesty: I like looking at people, especially people with few clothes on. When I see this, the person can't hide behind his clothes and has to come on as the person he really is. [M age 18] (2014, p. 56)

I like bright yellow for it seems warm and full of joy. [F age 17] (2014, p. 56)

I like bright colors (red, orange, yellow). I like smiles and laughing. I like seeing people enjoying what they do. I like to see surprised faces. [F age 16] (2014, p. 56)

People make friends. Animals recover from an illness. [F age 15] (2014, p. 56)

A steak and having time to just savor every bite. [F age 15] (2014, p. 56)

[Tasting is special to me] Maybe that's why I'm so "picky." Taste depends on flavor, texture, consistency, smell, color, and appearance. Beans are so gross! They are just there, they don't do anything for you. Whipped potatoes in butter – they are fun! You can do anything with them! Not that food has to be fun – simply being good in flavor is all right, too! (I don't mean to sound like a Jell-O commercial. Watch it shimmer!) [F age 16] (2014, p. 56)

Sensitivity to textures also plays a role in taste: I like tastes which are mixtures of different elements. Like mixtures of sweet and sour, creamy and crunchy.... In drinks I like those which don't muck up your mouth, like milk does. [F age 17] (2014, p. 56)

At 14: Meat, shrimp, salt, sugar (at the right times), butter. (2014, p. 57)

At 16: Fresh breath emerging from moist lips at close range. Salt on good meat. White milk (2%). Wine in small quantities. (2014, p. 57)

One 16-year-old boy answered whether tasting was something special to him: "Not really because I've never thought of it before." Two years later at the age of 18, he wrote: "Tasting is special.... Next to sex, eating and tasting is the most sensuous thing you could do. I think it is true because I love to taste things." (2014, p. 57)

I love the smell of a woman – not perfumes, but natural smells and maybe light fragrances of soap or shampoo. The smell of sweet and rich foods can also make my whole body tingle. [M Adult] (2014, p. 57)

I like tasting a person's mouth etc. It makes me feel I'm part of that person. [M age 16] (2014, p. 57)

I like smelling a person's perfume and body. If the girl is sexy I can feel very close to her just by smelling her perfume. [M age 16] (2014, p. 57)

A light perfume, sea air, pine trees, Chicago smog, car exhaust... shaving cream, the “new” smell that newly purchased things have. [M age 18] (2014, p. 57)

I seem to notice more smells than a lot of other people. I love dark, musty smells and earthy smells, herbs and things like that. I love the smell of clean air in spring and tree blossoms and things and the smell of clean bodies, esp. hair. [F age 16] (2014, p. 57)

I like the smell of leaves burning. I also like the smell of gasoline. I like the smell of new books. [F age 17] (2014, p. 57)

What I like to smell is the air after it rains. Food cooking. The way men smell. I like the smell of tobacco before it's burned. New-mown grass. [F age 18] (2014, p. 57)

The taste of apple pie is very special to me because when I was little we used to have it every week, and we still have it at my granny's. It's also special to me because it's a symbol of regularity, and something to look forward to and something that I knew would come every week no matter what. [F age 15] (2014, p. 58)

Smells almost always trigger memories. I often smell a food cooking and can recall (visually) the last time I had that food. Even to the point of remembering what music was on the stereo. I have found several types of bath salts that are very aromatic and soothing to use. [Adult M] (2014, p. 58)

I have a thing about bodily contact – my way of showing love and affection and that I care. Holding a hand; stroking a face; twisting his hair around my finger... Also the feel of cool water; velvet; satin; silk; dry sand running thru my fingers; a beating rain on my face; running barefoot on grass; sitting on stones heated by the sun. [F age 15] (2014, p. 58)

I like touching a person all over. Not just sexual areas but on their face, etc. I also dig a person touching me. [M age 16] (2014, p. 58)

I like dough. I like to work in it with my hands. I like the feel of textures like flannel or warm water on my face. I like the feel of clay on the potter's wheel when it is wet and smooth. I like slick surfaces like slides. I like to walk on carpets instead of bare floor, except linoleum is nice in the summer when the sun coming through the window warms it. [F age 17] (2014, p. 58)

Anything furry – soft, anything fuzzy, liquid, sanded wood, gooey paint, my graduation tassel, silk, velvet, a warm light bulb, a blanket, elmer's glue, a window screen, feeling the wind on my face. [M age 18] (2014, pp. 58-59)

Crickets and frogs at nite in a marsh; the voice of a person that means a lot to me... laughter (any kind and every kind)... clocks ticking, waves lapping against the shore; wind whistling thru the trees; the breathing of a sleeping person. [F age 15] (2014, p. 59)

I enjoy hearing songs that make me remember the time I first heard that song. One particular song was playing on the car radio the day I delivered that doll to that little girl last winter. Every time I hear that song I remember the feeling I had that day. [M age 17] (2014, p. 59)

I like voices with accents. Something distinctive or different from what I usually hear. I like to listen to people whose voices seem incongruent to their physical appearance. [F age 17] (2014, p. 59)

Soft music, totally instrumental (e.g., symphonies) are excellent. Ditto with soft music of birds. In contrast to this, loud, hard-driving progressive rock can really get me going too. But this has the effect of supercharging my system, as opposed to [the] unwinding effect of previously mentioned sounds. [M age 17] (2014, p. 59)

The slight smell of burning wood refreshes me to an unbelievable extent. It takes me away from wherever I am and puts me in a beautiful forest at a campfire. The scent of cool, fresh air is also very invigorating. It seems to come right through my body, making my respiratory system unnecessary. [M age 17] (2014, p. 60)

I like hearing music the best. It can become almost a part of me at times. [M age 16] (2014, p. 60)

Certain music seems to affect my body's physiology – my heart takes on the pulse of the music and I am totally caught up in intense pleasure – the only thing that comes close is sex! [Adult F] (2014, p. 60)

I am very sensitive to sound. I can always hear the high frequencies of burglar alarms, etc., and know I'm annoying when I complain about them! Being a music lover (musical theater major) I love all sorts of music – but if I'm not in the right frame of mind to listen it can really disturb me. Other times noise sound does not bother me at all. [Adult F] (2014, p. 60)

I get pleasure from eating, especially when I am sad or depressed, and this is a terrible way to get pleasure, but sometimes I can't help it! [F age 17] (2014, p. 60)

Tasting something can be quite special to me. The experience can really soothe the anxiety and excitement that I had before. However, I think that the emotions I had before I tried something were more special than the moment I tasted that thing. [F age 15] (2014, p. 61)

Tasting gives me a sense of security. I love the different textures and temperatures of food as well as the scope of taste. [Adult F] (2014, p. 61)

INTELLECTUAL OVEREXCITABILITY

Descriptions

The intellectual dimension is one of analysis, questioning and logic (Piechowski, 1974, p. 92).

Intellectual overexcitability is manifested in the persistence to ask probing questions, avidity for knowledge, analysis, theoretical thinking, reverence for logic, preoccupation with theoretical problems. Intellectual overexcitability, in contrast to the first three forms, does not manifest the transfer of emotional tension to intellectual activity under distinct forms. When intellectual and emotional process of high intensity occur together, it always seems possible to separate the intellectual from the emotional component (Piechowski, 1975, p. 257).

The manifestations of intellectual overexcitability are associated with an intensified and accelerated activity of the mind. Its strongest expressions have more to do with striving for understanding, probing the unknown and love of truth than with learning per se and academic achievement. Conceived in these terms, intellectual overexcitability is the least common among the five forms of psychic overexcitability (Dabrowski, 1959). (Piechowski, 1979, p. 34)

Probing questions: learning about death a child wonders: "I tried to understand why we were born, if it was only to wait in agony for death;" witnessing unexpected reactions of a family to death among their midst, the same girl asks: "The man, who had always been stem and decisive broke down completely. The woman, emotional, excitable, was strong. What was happening? Were we all the opposite of what we appeared to be?" "I don't always believe what I hear and I always ask questions. Many times I feel I am a nuisance because I ask so many questions." (1979, p. 34)

Problem solving: devising strategies for snowball fights: "the more aggressive was the French class, and this fact, coupled with the fact that I spent my nights making battle plans for the next day's snowball fights, always seemed to surpass the fighting skills, as well as the numbers (the English always outnumbered the French) of the English class." Inventing and designing engines and machines: "He would spend hours drawing diagrams of imaginary engines, then pester the Cure, who had once taught mathematics, to find out if he thought they were all right" (SE). Finding a method of autopsychotherapy in marine biology: "A sudden emotional shock triggers off the inner balance mechanism and I am fighting a downhill struggle. The best solution is to ride with the wave of depression. This I discovered after reading an analysis of how delicate seashells reach the shore of the ocean unbroken – riding with the wave being the secret." (1979, p. 34)

Learning: curiosity, concentration, capacity for sustained intellectual effort, voracious reading and starting on difficult books at a young age, wide variety of interests, "He could spend minutes at a time watching a moth or a butterfly" (SE at the age of 6). Seeking feedback on one's invention or thought processes brings into the picture the felt need to monitor one's own thinking: "Whenever I think, I usually type it out, and then ask someone what they think." (1979, pp. 34-35)

Theoretical thinking: one can discern several forms of this such as thinking about thinking, introspection, preoccupation with certain problems, moral thinking and development of a hierarchy of values, and conceptual or intuitive integration of one's worldview. For example: "Up to a while ago, I thought, yes, but never really thought about thinking, or never did realize that I did think;" "We learn to write, to sing, to speak well, to excite oneself emotionally but never to think! And we are led by words which mislead even the feelings" (SE); the universal man derives his knowledge and insight from involvement: "It seems to me that sophism consists in saying, 'How can a sage of such stature and capable of such great synthesis involve himself in public life rather than close himself in his office?' – but this is what it should be saying: 'It is because that man is universal, he does not shut himself in his office, but involving himself in public life he observes everywhere the structures– that he is capable of such great synthesis,'" (SE); perception of the hidden order of things: "Civilization is an invisible boon; it concerns not the things we see but the unseen bonds linking these together in one special way and not otherwise" (SE). (1979, p. 35)

A sharp sense of observation, independence of thought (often expressed in criticism) and symbolic thinking are also characteristic and rather familiar manifestations of intellectual overexcitability (1979, p. 35).

The "why" questions, perception of problems, perception of solutions, avidity for learning and the like are all familiar enough manifestations of intellectual precocity. Less familiar, or at least less integrated with our usual conceptions of the human intellect are processes of self-monitoring, self-evaluation, preoccupation with moral problems and the responsibility of an enlightened person. Nevertheless, Guilford (1967) incorporated evaluative thinking into his model of the intellect, and Hollingworth (1942) drew attention to the highly gifted's preoccupation with questions of the meaning of human existence and moral responsibility – a highly developed form of evaluative feeling. MacKinnon (1962) found his architects to be highly intuitive, where intuition is the capacity for synthesis and for seeing underlying order, the "invisible links." It is these facets that characterize superior conceptualization and a mind capable of discovery, which is the capacity for abstraction of new and unknown form. C. S. Pierce named this capacity, "abduction." (1979, p. 35)

Development of new concepts and striving for synthesis of knowledge are the distinguishing marks of a highly evolved intellectual overexcitability. But at this level there is a conjunction with emotional overexcitability which endows a person with the capacity for evaluation and discernment of quality. (Bowlby, 1969; Langer, 1967; Maslow, 1970; Wertheimer, 1954) (1979, p. 35)

Intellectual overexcitability is to be distinguished from intelligence. It manifests itself as persistence in asking probing questions, avidity for knowledge and analysis, preoccupation with logic and theoretical problems. Other expressions are: a sharp sense of observation, independence of thought (often expressed in criticism), symbolic thinking, development of new concepts, striving for synthesis of knowledge, capacity to search for knowledge and truth. (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983, p. 272)

Intellectual overexcitability (T) is associated with an intensified activity of the mind. Its strongest expressions – persistence in asking probing questions, avidity for knowledge and analysis, preoccupation with logic, and theoretical problems – have more to do with striving for understanding and truth than with academic learning and achievement. Other expressions are: a sharp sense of observation, independence of thought (often expressed in criticism), symbolic thinking, development of new concepts, striving for synthesis of knowledge; a capacity to search for knowledge and truth. (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984, p. 82)

Intellectual overexcitability is to be distinguished from intelligence. It manifests itself as persistence in asking probing questions, avidity for knowledge and analysis, preoccupation with theoretical problems. Other expressions are: a sharp sense of observation, independence of thought (often expressed in criticism), symbolic thinking, development of new concepts, striving for synthesis of knowledge and searching for truth. (Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985, p. 154)

Intellectual (T) – avidity for knowledge, discovery, questioning, love of ideas and theoretical analysis, search for truth (Piechowski, 1986, p. 191; 1989, p. 88; 1991, p. 287; Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 176).

Intellectual overexcitability, accompanied by other forms of overexcitability, especially emotional and imaginal, together with some potential for intuition, can lead to an early development of special interests and talents" (Dabrowski et al., 1970, p. 31) (Piechowski, 1995, p. 4).

Intellectual "During tests I think about how and what's going on inside my head" (1; boy, age 11); "I think about my thoughts being different from other people's thoughts and wonder what they think and how they 'word' it" (2; girl, age 13); "I think I'm the only kid who loves to ask questions. I mean that's . . . my life! Questions, questions, and finally when I get all those questions answered, it's put together, and it's like a puzzle and all the pieces have been put together and it looks decent. And if there's a missing piece I just have to imagine what's supposed to be there. If somebody won't answer my question, I get angry!" (3; girl, age 13). The first example expresses curiosity about one's thinking in a very limited context; in the second, the scope of intellectual curiosity and awareness of one's thought processes is much greater. In the third example, curiosity and pursuit of knowledge are expressed with great intensity. (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 177)

The intellectual mode favors analysis, logic, questioning, the search for truth (Piechowski, 1999, p. 327).

Intellectual overexcitability encompasses the intensified activity of the mind as thirst for knowledge, curiosity, capacity for concentration and sustained intellectual effort, avid reading and precision in observation, recall, and careful planning. Questioning is the hallmark of intellectual overexcitability as the person is driven by the search for understanding and truth. Perceiving patterns and relationships leads to naming them; thus, new concepts are born. Solving problems, finding it difficult to let go of a problem, and finding new ones to solve is typical. Another trait is reflective thought, exemplified by watching one's own thought processes, delighting in analysis and theoretical thought, preoccupation with logic, moral thinking, introspection, and seeking integration of concepts and intuitions. People strong in intellectual overexcitability are independent thinkers and often highly critical of the thoughts of others. (1999, p. 329)

Although one would think that intellectual overexcitability is the prerogative of scientists and philosophers, it is also characteristic of artists and creative people in all domains. The more original an artist's work was judged by experts, the more facility for asking questions the artist had. Habitual or relentless inquisitiveness – pondering and puzzling over things – is one of the distinct characteristics of intellectual overexcitability. The *Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values* similarly defines theoretical value as an interest in and pursuit of truth, a desire to gain knowledge, systematize it, and bring order to it. (1999, pp. 329-330)

A statement from Darwin illustrates curiosity, concentration, and the thrill of learning a logical principle. Recalling his youth, Darwin said: I had strong and diversified tastes, much zeal for whatever interested me, and a keen pleasure in understanding any complex subject or thing. I was taught Euclid by a private tutor, and I distinctly remember the intense satisfaction which the

clear geometrical proofs gave me. I remember with equal distinctness, the delight which my uncle (the father of Francis Galton) gave me by explaining the principle of the vernier of a barometer. (1999, p. 330)

In his autobiography, *Ex-Prodigy: My Childhood and Youth*, Norbert Wiener stressed that he was motivated by the ideal of service to truth rather than service to humanity even though his father exerted a strong moral influence on him to serve humanity. Wiener also described how when working on a problem "the unresolved ideas were a positive torture to me until I had finally written them down and got them out of my system." The excerpts from Darwin and Wiener show the crucial involvement of emotion in learning and solving problems. (1999, p. 330)

These examples demonstrate several aspects of intensified activity of the mind that lead to ever more probing questions and search for understanding, shared by scientists and artists alike though their questions and their methods of inquiry may be quite different. They also show a strong emotional component in the process. (1999, p. 330)

Intellectual (T) – avidity for knowledge, discovery, questioning, love of ideas and theoretical analysis, search for truth (Piechowski, 2002, p. 28).

The intellectual mode – of analysis, logic, questioning, theorizing, seeking truth (Piechowski, 2003, p. 299).

Intellectual overexcitability is the characteristic by which gifted children are most often identified. In a happy turn of phrase, Frank (2006) said that intelligence is about the ability to solve problems, but overexcitability is about the passion for solving them. When the emotional and mental energies meet, the mind supplies the energy of sustained concentration while emotional energy drives interest (passion). Interest is one of the basic emotions. (Izard 1971) (Piechowski, 2009, p. 179)

Intellectual energy has certain consequences: relentless questioning, critical thinking, and evaluation. For instance, gifted adolescents responded to the question, What gets your mind going? by mentioning the irresistible attraction of brain teasers, logical puzzles, theories and controversies. More significantly, some have mentioned "challenging anything accepted by society," their way of resisting conformity: "One good thing [is that] I try to think about my beliefs – political and religious – so that I won't believe things just because my parents do" (Piechowski 2006, p. 64). This may lead to a crisis in families with rather strict and orthodox

religious faith or political adherence. Gifted adolescents are likely to question the foundations of their faith, and may find it wanting. To a highly gifted young person doubts about beliefs present themselves almost inevitably, consequently they may precipitate a crisis of worldview, in other words, a moral crisis. (2009, pp. 179-180)

The price of questioning can be twofold. One, in environments that do not value questioning one quickly meets with resistance and even rejection. Two, self-questioning may create self-doubt and the fear of going crazy: “I probably spend too much time thinking about my own thinking, analyzing myself and analyzing the analysis. I sometimes psych myself into thinking I am going crazy” (Piechowski 2006, p. 63). It may be interesting to note that the great Sir Francis Galton tried thinking paranoically and was startled how quickly he became paranoid. (2009, p. 180)

Intellectual Overexcitability (T) is an intensified activity of the mind. Its strongest expressions, such as persistence in asking probing questions, avidity for knowledge and analysis, preoccupation with logic and theoretical problems, have more to do with striving for understanding and truth than with academic learning and achievement. (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 2)

Other expressions are: a sharp sense of observation, independence of thought (often expressed in criticism), symbolic thinking, development of new concepts, striving for synthesis of knowledge, and a desire to search for knowledge and truth. Examples include: I can't resist math puzzles, or brain teasers of any kind, and I go to ridiculous lengths to figure them out. When I'm being sensible I know they're a waste of time, but I can't see one without working it out. I guess I'm conceited – I don't like to think that there is anything I can't figure out. My favorite puzzles are the logic puzzles in which they give a set of facts that must be combined in order to find the answer. (Female, age 16) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 2)

Yes. [I think about my own thinking,] sometimes I get a long line of thinking and I go back and trace from where I started, and usually it is from the most insignificant thing, or, I am appalled at how I have compared something. (Male, age 14) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 2)

I don't very often [catch myself seeing or imagining things that aren't really there]. Instead, I analyze things that are there in different ways. I read stories deeper, read into questions, find catchy puns or mistakes of words in people's writings, etc. If something has no meaning I try to give it some. If it means something I wonder why. I usually find when given a topic to write about, for example, I usually have a completely different approach to the same topic than does the rest of the class. (Male, age 16) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, pp. 2-3)

Heightened Intellectual Excitability. All Five children showed strong curiosity and excellent problem-solving skills. Gerald was curious about how the world operates, and once his interest was sparked, he asked many questions. Given a new puzzle, he did it over and over again until he mastered it. Peter was full of questions, interested in everything around him. He soaked in knowledge, constantly wondering, probing, and questioning. When Katrina asked a question, she repeated the answer aloud, as if processing the new concept. She then was able to apply it freely in novel situations. (Piechowski, 2014, p. 25)

Intellectual overexcitability, generating an intense engagement with ideas, is typical of gifted children yet is often perceived in a negative light. Children with an insatiable appetite for questioning, discovering, and solving puzzles may seem annoying or arrogant, and their stubborn individuality may be misinterpreted as defiance toward authority or indifference to social context. They may be caricatured as “little professors,” or, if their intellectual drive is focused on a narrow or esoteric subject, they are labeled with Asperger's syndrome. Intensely intellectual children can be surprisingly perceptive, aware, and sensitive in their understanding of their environment.¹⁴ Their impulse to correct others comes from a strong visceral reaction to errors and mistakes the way a musician responds to false notes, poor rhythm, and incorrect phrasing. (2014, pp. 34-35)

Examples of Intellectual OE

I love to read in my room alone. Here I can concentrate the best on what I'm reading. If I'm reading a really good book I'll concentrate on every word and sentence. But if I'm reading a magazine or a textbook I'll just skim the sentences, picking up general ideas. [M age 15] (Piechowski, 2014, p. 66)

I don't very often [catch myself imagining things that aren't really there]. Instead, I analyze things that are there in different ways. I read stories deeper, read into questions, find catchy puns or mistakes of words in people's writings, etc. If something has no meaning I try to give it some. If it means something I wonder why. I usually find when given a topic to write about, for example, I usually have a completely different approach to the same topic than does the rest of the class. [M age 16] (2014, p. 66)

Brain teasers stump me and I wonder and wonder about how it works and how it all fits together. This makes me think and has my brain going like 60 [mph]. [M age 11] (2014, p. 66)

I can't resist math puzzles, or brain teasers of any kind, and I go to ridiculous lengths to figure them out. When I'm being sensible I know they're a waste of time, but I can't see one without

working it out. I guess I'm conceited – I don't like to think that there is anything I can't figure out. My favorite puzzles are the logic puzzles in which they give a set of facts that must be combined in order to find the answer. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 66-67)

Theories and ideas. I (like a lot of people) have trouble remembering names and dates but can understand and remember theories and ideas behind events. [M age 13] (2014, p. 67)

A controversy [sic], especially a philosophical controversy where there is no right answer. I like to philosophize about the universe and life and death and God and religion. I also love to think about the relationship between mathematics and nature, the laws of physics, the orderliness of the universe. [F age 18] (2014, p. 67)

Things that challenge anything accepted by society. New religions, magic, extra sensory perception, clairvoyance, mediums, and metaphysical things dealing with everything. I like to wonder about reality, time, space, existence, and human minds. What is that voice I hear in my head? What is me? What are the capabilities of the human mind? What is God? I like to think about words and say them over and over again in my head until they seem positively absurd. [F age 17] (2014, p. 67)

When I “get into” a concept or theory, I am very happy and, sometimes, I almost lose my touch with the world and I “space off.” [M age 17] (2014, p. 67)

[I like to concentrate on] Music. I love to play it or listen to it. When I'm listening to music my mind is not aware of anything else. I concentrate so heavily on music when I hear it that I cannot read efficiently and listen to music at the same time; I start to read in rhythm. [F age 18] (2014, p. 68)

History and Travel are my passions. I will study maps or read history texts for hours, and enjoy it. I get pleasure from planning trips down to the last minute or striving to understand all the twistings and turning in thoughts, emotions, and pressures that lead to an event. And all the problems that might be involved in each minute of the trip or all the events that lead from that event. I could go on for hours with such things. [M age 18] (2014, p. 68)

Yes. I sometimes think of things I think are fun and others think otherwise. That's when I think about my thinking. [M age 15] (2014, p. 68)

I just wonder why do I think the way I do and how did I come to think that way. I often wonder why my classmates and I think so differently. [F age 16] (2014, p. 68)

Yes. I amaze myself that I think in English. And my brain talks without my mouth. [F age 17] (2014, p. 69)

Like what makes my mind work. Sometimes I think why I am here. Why do I think the way I do. How is my mind gathering this information and storing it so that someday I can remember it. [M age 15] (2014, p. 69)

Not so much about what I'm thinking but how I'm thinking. Where is my thought? How can words be formed and float around in my head? What stimulates the process? [M age 17] (2014, p. 69)

I do [think about my thinking], but not that often. I usually confuse myself. Sometimes I'll try to think about nothing, but then I'll realize I'm thinking (about not thinking). Lots of times I wonder how I think; like if I fit in a certain type of thinking or what. Thinkety-think-think-think. BLAH. [M age 15] (2014, p. 69)

When I think about my thinking I usually dwell on the emotional side of my thinking. I think about why I thought and loved a person or if I did love them. When I think about my thinking it's almost like using a drug to slow down your mind. [M age 16] (2014, p. 69)

I often wonder if I'm thinking logically or emotionally. Sometimes emotion clouds your thinking and you believe you're thinking logically but when you cool down you realize you weren't. [M age 13] (2014, p. 69)

Yes, a lot, do I think "normal" things? Why do I think such ridiculous thoughts sometimes or do I think more than other people think, or less? Is there somewhere in the world another person thinking the same thoughts. I used to think about it more often when I was a little kid because I didn't have much else to think about. I used to think am I really thinking this or is someone thinking thoughts into my brain and I just do them? [F age 15] (2014, p. 70)

I've thought about which is smarter, a pig or a horse for years. And if you bumped into something in outer space would it hurt? That was a biggie. [F age 15] (2014, p. 70)

Yes. When I argue in my head, I am usually arguing with someone and telling them my exact thoughts, usually something I wouldn't dare speak out loud. Many times they occur while someone is telling me something or yelling at me – and I mentally carry on an argument with him – Yet, not saying a single word. Most of the time, the language is quite obscene. It may be between my mother and I [sic] over some trivial detail; or a teacher and I [sic]; etc. I have found by doing this, a person can let off an awful lot of pressure without actually hurting someone or getting into trouble. On rare occasions there are 2 other people arguing, and I sit back and watch with sort of a superior feeling. [F age 15] (2014, pp. 70-71)

Very often. Whenever I'm mad at someone, I plan arguments in my head. I also plan them out when a clash with someone (usually teachers) seems inevitable. I also argue with myself a lot. The subject matter of these things varies greatly. (Anything from shoestrings to theology.) [M age 15] (2014, p. 71)

Most mathematical and scientific concepts I can understand if someone draws it out for me step by step. I will describe for you, though, the most difficult concept I have ever come across. Going to a parochial school this year has brought me into contact with the concept of God. At this point I feel it's very unreasonable. There are too many things about God that I don't like. And the people at school tell me it's because I don't understand him, but they don't seem to be able to explain him either. They say that first you have to accept the idea of God, then he will explain himself to you. But that's not very logical. This concept has not yet come clear to me and I am very frustrated with it. [F age 14] (2014, p. 71)

I am always getting into trouble for asking “Why?” I don't mean to be a nuisance and I don't ask to bother anybody. (Some of my teachers think that I do it just for fun, I think.) But I honestly want to know. Sometimes people get upset with me for asking why, and I wish if they didn't know they'd just say they don't. My science teacher is always honest and tells me if he doesn't know but he's almost too much, because he never knows. [F age 14] (2014, p. 72)

“Whether or not to have sex now or wait. Neither of the sides in my head win that one and it is frustrating.” [F age 17] (2014, p. 72)

I argue with everyone. Of course I'm not always arguing! I mostly argue with my reading teacher and other teachers about what I think is right and wrong. After I'm done arguing, if I win the argument I'm satisfied but if the other person wins my argument turns into anger against the other person. [F age 12] (2014, p. 72)

Yes. I think I'm right until someone shows me or I find out I'm wrong. I figure that I've got brains, so most of the time I'll be right. [M age 16] (2014, p. 73)

Yes, I argue that I'm stupid to be questioning so many things the way I do. [F age 17] (2014, p. 73)

At 16: I think that I have a good memory and some people think that I'm spaced out. They'll speak of something and I can say something that seems to them to be totally unrelated. But I remember (or know) something that they don't realize. Therefore the subjects are related (this makes sense after you read it slowly enough.) It bugs the hell out of me when people think I'm a space cadet when it's their stupidity, not mine. (2014, pp. 73-74)

At 18: Sometimes I say something and was thinking the opposite. Sometimes I think I'm crazy because I start associating strange things with perfectly normal ideas. The two do have a connection, but only I can see it. Either I'm smart or weird. Generally I'm smart. (2014, p. 74)

Yes, I've analyzed my thinking and sometimes I get mad at myself because I think I'm hypocritical. I think one thing and do another and then think that I shouldn't have done it and think up some excuse to make it right. I don't like it but I do it. I can't stand it when other people do it. I'm an irrational thinker. [M age 18] (2014, p. 74)

When I think about my own thinking I become disgusted with myself and say, Why can't I just naturally be, without reasoning it out all the time? [F age 16] (2014, p. 74)

Sometimes I think I am going insane and I wish I had someone intelligent to talk to. [But] Lots of times I wish I wouldn't think so much. It makes me very confused about a lot of stuff in the world. And I always wish I could think up answers instead of just questions.... My parents and all my adult friends don't understand. I wish I could talk to somebody who would have the same questions I do, and answers to them. Maybe instead of somebody intelligent I need somebody insane. [F age 16] (2014, p. 74)

I probably spend too much time thinking about my own thinking, analyzing myself and analyzing the analysis. I sometimes psych myself into thinking I'm going crazy. One good thing [is that] I try to keep thinking about my beliefs – political and religious – so that I won't believe things just because my parents do. [F age 17] (2014, p. 75)

I am basically critical. When I see something wrong I will correct or try to correct it. I spot error fairly easily and will correct teachers, parents, anybody that errs. To a certain point it is a bad habit but also is a good habit. Teachers will respect a kid for correcting them but also hate the kid continually doing it. [M age 15] (2014, p. 75)

I'm the most critical when I'm jealous, in fact that's how I can tell I'm jealous. I'm also critical when I'm proud and think that I'm good at something while others aren't. There is no justification for criticism of others. I can be pretty good at criticizing myself also, especially when I'm depressed. [F age 16] (2014, p. 75)

[I carry arguments in my head.] Very often, I feel. Perhaps too often, every few days. My main argument is about what I will be when I grow up. Part of me wants to own a farm and teach children and raise a family. The other part is driven insane by the world, both close and far away, and he says that I've no choice but to try to make things right. And I agree with him, but still I wish for the gift of ignorance. The question of how we should worship God is another question I argue about. How is the right way? This is what I call an infinite answer. Because there is no right answer, or a wrong one. This is just what the individual feels about it, but still.... [M age 16] (2014, p. 76)

I look at it from all angles. I just really think about it. My brain really moves and I think hard. [M age 9] (2014, p. 77)

Sometimes in math or science I don't understand something and I just sort of force myself to understand it. I kind of think it out by starting in the very beginning and adding facts until I come to what I was trying to understand in the first place. Sometimes I think so hard my temples sweat. [F age 14] (2014, p. 77)

Usually I sit there and space out for a while, desperately trying to figure it out, but there's this giant mental block there. A lot of times there will be a key word that will pop into my head; and it's like a huge tidal wave, and everything clicks into place. It always hits me all at once, it doesn't just slide into place. [F age 15] (2014, p. 78)

New concepts come to me in a flash – a regular “dawn-breaking.” And I completely understand it. Pictures help and intelligent people explaining it. [F age 17] (2014, p. 78)

I have to grasp a new idea all at once. I don't understand something little by little, even though I might be able to do it. This gets me into trouble at school since generally I refuse something unless I understand it or know the reason for it. I also rearrange ideas to suit my taste before I accept them, consciously or subconsciously. [F age 16] (2014, p. 80)

I don't really know, it just comes to me, like I'm in darkness and all of a sudden “then there was light” you know that kind of thing. It's hard to explain. I mostly get my understanding from insight rather than repetition [sic] or any other learning processes. [F age 17] (2014, p. 80)

IMAGINATIONAL OVEREXCITABILITY

Descriptions

The imaginal dimension is one of dreams, images, humor, plans never carried out, strong visualization of experience (Piechowski, 1974, p. 92).

Imaginational overexcitability in its "pure" form manifests itself through rich association of images and impressions, inventiveness, use of image and metaphor in verbal expression, strong and sharp visualization. In its less pure form, emotional tension is transferred to dreams, nightmares, mixing of truth and fiction, fears of the unknown, or vividly visualized emissaries of fear. (Piechowski, 1975, p. 257)

The presence of imaginal overexcitability can be inferred from frequent distraction, wandering attention, and daydreaming. These occur as a consequence of free play of the imagination. Here, too, belong illusions, animistic thinking, expressive image and metaphor, invention, and fantasy. Strong emotional experience and tension become expressed through imaginal overexcitability as dramatization, animistic thinking, mixing of truth and fiction, strong visual recall and visualization in general, vivid dreams and nightmares, and fears of the unknown (a combination of emotional and imaginal overexcitability). (Piechowski, 1979, p. 36)

Illusions: "I sometimes think I hear a song, but none is really playing." "I always think I see things running across my vision" (1979, p. 36).

Animistic and magical thinking: the little Saint-Exupéry asked his governess: "Tell me Paula, what was it like when you were a bear?" and when he saw a bird hopping about he would say, "Now what do you suppose he is thinking right now?" Another child to fight the nightmares following a television program imagined himself endowed with magic powers: "I was going to use my superhuman strength to sock the head off the first suit of armor to walk through the door, and to finish off the others in like fashion." (1979, p. 36)

The use of image and metaphor: "The atmosphere was so haunty, creepy sort of;" an image of fear – "from a grassy area one suddenly steps out into a muddy and clay-like substance"; an Image of anxiety – like being caught in a room with creepy slimy green ghost-like creatures, screaming at you – fear, fear, fear – coming closer and closer;" an image of significant personal change – "The image of my anxiety has changed. It is now a very high open iron fence. But as I walk toward it, there is to be seen a world beyond and I have learned to touch the fence so that it melts down and I can step beyond." And this is how the little Saint-Exupéry used his little tapestry-covered casket: "Madame, here are the chests where I have laid the dying sunsets to rest." (1979, p. 36)

Inventions and fantasy: a practical one – "In grade two, my teacher trusted me enough to leave me in charge of a class while she went out. I took down the names of everyone who so much as inhaled too deeply, and then went around collecting bribes to take the names off the list." "Next to food, day dreams and fantasies are my greatest temptation. I dream most of the time about situations involving myself and other people. I may know the people, know of them, or I may make them up. I dream in the present the least and the near future the most, although it's a lot of fun to dream in past time periods and future possible time periods. I could be anyplace on or in earth, although sometimes I even make up new planets." (1979, p. 36)

Poetic and dramatic perception: "His white shirt and his smiling face were so 'impossible when he was doomed by a steel plate in his head;" the contrast of life and death all that is directly opposite [to life] stands out very clearly, skeletal sharply outlined, cadaverous." (1979, p. 36)

Animistic imagery: feelings and objects become living entities as in these personification of nature (water and sound) – the formed image of anxiety – "often in the early morning it is still there, staring at me...eventually the phantom moves away;" "I respected and feared that water;" "The sight of the angry lake filled me with dread;" "There was a tone on the radio to signal the beginning of a certain program. It seemed furtive and menacing;" "When I came home from school, the washing machine was on, and the swish swash of the clothes in the water seemed to be saying, 'You can do better – you can do better.' Even when I covered my ears, the machine hounded me." (1979, pp. 36-37)

Mixing truth and fiction: a teenager develops a reputation for cycling to cities hundreds of miles away but actually goes there and returns by train – "I could have done it too, make no mistake about that, I was in excellent physical condition, had very powerful lungs and legs, and to this day, though I didn't do it, the distances I did go, in the time it took me are good enough that I could have done it It didn't matter how much I lied about my achievements, all that mattered was that people believe me." A simple treasure hunt can be blown up into an "exaggerated tale of daring and danger." (1979, p. 37)

Dreams are vivid and can be retold in detail: The content of the dreams usually gives the opportunity to detect other forms of overexcitability – dreams about involvement with other people would most likely indicate emotional overexcitability; sexual dreams – sensual overexcitability; and dreams with intense running and chasing, perhaps psychomotor overexcitability. (1979, p. 37)

Visual recall of scenes of high emotional impact: "Often when I am deep at work on, say, a novel excerpt or writing a short story, etc., scenes from my childhood will flash back so vividly that for a split second I'll almost be there." "Every now and then I can visualize in my head the reproduction of the scene as seen through my eyes." "Even a minor accident, in which he [little brother] slipped on the stairs and knocked himself out, left a picture of his little limp body that is burned into my brain. If I think about it, it comes clearly and can still upset me." "When I feel pressured and in need of battery recharging I occasionally try to visualize that scene near the ocean." (1979, p. 37)

Visualization of anticipated events, as in planning strategies for winning snowball fights, developing exaggerated expectations, or picturing events when they are reported by others: "A boy in my class broke his leg. Later . . . I was overjoyed to see he still had his leg for I thought it had broken off;" and being told about the grief in another family – "She went in and found the remaining four members of the family, the parents and two teenage children, lying on the bed, holding each other and crying. I never forgot that. It haunted me day and night." (1979, p. 37)

Fears of the unknown: "I was afraid of the dark;" "I had always been afraid of that hall" (SE) (1979, p. 37).

Dabrowski (1959) points out that children and adults whose imaginal mode is the dominant mode of experiencing and responding, may find themselves in understandable difficulty. They may have difficulty distinguishing their dreams and fantasy from reality and in more extreme cases suffer in situations requiring attention and systematic activity, as in school. Singer (1975) and his collaborators, however, have shown that fantasy and make-believe are part of the healthy

development of a child, and that, in fact, make believe play enhances the child's capacity to differentiate fantasy from reality. It also enhances the child's learning. (1979, pp. 37-38)

In summary, imaginal overexcitability provides for a variety of associations and new forms. Most of them are visual. A visual stimulus is a trigger to an expanded vision, as if whole filmstrips were available, and for some even with sound. Besides visual association, there is the animation of objects and natural phenomena and endowing them with the ability to speak and express feelings. It is actually a projection of human feeling onto nature (Langer, 1967). Animals are endowed with human powers of thought, feeling, and speech. This richness of association is a necessary condition of creativity and invention in any field. (1979, p. 38)

The enhanced excitability of imagination when combined with emotional overexcitability makes it a suitable medium for the discharge of emotional tension. The image really makes the feeling visible and helps to articulate it. Most typical manifestations are dreams, especially recurrent ones, strong visual recall of past experience, and vivid picturing of scenes triggered by an emotional signal. Very common are images of fear and anxiety, images of fears of the unknown, manifested as fears of the dark or of evil powers. A sense of drama appears as perception of contrasts, as personification of one's own feelings, and most obviously as an inclination toward the stage and acting. Mixing truth and fiction would appear to relate to this sense of the dramatic. (1979, pp. 38)

Imaginational overexcitability is recognized through rich association of images and impressions, inventiveness, vivid and often animated visualization, use of image and metaphor in verbal expression. Dreams are vivid and can be retold in detail. Intense living in the world of fantasy, predilection for fairy and magic tales, poetic creations, and dramatizing to escape boredom are also observed. (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983, p. 272)

Imaginational overexcitability (M) is recognized through rich association of images and impressions, inventiveness, vivid and often animated visualization, use of image and metaphor in speaking and writing. Dreams are vivid and can be retold in detail. Living in the world of fantasy, predilection for fairy and magic tales, poetic creations, imaginary companions, or dramatizing to escape boredom are also observed. (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984, p. 82)

Imaginational overexcitability is recognized through rich association of images and impressions, inventiveness, vivid and often animated visualization, use of image and metaphor in verbal expression. Dreams are vivid and can be retold in detail. Intense living in the world of fantasy, predilection for fairy and magic tales, poetic creations and dramatizing to escape boredom are also observed. (Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985, pp. 154-156)

Imaginational (M) – vividness of imagery, richness of association, facility for dreams, fantasies and inventions, animisms and personifications, liking for the unusual (Piechowski, 1986, p. 191; 1989, p. 88; 1991, p. 287).

Imaginational hyperexcitability can provide the basis for the development of propection and retrospection, that is to say, the ability to use one's past experiences in the planning of the future (Piechowski, 1995, p. 4).

Imaginational refers to the realm of fantasy, dreams and inventions, vivid imagery, richness of associations, and penchant for the unusual (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 176).

Imaginational "My daydream is to become an astronaut" (1; girl, age 9); "I daydream about time machines and where I would go in them" (2; boy, age 13); "I like to dream about different countries, places that I make up myself, even animals that I make up. Just anything that is unusual to me" (3; girl, age 13). In the first example, the daydream occurs within the bounds of physical reality; in the second, these bounds are freely transcended; in the third, an imaginary reality is created. (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 177)

The imaginational mode celebrates vivid dreams, fantasies, images and metaphors, personifications, strong visualization of experience (Piechowski, 1999, p. 327).

The role of imagination in creativity has been well documented in many sources. As a personal characteristic, the concept of imaginational overexcitability is broader. It looks at the creator's underlying predisposition, manifested in childhood, to engage in the free play of the imagination, to fantasize and daydream, but also to come up with unusual associations. To be able to convert experience into imagery depends on an exceptional ability to see analogies, which are facilitated by unusual associations to emerge as metaphors. When Edison was 10 years old he weighed himself on a scale and said to his mother, "I am a bushel of wheat now, I weigh 80 pounds." Imagination makes such analogies possible. The impulse to explore new possibilities and to change what is given into something else is ever present; it was delightfully illustrated in the film *Amadeus*. After hearing a court composer's piece, Mozart goes to the keyboard to play it and to show how to make it more interesting. All it took was imagination. (1999, p. 330)

Imaginational overexcitability can be also noticed in a person's facility for visualizing, making elaborate dreams and fantasies, perceiving life experiences poetically and dramatically, and in animistic and magical thinking. Animistic thinking involves endowing inanimate objects with personality, character, and a will of their own. Magical thinking rests on the conviction that to

think something is as good as making it happen. The private rituals and formulas to ensure that everything works out all right are examples of such thinking. The capacity for living in a world of fantasy often goes together with the need to spend certain amount of time daydreaming, reading fairy tales and stories, or even creating private imaginary worlds. Having several imaginary companions in childhood, and for some even into adulthood, is a telling sign. (1999, p. 330)

Emotional tension is easily diverted into the theater of imagination where feelings and emotions find their form. It is helpful for understanding one's emotional life to be able to give an image to what is felt. Words are inadequate and limited, but an image carries the energy and felt quality that reveals the meaning of an experience. For people with overexcitability of imagination, spontaneous imagery is as natural as breathing; dreams are elaborate, illusions and mixing truth and fiction are possible. This does not mean that at other times such persons are not capable of sorting fantasy from reality. On the contrary, for them the difference is quite enhanced. The boundary may blur when intense emotions take over in a rush of vivid images. Frank Lloyd Wright once imagined that his mother was going to give a party for him. He started telling his friends in detail what would be served and how special this occasion was going to be. So they came, all dressed up. Wright's mother was surprised but knowing her son she improvised a party. Because he imagined it, he actually believed the party was going to take place. (1999, pp. 330-331)

Richard Wagner was so fascinated by Beethoven and Shakespeare that he created in his mind a vivid image of each one: "I used to meet them both in ecstatic dreams, saw them, and spoke to them; on awakening I was bathed in tears." His imagination was so graphic that whenever he thought of ghosts he was terrified. When as a boy he visited his relatives who lived in a big house, he was lodged in a stately guest room. The old portraits of young ladies "in hooped petticoats and white powdered hair" seemed to him to be ghosts. Alone in the room he was possessed by terror because they seemed to come to life. Every night of his stay he was drenched with perspiration, a victim to his frightening visions. (1999, p. 331)

Creative people do not tolerate boredom well. They do not enjoy routine and unimaginative exercises. As a boy Rachmaninoff took up improvisation because the music he had to study was too dull for him. He said to his naive listeners that he was playing Chopin or Mendelssohn and no one realized he was playing his own music. (1999, p. 331)

These are just a few examples of the free play of imagination, the capacity for visualization and for fantasy, animistic and magical thinking, and the ability to conjure up novel images and unusual analogies, responses typical of imaginal overexcitability. (1999, p. 331)

Imaginational (M) – vividness of imagery, richness of association, facility for dreams, fantasies and inventions, endowing toys and other objects with personality (animism), liking for the unusual (Piechowski, 2002, p. 28).

The mode of imagination – of vivid dreams, fantasies, images, personification, strong visualization of experience (Piechowski, 2003, p. 299).

Gifted children tend to have excitable imagination that is especially rich, abundant, and surprising in creative individuals (Piechowski 1999). With imagination a whole universe of unlimited possibilities opens up to us. Imaginal experience can be real and remembered as such, “as if it really happened.” (Piechowski, 2009, p. 179)

The subject of invisible friends (imaginary playmates) has not received much attention in gifted literature other than noting that gifted children tend to have many more such companions than other children (Terman 1925; Hollingworth 1942/1977) and that creative adolescents often keep them from childhood (Davis 2003; Piirto 2004). That children distinguish pretend play from everyday reality is well established (Singer 1975; Singer and Singer 1990). However, the role of invisible friends in social development, in gaining sense of competence and overcoming fears, though studied in regular children, has not received much attention in regard to gifted children. Imaginary companions usually are not secret but they do belong to the child's own world. Attempts on the part of adults to interact with them swiftly lead to their disappearance by natural or unnatural means (Taylor 1999). Imaginary playmates are real to the child and one may wonder whether the experience is accompanied by sensations of sound, warmth, or touch that are felt. The answer is that it is. (2009, p. 179)

Cohen and MacKeith (1991) examined 64 accounts of imaginary worlds. The degree of elaboration – creation of histories, languages, multiple characters (in one case as many as 282), and the early age when they are begun (six or seven or even younger) – indicates that the young weavers of these worlds were highly gifted. The experience of being in an imaginary world can be “as real as real.” For example: “I also had a magic boat in my youth for a while. It had an outboard motor but I found that too noisy. I've never been clever with engines and there were always problems about petrol, so I discarded the idea” (Cohen and MacKeith 1991, p. 57). (2009, p. 179)

Imaginary is usually taken to mean not real. But imaginary playmates and imaginary worlds are lived with the full range of sensory experience and vivid memory. The brain appears to make little distinction between something that is vividly imagined from something that is experienced from an outside sensory input (Damasio 2003) (pp. 179-180). Therefore, to allow for the “as real

as real” quality of experience, a more fitting term is imaginal (Singer 1975; Watkins 1990). (2009, p. 179)

Imaginational Overexcitability (M) is the capacity for free play of the imagination and creative vision. It is recognized through rich association of images and impressions (real or imagined), inventiveness, vivid and often animated visualization, use of image and metaphor in speaking and writing, attraction to the unusual, and the like. Dreams are vivid and can be retold in detail. (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

Daydreaming, distractibility, predilection for fairy tales, magical thinking, imaginary companions, love of fantasy, poetic creations, dramatizing to escape boredom, or a taste for the absurd and surreal, are also characteristic expressions of Imaginational OE. Examples include: I like to think about things not too many people do. Like what will fire hydrants look like in the future. Sometimes I used to pretend I had a little brother or sister, or I would imagine myself in a rabbit hole watching thousands of wild horses galloping over me. (Female, age 13) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

Heightened Excitability of Imagination. All Five children were highly imaginative and enjoyed fantasy play. But Steven was always engaged in imaginative play. One day he announced, “We are playing that we are bears. We are building a shelter for us.” Another day he pretended to be a bee. When it came to writing, Steven said, “The pencils are exploding with electricity.” His explanations for things were also quite inventive. One day as he was cleaning the paint off a table, he said, “I have cleaned the table with hot water. The hot water burned the paint off the table” (Piechowski, 2014, p. 25).

Imaginational overexcitability, expressed in intense, free-flowing creativity, inventing improbable or bizarre stories, converting the everyday into fantastic images, or simply daydreaming, may seem to indicate Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or even a delusional disorder. But preference for the unusual and absurd is also an indicator of the talent characteristic of poets, artists, dramatists, film-makers, and inventors. While true delusional disorder requires treatment, creative talent pushes for expression and needs to be supported and appreciated. Preferring their own peculiar interpretations to those of others, or to versions that are officially approved, is another sign of an original mind. When such creative pressures are denied means of expression, the child may become angry, irritable, or depressed. (2014, p. 35)

Examples of Imaginational OE

I also have one [fantasy] in which I can get inside people's heads to see what "makes them go" or can make everything and anyone freeze in their tracks (everyone except me) so I can go around and see what they are doing. (Male, age 15) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

In a real event, if it does not particularly interest me, I only see a few highlights. If it is a real event that terrifically interests me I only see the main highlights and supporting detail. I do this a lot. I also take real events and change them around in my imagination to make them appeal more to me. (Male, age 15) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

Riding a strong, huge, white horse on a beach cantering full speed, riding so close to the ocean the water splashes my face as the horse runs. [F age 13] (Piechowski, 2014, p. 91)

[My most intense pleasure is] being involved in music. Touching the keyboard of a piano and challenging myself to make the sounds come out absolutely perfect. When it does come out perfect I feel so neat. I don't know how to describe it with words. I suppose it would be something like your first kiss or if you hadn't taken a bath in 10 years and you got to take one. These are weird similarities but the sensations are somewhat the same. In those situations at the piano my body just seethes with music and sometimes I can get so lost in it I don't hear any other sounds and if I have it memorized I can close my eyes and become part of it. To someone who isn't into music this might sound a bit absurd but you asked for it and you got it. [F age 12] (2014, p. 94)

[Feeling low or depressed] I would say deep purple would fit the mood, and the frustration a bird would feel flying against a 60 m.p.h. gale would describe it. It's a state of trying the hardest but getting nowhere, finally surrendering to the elements. [F age 15] (2014, p. 94)

I can visualize almost everything as clear as if I were seeing it. When I read a book if I can't "see" what I'm reading I stop reading for a moment until I can "see." If I'm reading, and the book describes something like a house or a way something looks I visualize it, not always the way it says in the story but sometimes my own way. [F age 12] (2014, p. 95)

Very precisely. I do visualize it, too, with a sort of narrative along with the visuals. Real events are like a photograph, I can dissect and examine at length what happened in seconds. I enjoy visualizing imaginary events because I have control over the small details. If I imagine a person,

for instance – I can see the eyes, their color, size, etc., everything–.... [M age 17] (2014, pp. 95-96)

Pretty well, sometimes it seems like I can touch what I'm thinking about. [F age 13] (2014, p. 96)

I have a vivid imagination so I can usually picture anything that is described to me. Of course many times my imagination exceeds reality, so my visualizations aren't very precise. I love to read, and one of the biggest parts of reading a book...is visualizing the settings. As an author I find that to be one of the hardest parts of writing – describing a scene, that you have a vivid picture of, to a reader who may be visualizing a totally different scene. [M age 16] (2014, p. 96)

Past events, [and those] that are going to be, both come in clearly with detail. But they are imaginary because it appears as being both as if I was seeing it from my eyes, and as if I am seeing the whole picture with me in it. [F age 13] (2014, p. 96)

There are a couple [of things I can visualize well]. One of them is playing basketball for a major college. I imagine what I would do in certain situations playing against some of the best players in the country. I can see everything very clearly, and I do some moves that I know I could do if I were a little taller. Most of my moves end up in slam dunks, which are very easy to do in my daydreams. I can think through almost a full game. If I really concentrate and get into it, I can even picture the crowd. [M age 16] (2014, pp. 96-97)

Yes. I hope I'll outgrow it because it can be really bothersome. When I do, I become (and stay that way for a while) very spacey and absentminded. I often hear music and become totally absorbed in listening– this happens in school often and thus has caused me considerable trouble: the same happens seeing and imagining things; one teacher thought I was epileptic. Lots of times I see a sort of place where children live and play and dance and I watch them and it's so real – whenever someone somehow breaks into my imaginings and “wakes me up” I get hostile and angry with them. I don't have it as much as I used to and it's becoming easier to be drawn out of it. [M age 17] (2014, p. 97)

Every now and then I'll unintentionally jump in my seat during some boring class I thought I had been paying attention to, after suddenly imagining some sort of physical activity. I'll see the people I want to see in the wrong people's faces. And when I go out on long walks to relax myself I sometimes have to shake my head three times to see if something is or isn't there. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 97-98)

Yes, often my imagination takes over and I absolutely hear a voice or see someone running. I fear I'm going to be a menace on the roads when I get my license because of this tendency. [M age 15] (2014, p. 98)

Last summer when I went to drama camp. The adults couldn't control us kids and this girl and I led an army of renegade kids and she and I were voted Mr. and Mrs. Mischief. The best part was proving that kids can do whatever they put their minds to and that adults aren't always as "in control" as they like to believe. I've always been an avid supporter of kids' rights. [M age 15] (2014, pp. 98-99)

My special fantasy is to find a lamp on the street, open it up and find a Jeenie [genie] who would give me all the wishes I ever wanted so whenever I would be in trouble I could wish my way out of it. [M age 11] (2014, p. 99)

Yes, I imagine a life where there aren't any problems or troubles. I think about living out in the wilds with the animals. [M age 15] (2014, p. 99)

Meeting someone important. Preferably Marcel Marceau [a famous mime]. Doing something in acting" [F age 12]. (2014, p. 99)

Or they may dream up inventions – for instance, "To achieve flight without the aid of wings, planes, propellers, etc. [M age 14]. (2014, p. 99)

When I take time to daydream it's usually not just an illusion but a goal. I dream about being on stage as a concert pianist. Not famous, but just enjoying the glare of the lights and the power of the keyboard. Sometimes I think about the applause but then I feel sort of guilty because that's not the real reason that I want to be there. I want to be there to make others happy and to give myself a feeling of accomplishment and content. [F age 12] (2014, p. 99)

My two daydreams/fantasies are to either be a wonderful, famous or not, it does not matter, lawyer, or to dance on Broadway in a production. My ultimate dream and this really is a dream, [is] to be both, a lawyer of the utmost esteem and a dancer of the utmost esteem. Don't ask me how it's possible, I don't know, yet. [F age 13] (2014, p. 100)

I daydream (at school) that I take Chemistry, Analysis, Physics, Geometry, Trig., and British Lit. all the same year, but instead of going to college I end up going to a mental institution. I can see the white jacket and everything. [F age 15] (2014, p. 100)

I always dream of doing something great. One of the daydreams I have a lot is about getting paralyzed and then coming back and doing some great thing like dragging my body across the United States (well...). Anyway, I like to think of everyone trying to feel sorry for me, but coming back and showing them that no matter what, I can overcome a difficult problem. [F age 16] (2014, p. 100)

I dream of the future. A future where peace is the law and militaries help and rescue people. The worldwide government would consist of thousands of representatives from different places around the world. Each representative would not be elected from area of land, but by equal amount of voters. I also dream of flying different kinds of aircraft and also going on interstellar voyages. [M age 13] (2014, p. 100)

[I dream] that society becomes one where people are judged by their abilities and accomplishments – not sex, race, religion and beliefs, OR AGE. Another is being able to raise a child free from the contaminations produced by modern-day society. Another is banishing our sexist ideas on relationships between 2 people. Two of my 4 best friends are girls, and people just can't understand how a boy and a girl can be friends without romance. It drives me crazy. [M age 15] (2014, p. 101)

I like to think about things not many other people do. Like what will fire hydrants look like in the future. [F age 13] (2014, p. 101)

I also have one in which I can get inside people's heads to see what “makes them go” or can have everything and everyone stop and freeze in their tracks (everyone except me) so I can go around and see what they're doing. [M age 15] (2014, p. 101)

Talking to little people who live in mouse holes. Or riding Silver (used to be) my second grade “instant horse.” [F age 13] (2014, p. 101)

Once in a while I try to hypnotize my plants. And I even tried to put a rock in a trance, but I think that day I was desperate for something to do. When I was in 5th grade I went through a phase where I was even paranoid about ripping pages out of my notebook for fear I might hurt it. Really dumb, huh? [F age 15] (2014, p. 100)

A fantasy I have would be like (this is gonna sound slightly stupid) becoming a princess in a fantasyland and riding off on a unicorn with some gorgeous hunk! I like unicorns and I dream about having one. A place with castles and dragons and things like that. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 101-102)

In my daydreams I might save a village or rescue a maiden....I enjoy daydreaming and hope I never stop, for it is a way to get away from it all. [M age 17] (2014, p. 102)

“I often daydream before I fall to sleep at night – usually even plan what I'm going to daydream about” [M age 17] (2014, p. 12)

[I dream] Twice a week, usually they are wild impossible things, happening in places like-the public library, the hospital, school. Very seldom violent although often terrifying – Poe-like in content. I sometimes dream about people I love getting killed, my lovers killed in a war, a car accident, a heart attack. Sometimes I'll dream I'm dancing, endlessly dancing. [F age 16] (2014, p. 102)

If something is bothering me I'll often have dreams which I can relate to what's going on inside me.... Sometimes in bad dreams I can remember telling myself not to worry because it's only a dream. I've dreamt about dying but never actually [of] being dead. I can remember the fear from those dreams. I remember my dreams quite often. Many times things will happen the next day which causes me to remember a dream. [F age 17] (2014, p. 102)

While I was sleeping, I saw a car smashed on the driver's side and turned upside down against a tree. The next day at school everyone was talking about it. One of the senior boys had an accident. The senior boy...helped me with my science project three weeks earlier. He was injured seriously but is alright now. [F age 16] (2014, p. 103)

Extremely clear. When I have dreams at night, they go into great detail. Like, the separate articles scattered through a room or faces in a crowd. Sometimes it's scary because the same

situations or parts of my dreams will be presented to me a few days down the road sometimes. [M age 18] (2014, p. 103)

Sometimes when I leave the house I get the suspicion that everything in the house starts talking. [M age 11] (2014, p. 103)

When I come home from a dance, and I go to sleep, I often wake up later and see all the people that I would see at the dance. And I can hear the band playing so loud. You can't really say that I'm dreaming 'cause I'm awake. I just imagine that everyone is in my room. They come and talk to me, and it doesn't seem strange at all that I am in bed. I just lay there trying to go to sleep, and I wish they would leave me alone. [F age 15] (2014, p. 103)

Yes. Lots of times I'll know without people telling me and it gets confusing. I can't explain it, really. I also have a vivid imagination. (It was certainly bad when I was little.) Once, when I was about 5, I thought Martians lived in this one deserted house. I really believed it. I still get touchy when someone brings it up. [M age 15] (2014, p. 103)

I can remember even when I was only 5 or 6 that I thought of my crib as alive. I thought of all the children that had slept in it, and I thought that it actually was worried about me when I was sick or I couldn't go to sleep. Weird!! [F age 15] (2014, p. 104)

I like to put my spirit into inanimate objects to think about how they would feel. For example, I think of a chair and wonder how it feels. People sit on it and use it all the time. Then I think, That's what it was made for, and is best at, so a chair might be happy. [M age 17] (2014, p. 104)

Sometimes I feel everything around me is alive. [M age 9] (2014, p. 104)

Yes, like everything wants to play and have fun. [M age 13] (2014, p. 105)

Yes, that when I kill an ant it is screaming out in pain. [M age 14] (2014, p. 105)

Plants kind of droop when they're not being loved. [M age 9] (2014, p. 105)

Whenever someone prunes a tree I feel like they're cutting off its arms. [F age 9] (2014, p. 105)

YES! I'm always thinking when I step on a plant I think I am sorry because it must not feel too good. Or my stuffed animals, how they feel. I think everything has feelings. [F age 11] (2014, p. 105)

Yes. I think that an injured animal feels pain and I feel pain because it does. [F age 9] (2014, p. 105)

Yes, because if you break off a tree branch the part that you broke off will die. Like [if] you lose a limb that part of you will die. [M age 9] (2014, p. 105)

When I see someone abusing a plant or an animal, I want to kill them. [M age 11] (2014, p. 105)

I often speculate on how a plant feels, what it experiences. Humans abuse plants so, and they are so dependent on them. I would love to have scientists discover that cancer or some other feared disease was transmitted from plants to people who malign them. Highly improbable, but equally just. If I was a plant, I think I would know certain secrets that all plants know that would make me grow and make me content to just sit in the dirt. I feel the same about animals. Animals are abused by us, etc. But I do not want to be any animal except a human being. Life is so cruel and harsh for ordinary animals and they can't do much about that. I sometimes consider plants to be above animals in the way that some people consider cats to be superior to dogs. [M age 17] (2014, pp. 105-106)

I'm totally convinced dogs are of higher intelligence than we give them credit for. And sometimes I wonder if they aren't of an even higher intelligence, and they're just faking it (being dumb). I feel that even the smallest (amoeba) had its own moral standard. Whatever that may be. [F age 15] (2014, p. 106)

Sometimes I wonder how plants talk. [M age 9] (2014, p. 106)

I like think when I lean against a tree. Does this hurt him or what and wish it could like tell me if anything's wrong. [M age 11] (2014, p. 106)

It often appears to me that things around me have a life of their own. When the wind blows it seems as if the trees are complaining at their mistreatment. When it rains it seems as if the plants look up and say thank you. When I see spiders it seems to me as if they are pleading with you not to kill them, as if life means as much to them as it does to us. [M age 13] (2014, p. 106)

Sometimes animals look to you as though they are your human friend, and sometimes trees and clouds have shapes that give themselves a personality. [F age 13] (2014, p. 106)

This is really sort of a silly example but I sometimes think if I squish a bug what if that little bug had a family and children and a wife then I start to feel really bad and I start to think that if I just got squished by some uncaring person how it would feel to my family and friends. And then I start to feel real guilty and want to bring the little guy/gal back. [F age 13] (2014, p. 107)

I can tell that animals are so much like us in being creatures of this world, having all that we have, being equal. I could almost detect a little sense of understanding while I sat near a muskrat, and watched [it] pluck the grasses. I could relate to this need to build and to play easily. [F age 13] (2014, p. 107)

Yes. I first noticed this a long time ago when I thought that stepping on grass was cruel. Later I decided that it wouldn't be so short if it weren't to be stepped on. Picking flowers is mean. I just try to respect everything as having a life of its own. [F age 13] (2014, p. 107)

I do think that all things have their own life and mysterious ways of communicating with each other; and possibly each has its own soul. I don't have any grounds for stating these things, but it appears to me that all is living just by observing things like water gurgling in a brook, or dry leaves rustling, or whistling winds – Like they're commenting on the day's happenings. [F age 15] (2014, pp. 107-108)

Yes. Sometimes I'll watch my dog and try to figure out what she's thinking. Is she bored? Is she happy? Does she want to communicate with me? Sometimes I think about little bugs getting stepped on. I wonder if they really hurt bad or if they are scared. I wonder if they can talk to each other. Sometimes I even wonder if grass, and other plants, can feel it when they get stepped on. I wonder if they can actually think. Maybe their cells can do a kind of thought process that we haven't discovered or just can't understand. I wonder if they have emotions. Do they have good days and bad days? Can plants communicate? [M age 16] (2014, p. 108)

I know most animals, or at least most mammals, have their own thoughts. Animals like dogs and monkeys, the more intelligent creatures, come across to me as having what we would call human emotions and personalities. I often get the feeling that they are appraising me as I do them. [M age 17] (2014, p. 108)

When I write a poem, more so than other things, I try to word everything perfectly. I search my sources thoroughly until I find that perfect word. I usually am writing the poem for a friend on their birthday, to tell them thank you, or to tell them I am sorry. For this reason my poems are a part of me and therefore are written with real meaning and are written delicately. I think my poems through very well. [M age 17] (2014, pp. 108-109)

Usually my poems are short, humorous ditties that aren't very good, but fun to think up. I also like to rewrite the words to popular songs. [M age 16] (2014, p. 109)

When in a romantic mood: beautiful sunsets; dawning of a new day; running hand-in-hand thru a meadow; being alone; going away forever from a person I love; birds; special events in my life; deepest, deepest desires of my life – All the beautiful things in the world – When in a morbid mood: death; unknown; questioning life; questioning God; struggles between Satan and God; fore-knowledge of spiritual presences; and any strange bizarre thoughts my mind can conjure up. [F age 15] (2014, p. 109)

EMOTIONAL OVEREXCITABILITY

Descriptions

The emotional dimension is one of relationships with others and with oneself, of the despair of loneliness and of the joy of love, of the enigma of existence (Piechowski, 1974, p. 92).

Emotional overexcitability is a function of experiencing emotional relationships. The relationships can manifest as strong attachment to persons, living things, or places. From the point of view presented here intensity of feelings and display of emotions alone are not developmentally significant unless the experiential aspect of relationship is present. This distinction is very important. For example, when a child is refused candy he may throw a temper tantrum to show his anger. Or, he may go away sad thinking he is not loved. In the first case we have only a display of emotion, in the second a relationship. The manifestations of emotional overexcitability include inhibition (timidity and shyness), excitation (enthusiasm), strong affective memory, concern with death, fears, anxieties, depressions, feelings of loneliness, need

for security, concern for others, exclusive relationships, difficulties of adjustment to new environments. Relationships or friendship and love are developed usually with very few persons, and in extreme cases with only one. For an "emotional" person, as defined here, such exclusive relationships may be the only source of meaning in life. (Piechowski, 1975, pp. 257-258)

Among the five forms of psychic overexcitability, the manifestations of emotional overexcitability are the most numerous. They include certain characteristic and easily recognizable somatic expressions, extremes of feeling, inhibition, strong affective memory, concern with death, anxieties, fears, feelings of guilt, depressive and suicidal moods. But the largest variety are "relationship feelings," that is, an intensified quality of human relationships, exclusive bonds of friendship and love, difficulties in adjustment to new places, loneliness, feelings toward self, concern for others and their feelings. This list is neither final nor complete. My main purpose here is to stress the intensity, richness and high degree of differentiation of interpersonal feeling is the main stuff of individual development from a lower to a higher level. It involves not only caring but also self-scrutiny; not only a sense of joy but also the sense of responsibility; not only affection but also compassion and patience. Emotional overexcitability is also a major ingredient of creative potential. Hence, the great significance of emotional overexcitability in assessing the type and the direction of an individual's psychological growth and in assessing developmental potential. (Piechowski, 1979, p. 38)

Somatic Expressions "I can well recall the tense and horrible feeling in my stomach at that time. All was tense and in tight knots;" "I paled, then blood rushed to my head;" "I sat with beating heart" (SE); "My heart sank;" "Everything seemed to have turned upside down and I felt as though I was running for my life.... As though there is a force in your chest heaving and trying to blow itself out of your head;" "My heart felt like a lump of lead;" "I carried this leaden feeling around quite often;" "My breath caught in my throat." Stage fright belongs here too and also the conversion reaction – "I would periodically lose my voice. It would happen very suddenly, and usually after a conflict situation where I had not honestly expressed my views." (1979, pp. 28-29)

Positive feelings: joy, exuberance, feeling high, ecstasy – "I have discovered that giving way to a desire to play the violin or listen to recordings for too long a period of time triggers such a state of ecstasy that I do not attend well to daily activities." "I am almost always at an 'all-time high.' It's like a warm wind blowing within, an internal sun and fields and fields of daisies. It's an ultimate happiness where you could just kick your heels and shout to everybody 'I love you' and they shout the same back. It's a feeling of knowing exactly where you stand and wanting nothing else in the world – you really can touch life and know it is worth living for. I feel this way when I fall on a powder-covered ski slope and on my bicycle with sweat pouring down my back – just compete exhilaration." "I get a tingly feeling and my mind feels like it's floating." "I often feel high when I am completely satisfied with everything like it is. It's a feeling of happiness, of

knowing you are wanted and needed. It is something that sort of builds up inside of you and you feel like you are going to burst unless you can tell someone how much you love them or make someone else happy as you are. It's a feeling of wanting to get close to people. You're so satisfied with life as it is that you want to share your life with others. You feel like running out and shouting, 'Hey, I'm Alive.' For some reason the simple things in life suddenly means more to you. It's as if for the first time you're looking at someone or someplace and looking right past their faults." (1979, p. 39)

Negative feelings: "One day my work page in school was wrong, because I had misunderstood the directions. My sorrow was so great that it didn't ease for days after a teacher's funeral – "I cried for days and couldn't stop I couldn't practice my required work but played haunting melodies which moved me so much that I would drop into despair again;" when feeling low – "I feel like I'm trapped and if I'm in the house I have to get out again for a walk" (a combination of emotional and psychomotor overexcitability). (1979, p. 39)

Extremes of feeling: "Life in those poems was either very ecstatic or very tragic;" on the way to apologize for a transgression – "This I did, reluctantly, pausing under a vine covered arch gateway to enjoy looking at growing leaves one last time before a certain death;" "I ran back to my bedroom and buried my head under a pillow, trying to deny what I had just seen. I wouldn't even admit that my mother had just sold the dog. I kept telling myself that it wasn't true;" "'Low' to me is always depression, when nothing can make me happy – sometimes I even enjoy feeling depressed. In my life there is no midpoint – I am either straight up or straight down. To me there also is really little difference between happiness and sadness, it all depends on how my mind wants me to feel;" avoiding end of everything. I started thinking about it in grade school and I still think about it now – in fear;" "Yes, I've thought of death many times, but usually without great success because I am unable to comprehend it;" "My grandmother died almost in my arms – scared of death – trying to overcome that fear – limited success;" "That's what I wanted to be – so retarded I didn't know I was alive so I wouldn't be so worried about how I was going to die;" when little Teddy, a playmate, died of meningitis – "I couldn't accept it. Not for Teddy and not for me. I wanted to back time up so Teddy could make another move, escape those germs." (1979, pp. 39-40)

Fear and Anxiety: fears of the dark, fear of violence, fear of the unknown and the unpredictable – "Uncertainty makes me anxious. It makes me anxious when my life or livelihood or that of someone dear to me is to be affected without any assurance. In external things the darkness can sometimes still succeed in scaring me, if say, I'm alone in the dark church during a rain storm, the sound of breathing in a dark empty room – any number of things that go bump in the night – things you're sometimes ashamed of being afraid of in the daylight. I suppose in one word, I'm afraid of the unknown;" "I have a big fear of being disliked by people whom I want to like me. With some people it makes no difference to me whether they like or dislike me but when I want

someone to like me I fear being rejected. I fear getting hurt by someone also until it is possible for me to trust them. I also fear being wrongly interpreted by people. I hate being judged. I want only to be accepted. It makes me angry when people form opinions of me based on such superficial aspects as my age, sex, way of dressing, etc. What is in my mind is what is really me;" "I think I'm most afraid of being alone, of losing all my friends my family, not being able to turn to someone and ask for help. I hate the thought of living the rest of my life by myself. I'm a person who has to be needed and feel needed....I see ladies old and crippled who seem totally alone. You can tell this, for many times I'll say 'hi' to such a person and it's as if it has brightened up their day just to have someone care enough to say 'hi.' That makes me feel sad to think that they're so alone. It makes me wonder if someday I'll be that way;" anxiety over playmates – "I couldn't bear to watch them play at the edge of the cliff and would run away, filled with a sense of dread;" reading forbidden books – "Every time my name was spoken sharply, I thought I had been found out, I would startle and tremble inside for a long time;" anxiety because of someone else being in danger as when a neighbor's house was on fire and a baby was believed to be inside – "I was out of my mind with anxiety, running in a circle of fear....During class I cried so much that I was sent home." (1979, p. 41)

Feelings of guilt: "My young brother was involved in a number of accidents, all of them quite serious, for which I felt responsible. The anxiety drove me into desperation. Perhaps this had something to do with my jealousy of him – maybe I imagined hurting him and thought I somehow caused his accidents....If I add to this the fact that while boosting him up on my sister's shoulders for a piggy back ride I 'accidentally' (deliberately) pushed him too hard causing him to go right over, and fall, cutting his face. I now see why I had such mixed up feelings. My real guilt was mixed up with my assumed guilt, and I felt responsible for everything that happened to him;" "When I feel guilty, I can't shake it until I do something about it. I feel kind of sick, and nervous, and I usually feel sad or 'low.' I'll forget for a while, but then it hits me again and I feel even worse." (1979, p. 41-42)

Depressive and suicidal moods: "A low feeling includes a general feeling of despondency and despair. My body and especially my legs and arms feel like lead, and my stomach feels even heavier. There is a feeling of the hopelessness of doing anything. I tend to just sit around. I become irritated if anyone breaks into my private gloomy reverie. I just think about all bad things that have happened and will happen to me." "When I feel low, it's like I'm sinking into an endless hole – it seems like life almost ceases. I guess you could call it suspended animation. Things go on in a routine way like normal, but without spirit or enthusiasm. This is usually when I'm mad at myself or disappointed in myself and I get the sensation of being a failure. If I had to make a comparison to the feeling I would say deep purple would fit the mood, and the frustration a bird would feel flying against a 60 m.p.h. gale would describe it. It's a state of trying your hardest but getting nowhere, finally surrendering to the elements." "I became very depressed, overwhelmed by the isolation and my new responsibilities. When the baby was six months old I tried to commit suicide;" "I can recall the times I had set out to end it all. I knew I just was no

good, incapable, just too inadequate to cope. "They would be better off without me." "That night, the night that my girlfriend betrayed me as I see it, I tried to commit suicide;" "I did it because I felt useless as a person in the world and that I wouldn't make a difference in the world even if I was perfect." (1979, p. 42)

Relationship Feelings. These reflect the significant position others have in the development of our emotional life. They reflect the fact that we have social instincts and social feelings (Adler, 1908; Bowlby, 1969; Eibl-Eilwfeldt, 1974; Harlow, 1971) and that a viable interpersonal network is one of the fundamental requirements of our well-being and physical health (Lowenthal and Haven, 1978; Lynch, 1977; Vermilyea, 1978). This may find expression as a need for protection, attachment to animals and in the numerous ways present in the examples that follow. (1979, p. 42)

Significant others: "A really terrible experience for me was when I was 13. I discovered that my father was cheating on my mother and that really put me through a lot of really heavy changes because I respected my father so much and It really destroyed that kind of thing for me for a while;" "I also felt as though I had betrayed someone, and I felt as though I must have hurt the teachers deeply – partly because I thought everyone thought highly of me." "My father looked so incredibly sad whenever one of my faults was aired. I couldn't bear to see him suffer on account of me. (1979, p. 42)

Perceptions of relationships: "I was shy with people when I got between the stage of knowing them slightly and knowing them well;" "I do not like to be with someone just for the sake of being with that person. I like to be with someone to enjoy being with that person;" the meaning of community – "When I was 18 I went to the Catholic church and I was for the first time interested in church because of the participation of the congregation in the mass;" "When I see someone suffering because he is aware and vulnerable, when I know I can do nothing and he thinks I will not do it." (1979, pp. 42-43)

Emotional ties and attachments: "...the one I loved most was a squirrel. He was very special to me, and I think I began to depend more on him for love and understanding than I did on my friends. He did everything with me. We went places together, he slept by me and even went downtown with me.... Sparky the squirrel always knew when to come and sit by me. Even so, sometimes it's good to have a friend to talk to." "I have all sorts of attachments. I have places, pets, and persons I'm very attached to. It's a very personal feeling, and it makes me feel good to think about them. They're mine, it's like a secret joy almost. I can't really explain how I feel because people never get the full impact of my feelings, so I find just enjoying it is enough." "We were like brothers for about 9 years beginning at age 5, 6 or 7. We kept each other 'in line', saved each other's life once each, and probably had the best of our life together." "I have formed

many strong attachments. Foremost in non-natural attachments has been an attachment to a young man I call Steerforth. It is not a mating-type, dating-type relationship. He is 19, I've known him for 5 years, have watched him grow up to be a man. The attachment is a strange one. Secretly over the years I've done and said everything I could to help him – and just as secretly he has accomplished the same for me. We like the same things, admire the same things. We feel safe and content near each other. There is something constant and slow – something eternal about it." Intense feelings of the value of friendship make it harder to start one – "He did not make friends easily, and it pained him, for he likes to be liked" (SE); the loved ones become the core of one's existence – "the density of those I love torments me more seriously than a chronic disease in myself. I feel threatened in my essence by their brittleness" (SE); "If his mother ever refused to say good night to him, he refused to go to sleep, and cried, 'Maman, embrassez moi' until she relented" (SE). It hurts to be cheated by someone who is believed to be a friend and it hurts if one feels one has let down a friend. Break ups of relationships are especially painful, "I have not gone out with another girl since I broke up with this girl. I often dream that I marry her and she puts me down and ends up breaking with me." (1979, p. 43)

Difficulties of adjustment to a new environment: "After Grade 8 I went to town for Grade 9 ... but I got really homesick;" "When I was at school, I wished I was at home with my family. I wanted to have someone to tuck me away and give me a kiss before I went to bed at night;" "We moved when I was eight years old. I did not want to leave and felt that I would never see my best friend again." (1979, p. 43)

Loneliness: "Feeling low is a feeling of being all alone. Suddenly you have to face something and you're scared. You feel like no one else knows what you are going through and for some reason you can't trust anyone with your innermost thoughts. You feel like reaching out to someone and asking them for help. Funny thing but if for some reason you can't reach out and tell someone, this feeling of lowness persists. You feel like no one cares if you're alive or not. For some reason you feel like you just can't face life as it is and if this feeling doesn't change you're going to go nuts." "The feeling of friendship is a very important one to me. A feeling of belonging and trust is included in this. Belonging in the sense of loving and being loved. Without this feeling you have loneliness and emptiness, which affect me strongly, also. Loneliness – sometimes it's good to be lonely. You need solitude." "As long as I keep to myself – I can't get hurt – but it does hurt me being by myself all the time." (1979, p. 43-44)

Concern for others (empathy): when the little Tonio climbs a mountain all over again to find his sisters watch he comes back exhausted and says, "But Monot, I am sorry, I didn't find it" (SE). "Father still emotionally hurts my Mother. But at least I don't add to the trouble by entering the fight." "I was really sad today when I read in the paper of a boy who was burned to death with people standing around who could do nothing." "When father explained the reason that he did not go to war was because the enemy was made up of little girls' daddies, and that he couldn't

hate them enough to kill them, although he hated the war. I never forgot that, for neither could I then hate an enemy I did not know." "If someone raised his voice at another, I flew to his defense, trying to deflect some of the hostility in my direction." "I could never tell at funerals if I felt most sorry about the person who was dead or those who were still alive." Empathy toward children at school in a poor district – "They ate sandwiches with nothing but jam on them – no protein. I couldn't eat my lunch." (1979, p. 44)

Conflict with others: the kind of conflict that is thought of here is one arising not from self-interest but rather from the ground of personal relationship, concern for others, and matters of principle such as fairness and justice conceived in terms of the rights of each individual and universal values. "Blatant insensitivity is one thing that I cannot tolerate under any circumstances, and it's the one thing I'll get in real trouble with my superiors over, especially if someone is being hurt." "Sometimes it really bothers me if I know no one cares what's going on in this world, or the hardships of others, or maybe I'm in trouble or need help. It really makes me mad when people can see someone's in trouble yet won't stop and help, let alone laugh at someone's mishaps." (1979, p. 44)

"My strongest feeling would be dealing with self-consciousness. I am the type of person who is constantly questioning myself to see why I act the way I do." "Defining 'me' is my only problem. What I can count on for sure is that I am always changing. I'm a young person trying to live in Christ's image, but it's not easy to know how to do that. I'm the one person who thinks exactly as I do, and I'm the one person I have to live with all the time. I'm often confused, unhappy, frustrated, and depressed, but I'm learning how to deal with these feelings, and to feel worthwhile and at ease more of the time." "Myself – living according to the social morals of society; the inner self that seeks fulfillment in all things; a knowledge seeker – craving, searching, finding and questioning; a person alive in this world, picking up many vibrations of life, sensing that there is more to life than just living." (1979, p. 44)

Self-evaluation and self-judgment: "...the only things that ever make me feel low are the ugly things that come from inside of me – if I say something immoral, act foolishly, etc... I feel a sinking sensation and condemn myself – perhaps that's what a low is, self-condemnation, for me anyway." "My relations with others are usually spiced with good-natured sarcasm (if there is such a thing) and they usually take my comments in stride. When they don't, however, and get offended, I become quite angry with myself and start dwelling on my faults in a fit of self-condemnation. I want to be alone to hash things out myself. They usually don't last real long, but when they do, it's not too good." (1979, pp. 44-45)

Feelings of inferiority and inadequacy: "I can easily bring to mind the feeling of being overwhelmed by what was expected of me (by myself in particular) as a teacher;" "I feel there is a lot that I could do but then there are times that I feel I am useless and they get me down no matter how many good things I have done;" "The nail biting continued, but I always felt guilty, anxious about bath-night, and sorry that my parents had a bad little girl;" "I felt hopelessly inadequate in relation to the piano," "I loved the violin passionately. Several years later, when we moved west, my new teacher placed a great emphasis on technique. This succeeded in raising my doubts about my ability and I began to feel hopelessly inadequate here too." (1979, p. 45)

Many of the above examples will seem common, in fact so common that it might be hard to conceive what constitutes over and above in emotional overexcitability. For one, many of the quotations show that such reactions are more intense, richer and deeper and more frequent in persons endowed emotionally. Secondly, they are either related to or themselves represent developmental dynamisms described by Dabrowski's theory. This is partly discussed in Ogburn-Colangelo's chapter in this book. (1979, p. 45)

The emotional aspect of human development usually is either taken for granted or is looked upon as a source of interference with efficiency, productivity, and the social order in general. People are expected to have appropriate emotions at times of misfortune and personal loss, but self-doubt, maladjustment, existential despair are considered handicaps. Yet, it is this kind of feeling that is a function of emotional overexcitability, and within the frame of Dabrowski's theory, such feeling has its logical and developmentally significant consequently low degree or absence of emotional overexcitability is the most serious curtailment of a person's developmental potential. To illustrate, we start with two replies to the question, "Do you ever feel high?" Note that the first one ends with a psychomotor response (need to be physically active); the second has no identifiable overexcitability response and is rather stereotypic: "Yes, I have felt good at times usually when something good happens or something I like. When you feel high you want to do things" (psychomotor). "Yes, in 8th grade. I went out with a girl for the first time and thought we were starting something great. This is the best I have ever felt in my life (stereotypic). (1979, p. 46)

These responses are undifferentiated, they lack depth of feeling, reflection and any connection with other experience and areas of awareness. Here is a response to the question, "Do you ever have several feelings at once?" The response that follows is an expression of an external orientation: "The only time I can think of that I feel several things at once is when I receive something in school (praise, grades, or appreciation...etc.). Most of the time I feel happy, but at the same time, many times, I feel I do not deserve what I get and I feel angry at myself that. I didn't do better to deserve what I received (especially regarding grades). Many times also I am happy when I think how lucky I am, and at the same time I feel sad and sorry for those who

aren't as lucky as I am. I wish they could be. Sometimes this makes me feel 'low'." (1979, pp. 46-47)

And here is an example where life is seen not as an individualized experience, but as a zero-sum process of external checks and balances. "I have experienced this (several feelings at once). I feel this way if something good may happen to me, and because of it something bad or not so good happens to a friend like if you get picked for something he may not." Asked, "Which of your feelings affect you most strongly?" the same boy wrote: "I suppose a happy feeling does because it makes everything seem good and you want to do more things. When sad I usually try to forget about it and so it is not that strong. (1979, p. 47)

Below is a response to the same question indicating an expression of strong sentiment yet giving semblance of being the antithesis of emotional overexcitability: "Do what *you* (myself) think is best, look out for yourself, try to get in a position where you have an advantage (I'm calling the shots), try to get ahead in the world, and most of all have *fun* doing the above. Go by your own book of rules in most situations, no one else's. These feelings can be adapted to almost any of my life situations." (1979, p. 46)

But other responses of the same boy indicate that this is a result of a deep hurt from loss of his closest friend of nine years. Unfortunately when the wound is covered up like this, it arrests emotional development. Perhaps, as sometimes happens, events later in life may force a change. (1979, p. 46)

Here are some examples of responses to the question, "Do you ever think of death?" Several replied, not very often. One said: "Very seldom. It does not bother me at all." In another instance, the reflection on death is regarded as a waste of time: "I don't like to think of death. I figure when it's time for me to die, I will just die. The time spent thinking about death, I could be doing more useful things and helping people. I cannot do things when I am dead, so I don't have time to think about it. I must do what I can now and think of death only when death comes." (1979, p. 46)

What is absent in the above responses is a relation to the interpersonal context, to the threat of death as the breaker and robber of the cherished presence of the loved ones. Because of this, the above responses are lacking in emotional overexcitability. Here is a response to the question, "If you ask yourself, 'Who am I really.' what is the answer?" "I'm not positively sure of that answer yet. I know I'm a girl with a fair amount of intelligence and I plan on doing something with my life that will help others. I have very high standards and am quite old-fashioned. There are a lot

of things I want to do and lots of places to see, but first I want to be successful at whatever I decide to do with my talents." (1979, p. 47)

This survey of the instances of emotional overexcitability shows that individuals endowed with it display an intensity of feeling often accompanied by somatic manifestations. Strong attachments to pets and members of the family are the first experiences of relationships. As relationships grow they become unique and exclusive. Almost always there is only one primary relationship in a given period of life, what Bowlby (1969) named monotropy. If this relationship is broken by separation or death, the hurt is felt intensely and the grief is often accompanied by a depression. In emotional individuals, thoughts of suicide are almost always present and in times of crisis suicide attempts are likely. The meaning of life is thus perceived chiefly in terms of relationships of love, friendship, service to others. The need for such relationships is so basic that their absence leads to intense feelings of loneliness and existential despair. For the same reason it is very difficult for such persons to move away from the place where the relationships have been developed and established to a new environment where one is a stranger. (1979, p. 47)

The involvement in relationships, and the awareness of one's aloneness in their absence contribute to the development of feelings toward oneself. There is exploration and examination of oneself, usually negative, because it seems to be in the nature of human feeling that in the absence of viable links with others we begin to feel worthless (technically called "negative cognitive set," as if this truly meant something). (1979, pp. 47)

Emotional overexcitability is recognized in the way emotional relationships are experienced, in strong attachments to persons, living things or places, and in the great intensity of feeling and awareness of its full range. Characteristic expressions are inhibition (timidity and shyness) and excitation (enthusiasm), strong affective recall of past experiences, concern with death, fears, anxieties, depressions; there may be an intense loneliness, and an intense desire to offer love, a concern for others; there is a high degree of differentiation of interpersonal feeling. Emotional overexcitability is the basis of one's relation to self through self-evaluation and self-judgment, coupled with a sense of responsibility, compassion, and responsiveness to others. (Lysy & Piechowski, 1983, p. 273)

Emotional overexcitability (E) is recognized in the way emotional relationships are experienced, in strong attachments to persons, living things or places, and in the great intensity of feeling and awareness of its full range. Characteristic expressions are: inhibition (timidity and shyness) and excitation (enthusiasm); strong affective recall of past experiences, concern with death, fears, anxieties, depressions; there may be an intense loneliness, and an intense desire to offer love, a concern for others. There is a high degree of differentiation of interpersonal feeling. Emotional overexcitability is the basis of one's relation to self through self-evaluation and self-judgment,

coupled with a sense of responsibility, compassion, and responsiveness to others. (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984, p. 82)

Emotional overexcitability is recognized in the way emotional relationships are experienced, and in the great intensity of feeling and awareness of its whole range. Characteristic expressions are: inhibition (timidity and shyness) and excitation (enthusiasm), strong affective recall of past experiences or concern with death, fears, anxieties or depressions. There may be intense loneliness, an intense desire to offer love, a concern for others. There is a high degree of differentiation of interpersonal feeling. Emotional overexcitability is the basis of one's relation to self through self-evaluation and self-judgment, sense of responsibility, compassion and responsiveness to others. (Piechowski & Cunningham, 1985, p. 156)

Emotional (E) – great depth and intensity of emotional life expressed in a wide range of feelings, compassion, attachments, heightened sense of responsibility, self-examination (Piechowski, 1986, p. 191; 1989, p. 88; 1991, p. 287).

The potential for emotional hyperexcitability can manifest itself by a great syntony and sensitivity. These represent the nuclei for further growth toward a higher level of empathy (Piechowski, 1995, p. 4).

Emotional refers to the depth and intensity of emotional life expressed through a wide range of feelings, attachments, and compassion for people, especially children, and other living things (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 176).

Emotional "I feel really high when I play football with my friends" (1; boy, age 13); "I often feel happy. When I ride my bike I feel a special kind of pride. I have the same feeling when the Broncos win, or when the snow is falling outside" (2; boy, age 13); "When I feel really happy I feel like nothing can go wrong for the rest of my life...When I am really happy it is more so than other people I know. When I am quite happy I am so high it seems like nothing could ever get me into a bad mood" (3; boy, age 13). In the first example, intensification of feeling is occasioned by the excitement of a game and the company of friends; in the second, the feelings are deeper, quietly spontaneous and evoked on quite dissimilar occasions; in the third, feelings are very intense, and there is an awareness that this makes the respondent different from other people. (Piechowski & Miller, 1995, p. 177)

The emotional mode centers on attachments and affectional bonds with others, empathy, the despair of loneliness, the joy of love, the enigma of existence and human responsibility (Piechowski, 1999, p. 327).

Emotional overexcitability is easily recognized. A person's feelings and emotions are frequently at a higher pitch. The person has a keen awareness and sensitivity to nuances of feeling both in oneself and in others. Because the vehicle for emotion is the body, there are distinctly recognizable psychosomatic signs of overexcitability, such as blushing, getting flushed with color, perspiring, trembling, feeling tension in different parts of the body, feeling hot or cold, and so on. Positive as well as negative feelings are experienced with great intensity, openly by extroverts and inwardly by introverts. We live in a culture in which being emotional is criticized and tampered with. Children are often told what they should or should not feel rather than accepting what they do feel. When this happens, children with high overexcitability are intensely miserable and confused. Consequently, we have a much higher frequency in emotional individuals of a tendency toward depression, suicidal thoughts, feeling of being out of place, and not belonging. Feelings of profound alienation, even suicide, are often the result. (1999, p. 331)

Highly emotional individuals make strong attachments to people, living things, and places. When they have to move they experience great difficulties adjusting to new environments. To pull up so many roots and strike them in new soil takes up much energy; it often takes a long time, or it fails to happen. This imparts compassion toward others, sympathy for the loneliness of others. Friendships are strong and enduring. Being emotional often means to judge oneself, to carry on an inner dialogue and self-judgment on how well one does toward others, how well one carries out one's responsibilities toward others. May Sarton, quoted at the beginning, wrote of the deep collision with her "unregenerate, tormenting, and tormented self." (1999, p. 331)

Intensity, passion, and sensitivity to nuances of feeling are usually associated with creative people in the arts but not in science or mathematics. Herbert Simon, a Nobel Prize winner in economics, said in an interview that there is no emotion in his creative process – only hard cognitive work and hard problem solving. This, however, is not true of other scientists. Simon took for granted his wife's contribution to his emotional well-being and overlooked the obvious fact that the intense interest driving him is an intense emotion. Louis Pasteur and Norbert Wiener, to cite just two examples, were deeply emotional and highly sensitive people. Darwin and Einstein also had a strongly emotional aspect to their personalities. The spectrum of emotions and feelings is immense and exceedingly intricate. The portion of the emotional spectrum that is characteristic of each creator is probably unique. (1999, p. 331)

In his autobiography Darwin made frequent observations on his friendships and their importance to him as personal relationships in contrast to scientific ones. In describing people he always noted the emotional impact each person had on him. Recalling his childhood, Darwin confessed to an act of cruelty. He beat a puppy and it troubled his conscience for a long time. "The exact spot where the crime was committed" was engraved in his mind. It was all the more troubling to him because he loved dogs and they often preferred him to their masters. Darwin also recalled that he was more affectionate in his youth when he had many friends among the schoolboys whom he said he loved dearly. When as a student he attended the clinical ward of the hospital some of the cases distressed him and left vivid imprints on his mind. Two surgeries he attended were performed without anesthesia – it was not yet introduced – he could not bear to stay and see them completed. (1999, pp. 331-332)

Einstein said about himself, "I am not much with people, and I'm not a family man. I want my peace." In personal relationships he kept a distance. He concentrated all his energy on solving the riddle of how God created the universe. Yet he was also animated by deep emotions and sensibilities. He was close to his mother, to his sister Maja, and to his uncle Casar Koch. He was deeply honest and abhorred German militarism so strongly that from the age of 15 he sought to give up his German citizenship; a year later he became stateless; eventually he became a Swiss citizen. He cherished those few with whom he could discuss physics. Einstein said that he suffered nervous conflicts "at the very beginning when the Special Theory of Relativity began to germinate" in him. Similarly Max Planck described the 6 years of his own seminal work on the equilibrium between radiation and matter as "a process of despair" because the solution was eluding him. (1999, p. 332)

As a boy Einstein had a great sensitivity to beauty and a deep religiosity. About the age of 12 he came to the conclusion that many Bible stories could not possibly be true. Religion lost its authority. This led him to suspect that all institutional authority was intentionally deceiving the young through lies. The resulting emotional crisis made him distrust every kind of authority. Einstein loved music and studied the violin but was making little progress with teachers who stressed mechanical practicing and accuracy without feeling. When he was 13 he fell in love with Mozart and his violin sonatas: "The attempts to reproduce, to some extent, their artistic content and their singular grace compelled me to improve my technique...I believe, on the whole, that love is a better teacher than sense of duty." (1999, p. 332)

Pasteur as a boy liked to fish but abstained from trapping birds – a wounded bird was too much for him. The contact with his family and friends was vital to the young Pasteur. Away from home he constantly begged for more frequent and longer letters. Pasteur was also deeply religious and it pained him to see in the practice of religion so much controversy, intolerance, and lack of peace and love. (1999, p. 332)

Wiener's account of his boyhood and youth is very emotional. He remembered his first sweetheart in kindergarten – charmed by her voice he loved to stay close to her. He described his fears of the dark, injury, violence, and death and his sensitivity to the injustice and cruelty suffered by others. He was quite shaken when at the age of 13 he was told that his mother had a second child who died at birth. It shattered his sense of security to realize that his own family was not immune to tragedy. Lacking religious upbringing he learned the story of Christ's crucifixion from his Catholic friends. The image of Christ's wounds and the crown of thorns filled him with pain. (1999, p. 332)

Despite his extraordinary abilities and being radically accelerated in school – Wiener graduated from Tufts College at the age of 14 1/2, spent a year at Cornell, and earned his doctorate at Harvard before he turned 19 – his self-confidence was undercut by his father's demands for perfection. Even worse, his father stated publicly in print that all the boy's accomplishments were due to the training he gave him and none to his abilities. Wiener was devastated; he felt that all his successes were his father's but the failures were his own. He dreaded graduation, which forced him to leave the protection of childhood and face adult responsibility for himself. He seriously doubted he could succeed. "My achievement of independence during the year at Cornell had been incalculably retarded by the confused mass of feelings of resentment, despair, and rejection which had followed early in the year upon discovery of my Jewishness." The feeling of oneness with nature, or even with the universe, is also frequently expressed by creative people. (1999, p. 332)

Studies comparing artists and scientists in regard to emotionality have shown that as a group scientists tend to be less emotional. But this comparison overlooks at least two things. First, the comparison is made of adults. The examples cited make it clear that as children scientists often are emotional and sensitive but later the involvement in research restricts their emotional range – recall Darwin saying that he was more affectionate as a boy. Second, there is a distinct difference in the artists' and the scientists' material. Scientists study phenomena outside themselves, which are analyzed, experimented with, and explained in objective terms. But the process of working out solutions to problems is often described as despair or torture. (1999, p. 332-333)

Whether the scientist approaches this work with passion or not does not enter the final picture. That's how science is usually viewed and portrayed. Objectivity is in fact the outcome of the collective enterprise of science in which replication of results and confirmation of theories are carried out by different people checking on each other's work. In art the very material is human subjectivity, the life of feeling to which an artist gives expression. Artists work with the complexities of human emotion and feeling. Before experience can be portrayed and expressed it has to be felt, whether in reality or in imagination. (1999, p. 333)

In some cases emotional overexcitability is expressed negatively. For instance, Wagner was so self-centered that he believed that to be his friend a man had to be totally dedicated to him. Picasso, emotionally equally intense, was not far behind, being destructive in most of his intimate relationships. Somerset Maugham was often cruel to the boys procured for him. To understand what tips the balance toward a negative expression of overexcitability would require a close examination of the person's emotional development. (1999, p. 333)

Emotional (E) – great depth and intensity of emotional life expressed in a wide range of feelings, compassion, responsibility, self-examination (Piechowski, 2002, p. 28).

The emotional mode – of attachments and affectional bonds with others, empathy, despair and loneliness, the joy of love, the enigma of existence and human responsibility (Piechowski, 2003, p. 299).

Emotional overexcitability, manifested in a wide range of emotions and feelings, addresses the passionate nature of gifted and creative people – their emotional intensity. But it is emotional sensitivity that moves to compassion, caring, and responsibility. The significance of deep and perceptive feeling lies in empathy as a way of knowing, another little explored ability of the gifted. (Piechowski, 2009, p. 180)

Emotional overexcitability is about what stimulates the person's feelings and emotions. It is further differentiated into emotional intensity and sensitivity. Emotional sensitivity corresponds in many ways to emotional intelligence, the ability to perceive and respond to nuances of emotion and feeling in others, in oneself, and in group interactions. It may be so acute that it becomes hypersensitivity. Emotional intensity (passion) is about the amount of energy being expressed. With some people the intensity of their expression is so great that it may be felt as a pressure wave. Intensity of concentration, and their passion for a subject or talent, distinguish gifted children; as one of them said: “A passion is something that rules your life. You want to know everything that there is to know and you want to be the best at it. An interest is something that is cool, and you would like to know more, but if you don't that's okay too” (Schultz and Delisle 2006a, p. 90). (2009, p. 182)

Emotional life of the gifted encompasses so much that only a few selected themes can be discussed. In the responses to the OEQ positive feelings pre-dominate. The dominant affect tends to be love, compassion, caring, optimism, appreciation of beauty, and the like. Bonds of deep affection involve parents and siblings, pets and favorite places, whether it is grandma's house, an orchard, a spot by the river, or backstage of the school theater. (2009, p. 182)

The role of contact with nature in our emotional well-being has received very little attention. With the worsening environmental condition of the planet and growing urbanization, the opportunity for children to spend time in nature and explore it has all but vanished (Louv 2005). (2009, p. 182)

Younger children have much empathy for the natural world. They empathize with a wilting plant, a tree whose limb is cut off, a crushed spider, and rise in indignation against maltreatment of living things. We belittle it by calling it animism because we don't see the moral imagination of the child who identifies with what is living and seems sentient. This feeling is extended to stuffed animals or any objects of which the child is especially fond. When we grow up we still do it, too, when we identify with our car or piece of jewelry (Piechowski 2006). (2009, p. 182)

Gifted adolescents describe friendships in terms of intuitive connection and mutual understanding on a deep level. Friendships transcend gender stereotypes and are as easily formed between boys and girls as between boys only or girls only. Introverted and nonathletic gifted youngsters have a particularly difficult time finding friends – they are a minority (nonathletic) within a minority (gifted), which may be further compounded by any degree of “geekiness” (Anderegg 2007; Tannenbaum 1962). (2009, p. 182)

Being intense is an ineradicable part of the gifted self. To most people being intense means “too much,” creating an obvious challenge to find friends of similar level of intensity and passion. When asked how they see their own self (identity), some said that their self is unknown, elusive, or hidden; some described themselves in opposites. For example, a 16-year gifted girl said: “For every adjective I can think of there is one that contradicts it entirely: artistic but can't write neatly (so you've seen), lovable, yet a bitch; shy but loud, mature but silly, calm but 'spastic,' together yet ready for a nervous breakdown” (Piechowski 2006, p. 174). Others saw themselves as competent yet highly self-aware and weighed down by the burden of "the gift." (2009, p. 183)

Emotional Overexcitability (E) is the heightened intensity of positive and negative feelings. It is recognized in the way emotional relationships are experienced; in strong attachments to persons, living things or places; in the great intensity of feelings and emotions; and in an awareness of the full range of emotions. Characteristic expressions are: inhibition (timidity and shyness); enthusiasm; emotionality; compassion and understanding of others; strong affective recall of past experiences; concern with death, fears, anxieties, and depression; and occasional feelings of unreality. Intense loneliness may be combined with an intense desire to offer love or a deep concern for others. Intrapersonal and interpersonal feeling achieves a high degree of differentiation. (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

Heightened Emotional Excitability and Sensitivity. Steven was a sensitive boy, aware of his peers, their needs and discomforts. He regularly called attention of the entire class when a classmate needed assistance emotionally or physically. Katrina was also aware and sensitive to others' needs. An introverted child, Gerald was quiet and entered activities slowly. Peter was hesitant to do some activities until he had had time to watch and evaluate the process. He then engaged in the activity when he felt comfortable. This is typical of a child who is of cautious temperament and who needs to assess the situation before joining in. (2014, pp. 25-26)

At times the noise and activity level in the classroom were too intense for Peter, leaving him upset and crying. Transitions between new situations or classrooms could be difficult for him. To deal with this, Peter's teachers developed for him simple strategies. When he felt as though the classroom activity was becoming too intense for him, he went to touch his teacher's finger or put his hands over his ears. He then would sit in a quiet corner until he felt comfortable again. In this way, a little accommodation and the reassuring effect of human touch helped him in his social and emotional growth. He started taking more risks in his work and was seldom hesitant to try anything in the classroom. Transitions became easier for him. (2014, p. 26)

A child like Peter, and also Gerald, is temperamentally cautious – restrained, watchful, and gentle. Peter's extreme sensitivity to loud noise and stress is typical of some children. For instance, going to a shopping mall can be overwhelmingly stressful because the bombardment of noise, the people, and the visual stimuli demand attention at every point. Children with this kind of sensitivity need the support of an orderly, quiet environment. It is a good practice to prepare them in advance for upcoming transitions. It is best to avoid surprises that would upset the order they depend on. In contrast, children like Katrina or Steven are of a bold temperament. They are energetic and spontaneous. (2014, p. 26)

Emotional overexcitability, with its intense emotional highs and lows, may be seen as evidence of immaturity, poor parenting, or even a serious mood disorder in a gifted child. However, this greater responsiveness to stimuli – whether from the external environment or from internal thoughts and memories – needs to be understood and accepted as coming from a deeper and more intense processing of experience rather than from dysfunction. (2014, p. 35)

Examples of Emotional OE

Examples of emotional OE are as follows: When I kill a fly or an ant or any other insect, I suddenly get a feeling like, "Should I have done that? That's really just like going and killing a human being. I bet the animals have their own life, feelings, they must because they are really very intelligent." The next time a fly gets in the way, I usually just let it go, because I feel guilty. (Female, age 13) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

I spend my time writing poetry once in a while. Every time I write a poem, it comes out as a poem about someone I love, something that won't always be around or something special to me. Sometime I write of sad things to take the hurt out of me. I can never write poetry unless it is something very special to me. (Male, age 13) (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

[If you ask yourself, "Who am I" what is the answer?] Usually the answer is: an insignificant human speck in the vast universe trying to make something out of itself but will probably not succeed. A biological imperfect being destined for certain death in the end and being forgotten even though it attempted to make something of itself. But sometimes I get an irrational response: You are a perfect intelligence. You are destined to become a powerful person. This response sometimes scares me. (Male, age 15). (Falk & Piechowski, 2014, p. 3)

"I'm usually not afraid to not hide my feelings (something that often embarrasses my friends)" [M age 16] (2014, p. 154)

"I have a lot of emotions and thoughts rolling around in me" [F age 15] (2014, p. 154)

"[I like to concentrate on] emotions – experiencing them fully and trying to recreate them, being able to really feel them when I want to, not just simulate them" [M age 17] (2014, p. 154)

"[When excited] I let myself go and show my emotions. Many people may look at me funny, but I honestly feel I should show my true feelings" [F age 13] (2014, p. 154)

I rarely feel good because I can't stop thinking about all the bad things going on in my life. I must be very pessimistic because I can't really enjoy anything fully. [M age 14] (2014, p. 155)

No, because even though I have my moments of regular happiness, something always happens to dampen my spirits, ex., my main happiness comes from school, such as a good day in terms of getting along with people, and maybe making a new friend or the possibility of finding me a girlfriend, is always marred by 1 or more persons. [M age 16] (2014, p. 154)

By my own definition of those words I have never felt “really high, ecstatic, or incredibly happy.” Those words are silly. [M age 16] (2014, p. 155)

The feeling of power without the need to use it is permeating my body. [M age 17] (2014, p. 155)

There is a rushing feeling in my body, like I want to laugh and cry at the same time, just to let the joy out. It seems, for a little while that the world is perfect, and I think good thoughts about everyone and everything. I feel like I could jump up and fly. [F age 17] (2014, p. 155)

Adrenalin rules supreme, of course – I talk fast, don't sit or stand still – everything is speeded up ten times and exaggerated (I'm very prone to intense exaggeration when happy, etc.) I delight in surprising people when I'm happy (well, shocking them, actually). If I'm happy I'm not tired – ever...high ecstatic, and incredibly happy never last long for me – it usually comes in short, intense bursts (I don't know if I could handle it if it didn't). [M age 17] (2014, pp. 155-156)

Yes, sometimes I get so excited I don't know what to do. I feel like I'm going to burst because there's so much happiness inside of me. I just have to smile, laugh and try to make someone else happy. [M age 16] (2014, p. 156)

I feel happy, excited and cheerful and think nothing could possibly go wrong. I'm just overflowing with joy. I feel happy to be alive. I have the great urge to dance and sing. [F age 15] (2014, p. 156)

I get a tingly feeling and my mind feels like it's floating. [M age 14] (2014, p. 156)

When I feel incredibly happy, I feel there's a warm tingling which starts in the center of my chest and spreads throughout my body. [F age 16] (2014, p. 156)

It's like being on top of the world-in control of myself, able to cope with and react (correctly) to any situation that might arise. Sometimes it brings a silly, bubbly inner effervescence that spills over into laughter. [F age 16] (2014, p. 156)

Sometimes after talking to someone, being alone watching the animals at sunrise, I feel as if I should conquer the world, do anything and everything. I feel like I'm a bird who can soar with...just me, the wind, and the sun. [M age 14] (2014, p. 156)

There are quiet highs, too, when I just sit around and smile and feel quietly happy inside myself. Different kinds of joy bring different kinds of reactions, I guess, the quiet and the loud. [F age 16] (2014, p. 156)

Another natural high which I enjoy the most is feeling the real presence of God. I experienced this 2 years ago on a retreat and will never forget it. It is a feeling of total love and understanding. [M age 18] (2014, p. 157)

Suddenly I'll feel wonderful and the world looks beautiful. Whereas normally I would walk through the day rather unaware of the things around me, I am suddenly observant. [F age 18] (2014, p. 157)

More often, I just feel good about the world. But the times I really do feel incredibly happy, I feel as if the world is a beautiful place, that life is wonderful, precious, and made for living. I feel like dancing and singing everywhere, and I'm nice to everyone, even to people that usually aren't nice to me. It's like...falling in love. It's the feeling that life conquers death. I feel like I'm on top of the world, or something. I can't really describe it well. [F age 15] (2014, p. 157)

It's an ultimate happiness where you could just kick your heels and shout out to everybody 'I love you' and they shout the same back. [F age 15] (2014, p. 157)

When I feel so happy and ecstatic that I could just burst, I want everyone else to share my happiness and feel as I do. [F age 16] (2014, p. 157)

I feel open to anyone, as though communication with other people would be the simplest thing in the world. [M age 17] (2014, p. 157)

When I'm really happy I could care less what is happening in the world around me. I close myself off from other negative feelings. I like to do things for people. I'll do chores I usually put off as long as I can, right away. I'll do things without much thought. [M age 15] (2014, p. 158)

I feel different kinds of high where I laugh helplessly at anything because everything's funny, but deeper inside I feel that something's missing. Like there is really no reason to be happy. At a party or dance I may be like this, it gives me loads of energy, but leaves me with nothing. Here I am nervous, not tension nervous, just jumpy nerves. But here I laugh harder and longer than I do in the next type I'll describe, although I value the next type more. This type is where I feel "exalted." It happens when I come into contact with ideas which carry me above conflicts going on in my mind. The source of these concepts can be people, books or whatever. Usually when the source is a person, or people, I also have had a chance to express parts of my soul and this makes me feel good. I do not lose awareness of my practical problems but they seem less pressing, for my mind is on a higher level. But sometimes these practical problems frustrate me because they seem so trivial that I should be rid of them but aren't [sic]. [F age 17] (2014, p. 157)

Another kind of high is where I feel someone cares about me. This makes me feel good about myself. I then have a feeling of worthiness I don't usually have. [F age 17] (2014, p. 159)

I don't really think that I ever feel low.... I realize that failure is never final if you don't give up what you're trying to do. [M age 15] (2014, p. 159)

Yes. I walk slowly. It feels like something is pushing down on my head. [M age 16] (2014, p. 159)

When I'm really low there are a lot of things pressing on my head at once, that won't take turns. I become extremely tense when anyone even looks at me, and I do a lot of screaming inside myself. There is no alternative but to get away from everything and lose myself for a while until I settle down enough to reason with myself. [F age 16] (2014, p. 159)

A low feeling includes a general feeling of despondency and despair. My body and especially my legs and arms feel like lead, and my stomach feels even heavier. There is the feeling of the hopelessness of doing anything. I tend to withdraw from anything that is going on around me

and think my own gloomy thoughts...I tend to just sit around. I become irritated if anyone breaks into my private gloomy reverie. I just think about all the bad things that have happened and will happen to me. [M age 18] (2014, p. 159)

A physical feeling usually accompanies depressions; a nervous stomach, fatigue. Psychologically I have mixed feelings when I'm low. At one time I'll feel an irrepressible urge to totally exhaust myself physically by getting into a good game of basketball. Other times I feel a need for total isolation from everything, and everybody except myself. And, although I'm not sure if there is one, sometimes I'll talk to God. (Out of hope that if there is one, he can help me.) Religion is great for uplifting depression, though it never seems to solve any problems it gives you the attitude your problems aren't so bad. [M age 16] (2014, p. 160)

Depression, especially self-induced depression causes me to think deeply and search deeply into myself, it may also cause me to react violently or forcibly to a situation or problem. [F age 15] (2014, p. 160)

Feeling low I feel my mind a lot more than other times. Sometimes it really feels good to be down because you can't be high all the time. [M age 16] (2014, p. 160)

“Low” to me is always depression, when nothing can make me happy – sometimes I even enjoy feeling depressed. In my life there is no midpoint – I am either straight up or straight down. To me, there is also really little difference between happiness and sadness, it all depends on how my mind wants me to feel. [F age 17] (2014, pp. 160-161)

I do not experience lows often, but when I do it is characterized by apathy. I suddenly find I have a tiny attention span, nothing will hold my attention or interest. I notice that I have a hard time taking a deep breath. Everything feels dark; rooms look smaller. I will often try to extinguish the feeling by taking a nap, only to find myself feeling lower and defeated in my effort when I awake. Such a low always leaves as quickly and unexpectedly as it came. [F age 18] (2014, p. 161)

I may want someone to know I am depressed so I get terribly disagreeable and impossible to live with. When I'm like this I am asking for help, but it is difficult for me to accept help...depends on who is offering help. I shy away from someone whom I think I may get into an argument with. I feel very strongly in my own ideas and don't like being limited by someone with different ones. [F age 17] (2014, p. 161)

Feeling low is a feeling of being all alone. Suddenly you have to face something and you're scared. You feel like no one else knows what you're going through and for some reason you can't trust anyone with your innermost thoughts. You feel like reaching out to someone and asking them for help. Funny thing but if for some reason you can't reach out and tell someone, this feeling of lowness persists. You feel like no one cares if you're alive or not. For some reason you feel like you just can't face life as it is and if this feeling doesn't change you're going to go nuts. [F age 18] (2014, p. 161)

I'm always dissecting and analyzing which tends to ruin things but I can't help it. I have this need to understand. It verges on the obsessive side. [M age 17] (2014, p. 162)

Late at night, when I am in a certain mood, I get up and stare out the window. Then I take stock of myself, and think of what I have done with my life, and what I want to do. I tell myself that I want to make things better, that I want to start working for a better life for others, to make the world a better place to live. And then I realize how insignificant I really am, and how slim my chances really are to change things at all. And then I realize that to have any chance at all to change things, I will have to wait, that I am not yet old enough or wise enough to accomplish anything. I go sadly back to bed. And wait. [M age 18] (2014, p. 162)

I can't think of any circumstances where I have had several feelings at once. [M age 15] (2014, p. 163)

As far as I can remember I've never had two or more feelings at the same time. 10% of the time I am high, 80% average, 10% low. Note: ...during the school year all I do is eat, drink, and sleep [and do] school work. (It is actually quite fun.) [M age 16] (2014, p. 163)

You feel like you are being ripped in two. For instance, if I'm mad at someone I like, I feel angry yet I love them still. [M age 17] (2014, p. 164)

I feel that I'm being pulled apart inside but generally one feeling overwhelms the others so swiftly that I don't usually stop to recognize all the feelings that I may feel initially. [F age 16] (2014, p. 164)

Yes, sometimes I feel like I hate someone yet I love him. Perhaps this means I hate what he does but yet love him for what he is. Many times I have to make a decision between two goals. Then many times you have mixed feelings toward your decision. I've also been glad yet sad. For example when I'm trying out for something and I make it but my friend doesn't or vice versa I'm glad I made it but yet sad that she didn't because I know what it means to her. Perhaps this isn't exactly what you were looking for. [F age 18] (2014, p. 164)

Yes. I often have happiness along with sadness. For example, I feel this way when I have gained something that means the world to me, but a shade of sadness is there when I have to say goodbye to the old way of life and the security that was there. And hand in hand with this also goes fear and curiosity of the unknown. I think we all like to hang on to the stable, unchanging, warm things as long as we possibly can – but welcome change with excitement, anticipation and a bit of anxiety. In fact, I think most of my feelings are combinations, not strictly one feeling alone. It's hard for me to feel complete, thorough anger / happiness / fear / etc. [F age 15] (2014, p. 165)

Yes, I can feel many feelings when I'm doing something I shouldn't be. Like when I go somewhere I'm not supposed to. I feel happy because I'm having fun, but I also feel guilty, and that kind of spoils the fun. It's a feeling of confusion, and kind of guilt. I know what the right thing to do is, but I don't know if I want to give up the fun to do it. [F age 15] (2014, p. 165)

I'm really sensitive to what other people think or at least I always try to be. If someone is down or up it really gets me too. I try to be around to listen and share in what others around me are feeling, whether joy or sorrow, cause that's what goes into being a friend. You have to be a feeling person if you want to be a good person and a good friend and that's my main objective in my relations with others, to be a good friend. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 165-166)

When I was younger, either I liked the mood around me or I shut myself away from it. Right now I feel like a puppet in constant struggle to cut its own strings. I don't want how I feel to depend on others, and yet I don't want to shut them out anymore. What's even scarier is that I'm finding more and more that others are depending on my emotional state, and I can hold the responsibility for how they feel. So I'm never sure how I'm going to be affected. [F age 16] (2014, p. 166)

I'm affected very much by the feelings of people around me, probably too much – it gets me in trouble once in a while. If a person is really feeling like the world is really against him/her, I can't turn my back on them. I've got to help and let them know somebody cares – I worry very much about these people (I've had experiences with some that had suicidal tendencies and were

messed up on drugs). But sometimes I give so much of my life and love to them that it's taken wrong and leads to great misunderstandings. I don't let other people's feelings rule me, but I do give them a thought. [F age 15] (2014, p. 166)

I have an urge to love somebody. Perhaps it's the other way around. I want somebody to love me. I get all wound up with this urge, I think people notice it too. But I think I'm patient enough to wait. [M age 14] (2014, p. 167)

I would say that love has the most effect on me. It makes me want to possess a person and when I can't I feel very insecure. But at a certain time if I feel that a person wants me and wants to be mine I can really feel good. [M age 16] (2014, p. 167)

Feelings of friendship and security affect me most strongly. Insecurity also affects me at times. When friendship and trust is well secured in a relationship between people then one can throw aside his inhibitions. And when I'm loved and respected for what I really am, it's just the greatest feeling in the world. [M age 16] (2014, p. 167)

I think my feeling of compassion affects me most strongly. I really love people. I love being among different people – even those that are considered “bad”, because in every person there is at least one trait that I love them for. I love to analyze their personalities and habits and I lock them away in my mind for future use. Hate is unknown to me. I've never hated a person in my life. I just have an overwhelming desire to help people. [F age 15] (2014, p. 168)

My feelings for other people are the most strong. At all times, I try to make better conditions for students at our school, and I try to be pleasant and make people forget about their problems. I very often disagree with what others of my classmates do but I try to understand why they do these things and still remain friends. [F age 16] (2014, p. 168)

I guess love and the appreciation of beauty. My whole body responds to it and I feel exhilarated. I want to experience more of it and be wholly involved. Also, I have intense feelings of anger when I hear people being senselessly injured or killed. My stomach knots up and I become furious at the ignorance of others. [F age 17] (2014, p. 168)

Happy optimism affects me the most. I go into almost every day ready to take on the world and I credit a great part of my success to this. [M age 17] (2014, p. 168)

My feeling of responsibility affects me most strongly. I believe in the old Cub Scout motto – “I promise to do my best to do my duty.” If I have a responsibility to do something, I will do anything in my power to make certain it is done. As a sophomore I was the Homecoming chairman. Nobody but one other person assisted me at all. I spent two of the worst weeks of my life then. But the sophomore class did meet its responsibilities that year. I was sick for two days after the Homecoming celebration, but it was done. [M age 17] (2014, p. 169)

Self-confidence probably stands most prominently in my feelings. I usually feel I can accomplish what I want to when I want to (contributing to my procrastination). I think this often has an adverse effect on me in regard to my relationship with others. An air of superiority creeps into my mannerisms. Whether friends can detect this or not, I don't know. [M age 17] (2014, p. 169)

Probably the feelings that affect me most is when I feel good, happy, or satisfied with my work or achievements whether it be school work or golfing. My successes tend to make me very ambitious about any new undertakings. [F age 17] (2014, p. 169)

I would say that my strongest feeling is desire. If I want to do something, I will do it. Something in me keeps saying to me, “Keep going, don't stop.” I hope this continues. [M age 17] (2014, p. 169)

I always lose my temper at persons I don't like [M age 14] (2014, p. 170)

My anger – flash temper; get picked [piqued] real quick but can cool off in a few seconds [M age 17]. (2014, p. 170)

Frustration is the emotion that hits me the hardest. First it makes me mad, and since I can't do anything to relieve the frustration when I'm mad I become depressed. When I'm frustrated I'm very irritable and sarcastic, and people learn in a hurry that they'd better leave me alone. [F age 16] (2014, p. 170)

My feelings of insecurity often make me hesitate before doing something, until it's too late, and I have lost my chance. I'm getting over this a little bit, but it still affects me a lot. [F age 17] (2014, p. 170)

My strongest feeling would be that dealing with self-consciousness, I'm the type of person who is constantly questioning myself to see why I act the way I do. [F age 17] (2014, p. 170)

Probably guilt. When I feel guilty, I can't shake it until I do something about it. I feel kind of sick, and nervous, and I usually feel "sad" or "low". I'll forget for a while, but then it hits me again and I feel even worse. [F age 15] (2014, p. 170)

Attachments to people, places, and things

If I have [an attachment], it would be my family. I lose half of my personal drive and part of my optimism when I'm not living at home. [M age 16] (2014, p. 172)

I suppose the only real way to distinguish a strong attachment is the anguish caused by their absence.... I feel I have only formed two strong attachments during my sixteen years, 7 months and 8 days of living. My best friend (who presently is a page in the Senate in Washington, and I miss very much) who was always ready to make me feel important or secure through my trying times. And my brother, whom I would forgive regardless how much he screws up. Perhaps I feel close because it's always been "me n' him" against whatever oppressed each other. [M age 16] (2014, p. 173)

Yes – [my friend]. We were like brothers for about 9 years. We kept each other "in line", saved each other's life once each, and probably had the best of our life together. My attachment with nature, and with a cat named Bullet run a far distant second. [M age 16] (2014, p. 173)

I especially get attached to girls that I like. I know that I have to give them their freedom but I want to 'own' them. I get really jealous when they're with other guys. Another strong attachment comes to certain friends. It's different in that I don't get jealous but I want to spend a lot of time with them.... It's a feeling like 'I want to share part of my life with you.' [M age 18] (2014, pp. 173-174)

My love for my friends. (This includes girlfriends.) I hate to feel left out. My friends are like brothers. A brother to me is someone you love so much that you don't care what he does. There should be no jealousy and if you get into a fight, it should be resolved easily. This feeling really helps me to get 'high' and have a really good time. [M age 18] (2014, p. 174)

I've formed many strong attachments. Foremost in non natural attachments has been an attachment to a young man I call Steerforth. It is not a mating-type dating-type relationship. He is 19, I've known him for 5 years have watched him grow up to be a man. The attachment is a strange one. Secretly over the years I've done and said everything I could to help him – and just as secretly he has accomplished the same for me. We like the same things [and] admire the same things. We feel safe and content near each other. There is something constant and slow something eternal about it. [F age 16] (2014, p. 174)

When I met my best friend, Gene. He opened the doors to a whole new world – friends, confidence, self-acceptance, challenges and love. When I first met him somehow I must've known what a totally special person he was. That insight was a God-send. To this day, ours is a rich, and strong friendship. [F age 15] (2014, p. 174)

[I dream of] banishing our sexist ideas on relationships between 2 people. Two of my 4 best friends are girls, and people just can't understand how a boy & a girl can be friends without romance. It drives me crazy. [M age 15] (2014, pp. 174-175)

My friendships usually develop with someone with whom I am participating in some activity or class. [M age 18] (2014, p. 175)

The relationships which I value as friendships have developed from a need for love and through shared experiences. My friends have helped me through bad times and I hope I also helped them through some, because I tried. I love my friends and feel security and trust in this love. Also the relationship is honest because they know me as I really am. They accept me and do not deny me my freedom. Of course they don't know absolutely everything about me but I have no fear that they will stop loving me, no matter what new things they learn about me. [F age 17] (2014, p. 175)

All my friendships have developed out of a mutual need. It is a case of people being alone in a group of strangers and knowing I have to talk to someone. From there the person I choose must be interesting and intelligent. Teasing is a large part of the development. [F age 18] (2014, p. 175)

By revealing something meaningful or important to me, through conversation, I become that person's friend. [F age 17] (2014, p. 175)

I seek out people with pleasant faces and the love for people. I find common interests or startling differences which fascinate me. We talk casually and see each other in casual places. When I am at ease with them, can trust them, I partly display my “soul.” I want people to respect me, like me, so I try to be that way toward people. [F age 17] (2014, p. 176)

Once in a while I'll find a person that will really click with my personality and interests. This will usually develop into a close friendship that will last for years. Friends are very important to me so I take care not to just toss them off. My friends are such that we can feel each other's feelings and ideas without knowing them. [F age 15] (2014, p. 176)

For those who are shy, introverted, or loners, friendships may be difficult to find: I am kind of a loner, so I can't say that I have horribly close friendships with kids my age. I'm kind of shy that way. [M age 16] (2014, p. 176)

[I am] basically a loner, and a kid who thinks too much and remembers too much. [M age 14] (2014, p. 176)

[My friendships develop] Slowly. When I'm with strangers I have little trouble making conversation, but when I'm with people I think a lot of, I suddenly become very self-conscious, tongue-tied, and disgusted with myself. Another hindrance is that when other people think a lot of me I find it hard to simply accept it. Friendships just sort of have to happen to me, although I am learning to relax with people more easily, and I have to admit that I've been awfully lucky in my friendships. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 176-177)

I can talk on almost anything – I am outgoing. Also organizations help to bring me together with friends. [M age 17] (2014, p. 177)

I am a quite outgoing person so usually I will start the conversation with a new person. I usually can tell if I like him or her and consider them my friends after the first time, but I've been deceived by what people have said. I can pretty much consider everyone my friend. I'm not one to be mean to a certain person just because I don't like him as much as another person. I don't think I'm an overly hard person to get along with. [F age 18] (2014, p. 177)

My friendships usually develop very quickly. After a little while I am usually having a very intense relationship with the person. This usually lasts for a little while and then we break apart sometimes because the other person may feel he doesn't want to let himself out or is scared. [M age 16] (2014, p. 177)

I never really developed many real friendships, I can't explain why really except that I was a little different. I would rather read than play football. The kids called me a femme and I never made any friends. The only real friendship I have is with Anna. I can come to her and talk knowing it won't go any farther, and without her laughing. [M age 15] (2014, pp. 177-178)

I have had many pets. Almost any kind of animal you can think of. But the one I loved most was a squirrel. [F age 15] (2014, p. 180)

I love animals and ever since I was little I wanted a pet of my own. Finally in sixth grade I got Rusty who is a beautiful red cocker spaniel for my birthday. Rusty, and all animals give love so freely and openly and I guess that's what I love about him. [F age 16] (2014, p. 180)

I used to talk to our cat; most times she would seem to listen (maybe just my imagination). When others in our family couldn't get near her, she would let me pet her. I really liked that cat, but then we had to get rid of it because of my allergy to her. Even though that was almost one and a half year ago, I still miss my companion and friend to talk to. She was almost like a sister to me. I hope this doesn't sound too abnormal. [F age 18] (2014, p. 180)

I have places, pets, and persons (!) I'm very attached to. It's a very personal feeling, and it makes me feel good to think about them. They're mine, it's like a secret joy almost. I can't really explain how I feel because people never get the full impact of my feeling, so I find just enjoying it is enough. [F age 17] (2014, p. 181)

Our family has put so much of our life into this that it would be hard for anyone not to develop a strong feeling for the orchard. It is a feeling that, I feel, only a farmer could know. [M age 16] (2014, p. 181)

My favorite place is by a small, swift stream in back of my grandmother's house.... I feel so peaceful [there] and in tune with nature. (2014, p. 181)

I have become strongly attached to Tennessee. When I'm there, my senses are open and I "drink" in everything – the scenery, people, the way of life. I feel like I know nothing and every experience broadens my sights and fills me with knowledge. [F age 17] (2014, p. 181)

If I belong to a place, it belongs to me, and usually it's that simple. Some places, however, have personalities of their own, like the back stage of my high school. It is very old, and dark, and creaking, and it has been the sole witness and confessor to some of the most turbulent emotions I've gone through. (I haven't the space to explain, but strange things always happen when I'm in a play.) I'll always love that place as an old dear friend. [F age 16] (2014, p. 181)

My home which has been in the family for generations also gives me a feeling of total security and freedom from other people's feelings. [F age 15] (2014, p. 182)

I felt an attachment to buildings. They can help a person feel secure. [M age 16] (2014, p. 182)

Situations of conflict

“I generally avoid conflicts” [M age 17] (2014, p. 178)

“I avoid conflict like the plague“ [F age 18] (2014, p. 178)

Situations where I find one person forcing his will, opinions, or whatever on others. Also I come into conflict with people who brag a lot. Sometimes I go looking for trouble from other people. This isn't cool but I guess it fulfills a need of mine. If another person and I have a difference of opinion, it seldom ends in a conflict but rather a mutual understanding. [M age 18] (2014, p. 178)

If I do come into a conflict, it is generally because I feel that someone has neglected their duty. [M age 17] (2014, p. 178)

Blatant insensitivity is the one thing I cannot tolerate under any circumstances, and it's the one thing I'll get into real trouble with my superiors over, especially if someone is being hurt. I'm not too stubborn, but if I set out to do something my way, I'm not too appreciative of others butting in. I tend to be a perfectionist also, and that can cause friction if I have to work with someone who is not, although I don't get along with picky perfectionists either. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 178-179)

Something that brings me into conflict with others is if a relatively smart kid asks me stupid questions – something that they are perfectly capable of answering themselves. Another thing that I can't stand is if I have slaved half the night to figure out a problem and then if someone else tries to get my answer by asking me to tell it to them – no way. If the problem is easy, I may, but not if it took a great deal of effort. [M age 16] (2014, p. 179)

Sometimes I'm in conflict with my teachers because I won't go along with their superiority complexes. I won't accept their ideas all the time and I hate it when they come at me with them and I better accept them or get them wrong on the test. Sometimes I found that they would give their view on a certain subject yet wouldn't listen to what my view is, for of course theirs is right. [F age 18] (2014, p. 179)

Fears

Nobody likes to make a fool of himself, but I probably dread that more than most. Whenever I think back on things I did or said what went over pretty bad, I want to kick myself very hard. [M age 17] (2014, p. 183)

Being in front of a large group and not being able to see them – how they are reacting to me and what I am saying. Not being able to be personally in contact with someone I am speaking to. [F age 17] (2014, p. 183)

I get afraid when I have to talk in front of large groups of people. I can see me shaking now when I give my speech on graduation night! Even after four years of forensics, I'm still not used to speaking in front of large audiences, especially when I know people in the audience. [F age 18] (2014, p. 183)

Incertainty makes me anxious. It makes me anxious when my life or livelihood or that of someone dear to me is to be affected without any assurance. In external things the darkness can sometimes succeed in scaring me, if say, I'm alone in the dark church during a rain storm, the sound of breathing in a dark empty room – any number of things that go bump in the night – things you're sometimes ashamed of being afraid of in the daylight. I suppose in one word, I'm afraid of the unknown. [F age 16] (2014, p. 184)

I'm not afraid of any specific things, just the future. And it's not really a fear at that. It's more anxiety than anything. I just hope I can fulfill my goals as I've set [them] forth.... When other people feel good for no apparent reason at all, I feel lower than I normally would. Prior to this

year I don't think other people's feelings affected me like this. Why they are now is something that is not too clear to me. I have a hunch that other people's feeling good is a sort of trigger to me feeling anxious over my future. They feel good about their life and future, why can't I? [M age 17] (2014, p. 184)

It's the little things that bother me the most. Larger emotional crises I can handle fairly easily, probably because adults have recognized that they'd better train and condition me to meet them. But everybody forgot about the little things, like shaking somebody's hand and having your long fingernails bite into his palm. It takes a lot of effort to forgive myself for that. Things have never scared me, people always will. You never really know what they're thinking or how they'll react, or why they are like they are, and there's not much you can do about it. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 184-185)

“Sometimes I'm also afraid to tell a person how I feel about her and get scared.” [M age 16] (2014, p. 185)

I think that I'm most afraid of being alone, of losing all my friends, my family, not being able to turn to someone and ask for help. I hate the thought of living the rest of my life by myself. I'm a person who has to be needed, and feel needed. This is kind of a funny thing to be afraid of because there will always be someone to keep me from being alone but I guess that's not really true either. I see ladies old and crippled who seem totally alone. You can tell this for many times I'll say hi to such a person and it's as if it has brightened up their day just to have someone care enough to say hi. That makes me feel sad to think that they're so alone. It makes me wonder if someday I'll be that way. [F age 18] (2014, p. 185)

One young man's inability to help frustrated him because in another place he said that he gets upset when he cannot help someone who is crying: “Seeing old people sometimes disgusts me because they have no hope and can't be helped” [M age 18] (2014, p. 185)

Truthfully, there isn't much that makes me afraid or anxious. Probably the only thing I fear is the thought of not fulfilling my responsibilities. And then that truly isn't fear. It is more a feeling of not wanting to disappoint myself. [M age 17] (2014, p. 185)

Fear of losing or not being the best, probably bothers me the most although I am learning to accept it and try even harder. Darkness holds a certain amount of fear for me, in that I associate blackness with evil or dread. Most forms of nervous fear don't really control me. [F age 15] (2014, p. 186)

This one is easy – fear of failure. Fear of doing something incorrectly. Fear of failing to please my parents. Fear of not finding a job. Fear of failing at college. Fear of not having enough money. Fear of having an accident after borrowing the family car. Fear of making a wrong decision. All of the above are, to a certain extent, fears of failure. They also make up a pretty frightening list, don't you think? [M age 18] (2014, p. 186)

I am extremely afraid of hurting people. I get afraid over strange things. I also am rather fearful of taking chances that might hurt me physically more so than mentally at least now like rides at an amusement park and things like that. I'm afraid of machines, I guess to some extent. I'm not afraid of dying from an accident but I am afraid of getting mutilated or permanently crippled in some way. I'm afraid of losing my independence and if I'd be crippled I'd always be dependent on someone. I'd hate that. I'm afraid of not ever finding someone that I could have a mutual love relationship with. I doubt, though I love independence, that I could live my life alone. It seems I always get in relations that are relatively one way, either he cares more than me or I care more than him, but I'm only sixteen and as everyone keeps telling me, I have my whole life ahead of me. I guess I'll just have to wait and see how things turn out. [F age 16] (2014, pp. 186-187)

What will I do with myself and what kind of relationships I will have with my friends in the future. I hope to use my talents to the utmost helping people. I also hope to have very close relationships with my friends. Sometimes social events or meeting new people makes me somewhat anxious. [M age 18] (2014, p. 187)

I have a big fear of being disliked by people whom I want to like me. With some people it makes no difference to me whether they like or dislike me but when I want someone to like me I fear being rejected. I fear getting hurt by someone also until it is possible for me to trust them. I also fear being wrongly interpreted by people. I hate being judged. I want only to be accepted. It makes me angry when people form opinions based on such superficial aspects as my age, sex, way of dressing, etc. What is in my mind is what is really me. I become very afraid around physical violence. I hate to watch people beating on one another. [F age 17] (2014, p. 187)

Concern with death

The question asked was "Do you ever think of death?"

I never sit down to my desk and think about death. When death comes I will probably take it in stride but in the mean time I am not going to lose any sleep over it. [M age 16] (2014, p. 190)

I try not to. Death bothers me a lot. I can't explain why. I put it out of my mind. [M age 15] (2014, p. 190)

Yes, I think of death but it really doesn't scare me. I can think of dying and not get anxious because I think of the things I won't have to go through and I do believe in life after death so it doesn't look so bad. [M age 16] (2014, p. 190)

This might sound stupid, but if I had cancer, and I had no chance to live, I would kill myself, as soon I had a few days to do a few last things. Then I'd blow my brains out, the first chance I had. I wouldn't waste away like a dying leaf. This isn't trying to be a 'tough guy,' I've thought about it for many years now. The thought of dying certainly doesn't scare me. Odds are I'll never know what hit me. [M age 16] (2014, p. 190)

Yes, it scares me and yet it doesn't. It scares me to think life could be ended so quickly and that brilliant minds can be wiped out in a fraction of a second. [M age 14] (2014, p. 190)

I think mostly of death in the form of other people's deaths. It doesn't seem to me that there is anything that will kill me now, and no reason to die, so it just won't happen to me. I suppose that everyone feels this way but to lesser degrees as one grows older. [M age 15] (2014, pp. 190-191)

Yes. But it's usually not me thinking of dying myself, but of someone else dying, like my parents. I wonder what would happen if one did die. I used to think about it more than I do now. [F age 15] (2014, p. 191)

What really makes me the most afraid is dying a slow, painful, death. I am not afraid of death itself but getting there is what makes me shake. [M age 16] (2014, p. 191)

Yes, and it can be a little frightening. I think I just don't want to die because it is good living on Earth. It can be frightening because I am not sure really where I will go or what happens to you after death. No one really knows. I hope it is good. There may be a heaven or hell. I'm quite sure of God, but don't really know what will happen. [M age 16] (2014, p. 191)

Yes! It terrifies me. No maybe not death, but the idea of forever. I think of it and it scares me and I have to find someone to be with. It's a fear that raises a terror I feel all over my body. I think I'm more frightened of it than anything else. I like living. I enjoy now so much (it's always now). Dying seems to me like the end of everything. I started thinking about it in grade school and I still think about it now – in fear. [F age 17] (2014, p. 191)

Yes. My grandmother died almost in my arms – scared of death – trying to overcome that fear – limited success. [M age 17] (2014, p. 191)

Yes, I often think of death. At times it bothers me to think that I must die sometime. But then I realize why people say that we must live our life to the fullest. For I ask myself: Why am I on this earth? and Where is my place on this earth? Then I think to myself and come up with the answers that I am here to use my abilities and talents that God gave me to the best of my ability. [M age 15] (2014, p. 192)

I think it doesn't really pay to think about it. Once you're dead, you're dead. You can't change anything of your past when you're dead. So just fulfill your dreams while you're still alive and don't worry about it. [M age 17] (2014, p. 192)

I don't like to think of death. I figure when it's time for me to die, I will just die. The time I spend thinking about death, I could be doing more useful things and helping people. I cannot do things when I am dead, so I don't have time to think about it. I must do what I can now and think of death only when death comes. [F age 16] (2014, p. 192)

I hate thinking about death because this causes much grief and sadness to those around me, and I hate to see people who are sad. I also don't think about death because there is too much time ahead of me to live. Thinking about death would only waste many minutes that I would otherwise have to live. Death seems like an ugly subject, so why dwell on something that causes pain and sadness? [F age 18] (2014, p. 192)

Death has been close to me throughout my days in high school. Just a couple of weeks ago a pregnant girl who was formerly in my class was shot and thrown into the Fox river. I view death as a horrible thing, no, on second thought, dying is a horrible thing. I see pictures of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Dachau and Auschwitz and read books like “All Quiet on the Western Front” and learn to abhor war. Unnatural death is the worst, death for a cause lightens the load a bit. I cry when death is close, and wince when it's not but still occurs. The thought of my own frightens me, though I don't know why. Theologically I don't know what I believe. But I'll tell you what I hope: That there is a heaven, and a God that forgives, that there is a place where happiness abounds and life is eternal. But right now I can only hope. [M age 16] (2014, p. 193)

Many times I wonder what life is all for. Two weeks ago my 7th grade English teacher was murdered. She was 26. I had had a crush on her when I was 12 years old. For two weeks death has been on my mind. Also, when I see elderly people in homes for the aged, I know that I do not want to merely exist for the last 5-10 years. Also, at this time I am going through a struggle as to whether I believe in life after death or not. It is beyond the scope of imagination to visualize how life after death can work. But I am convinced that some being had to start the whole universe so why not believe in life after death, too. [M age 17] (2014, p. 193)

Several times I have dreamed things and had them happen to me.... A friend of mine died in an auto accident. Later a boy who I knew in my brother's grade was killed in an auto accident. I can vaguely remember thinking to myself “who next?” Then surprisingly a name popping into my head. “Treckart.” Later on that year a friend (not close) named Treckart was murdered in a gas station. Remembering then the first incident (when I asked myself the question) I couldn't be sure if it really happened or if my wild imagination was just leading me on. This same type of thing happened with a boy named “Ryan Lapernow” who used to be my locker partner. (He drowned last summer.) Again, by the time the death occurred I wasn't sure if it was true or just my imagination. This is very frightening to me and I have never told anyone about it, because it even sounds fishy to me. But I think this really happened. [M age 16] (2014, pp. 193-194)

I don't take up too much time thinking about death now, but I did when I was little. I was always kind of perturbed with myself because the thought of dying didn't scare me like I thought it should. The only thing that bothered me was the idea that others would feel bad about my dying, and cry, and maybe even feel guilty that they weren't nicer to me. I wouldn't be able to comfort them, either. My thoughts were never articulately religious, I simply knew that somebody up there was taking care of me, and if He let me die it would probably be for the same reason I had lived in the first place. I've never changed my mind. [F age 16] (2014, p. 195)

Yes, doesn't everyone? But I've never thought seriously of suicide, though when I get really down, sometimes I think death might be better. Actually though, I feel that life or death isn't in

my hands at least not yet. I have this desire to make my life count first, to do something decent for humanity, then I'll be ready for death, not yet.... I guess I believe in eternity so strongly that I can't fear death much, if it comes at the right time. I would fear it now because I have not accomplished my objective in life, after I have it completed, maybe I'll be ready to die. [F age 16] (2014, p. 195)

I went to my first funeral a year ago and even though I didn't know the kid very well – I felt that I hadn't accomplished anything in this life yet and I felt I better do it soon, in case I got killed in an automobile accident. I also discovered how selfish I was to think that it wasn't right for God to take young people just old. [F age 17] (2014, pp. 195-196)

Very seldom do I think of death. If I do it's usually not my own. If I think of my own death I wonder if I will have accomplished every thing I've wanted to, I want to live my life to the fullest if I can and that means doing everything in a big way. Such as loving, working, drinking or whatever. [M age 18] (2014, p. 196)

I am not afraid of death, and I don't think I ever will be, although I have a tremendous amount of respect for it. I accept it as a part of life and know that my time will come. In a way, I'm looking forward to it in a curious sort of way –...when I die, I want to be of sound mind and body, since as far as we know, a person dies only once. I want to really feel death and know what it's like. That's the reason why I don't want to die through a car accident, because I'd miss it all. Nothing violent. Just peace and calm. [F age 15] (2014, p. 196)

Yes. I wonder what life after death is. Is it rebirth or do we sit in heaven with the millions who have already died and watch Earth. I wonder if after I die I will have any effect on the people still here. [M age 16] (2014, p. 196)

Yes. Many times. I'm not afraid of death but I wonder what's it really like? How do you feel that split second you pass from life to death? Where does that spark of life go? How much life comes out of you, a speck or liters and liters. [M age 18] (2014, p. 196)

Wondering about death usually takes the form of “what happens?” What does it feel like, or not feel like? Is there life after death? If so, how and what kind? If not, is it just an unaware emptiness through eternity? I have not reached any answers or conclusions. I don't know. The only conclusion that I have reached is that death, like all things, must be experienced, or at least related by someone who has experienced it. Without this, we have no basic knowledge to build upon. Until we have this knowledge all we can do is speculate. [M age 18] (2014, pp. 196-197)

Yes, I have developed my belief of death. Perfection is attainable. We are reborn. I don't believe heaven is a place. Heaven is perfection. Death is a method of escaping our bodies where pain can be inflicted. I will welcome it and still be afraid of it. Because I'm not quite sure. [M age 14] (2014, p. 198)

Yes, I've thought of death many times, but usually without great success because I am unable to comprehend it. I believe that I have no control over death and I have faith that God will take care of me when that time comes. As for what will happen, I have no idea, but I hope it will be good! I hate to think that death is the complete end of life, in fact I don't believe that it is. I agree with the poem "Death Be Not Proud," "One short sleep past death we wake eternally, and Death thou shall be no more – death thou shall die." [F age 17] (2014, p. 198)

Death is a mystery to me. I do not want to fear death so this is what I am fighting. I have no institutional religious belief which allows me to accept any given interpretation of it. Because I cannot accept given interpretations is why I have no religious belief. I wonder if death means an end to me. I can easily see an end to my body [but] an end to my mind is what causes me to wonder. I never want to accept immortality of the mind just out of fear of death. Will the voice in my head just stop being there when my body ceases functioning? I cannot say if I will ever come to a definite opinion about this. I do feel the mind has more potential than we realize at this time. Maybe as we discover more about our minds some questions will be answered. [F age 17] (2014, p. 198)

Yes. In a way death is kind of scary. After you die there is a never ending eternity which we will spend in either heaven or hell.... [F age 15] (2014, p. 199)

Death seems so distant, somehow unlikely to happen to me – I wonder sometimes how I'm going to die and even if death will ever really exist. The thought of death doesn't scare me nor am I afraid of dead bodies etc. I have a certain revulsion at the thought of my flesh rotting away – but even then, somewhere inside of myself is the rock-hard undeniable fact that I believe that there is a part of me that is immortal, that will live forever. Call it soul, spirit whatever you call it, it is only a name for the universal continuity of life – perhaps I feel that a part of me is like seed that will die to live again. [F age 16] (2014, p. 199)

References

- Falk, R. F., & M. M. Piechowski. (2014). *Criteria for rating the intensity of overexcitabilities* (2nd ed.). Denver, CO: Institute for the Study of Advanced Development.
- Lysy, K. Z. & Piechowski, M. M. (1983). Personal growth: An empirical study using Jungian and Dabrowskian measures. *Genetic Psychology Monographs, 108*, 267-320.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1974). Two developmental concepts: Multilevelness and developmental potential. *Counseling and Values, 18*(2), 86-93.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1975). A theoretical and empirical approach to the study of development. *Genetic Psychology Monographs, 92*, 231-297.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1979). Developmental potential. In N. Colangelo & R. T. Zaffrann (Eds.), *New voices in counseling the gifted* (pp. 25-57). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1986). The concept of developmental potential. *Roeper Review, 8*(3), 190-197.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1989). Developmental potential and the growth of the self. In J. VanTassel-Baska & P. Olszewski-Kubilius (Eds.), *Patterns of influence on gifted learners: The home, the school, and the self* (pp. 87-101). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1991). Emotional development and emotional giftedness. In N. Colangelo & G. A. Davis (Eds.), *Handbook of gifted education* (pp. 285-306). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1995). OE origins. *The Dabrowski Newsletter, 1*(4), 2-4.
- Piechowski, M. M. (1999). Overexcitabilities. In M. Runco & S. Pritzker (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of creativity* (pp. 325-334). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Piechowski, M. M. (2002). Experiencing in a higher key: Dabrowski's theory of and for the gifted. *Gifted Education Communicator, 33*(1), 28-36.
- Piechowski, M. M. (2003). From William James to Maslow and Dabrowski: Excitability of character and self-actualization. In D. Ambrose, L. M. Cohen, & A. J. Tannenbaum (Eds.), *Creative intelligence: Toward a theoretic integration* (pp. 283-322). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Piechowski, M. M. (2009). The inner world of the young and bright. In D. Ambrose & T. Cross (Eds.), *Morality, ethics, and gifted minds*, (pp. 177-194). New York, NY: Springer US.
- Piechowski, M. M. (2014). "Mellow out," they say. *If I only could: Intensities and sensitivities of the young and bright* (2nd Ed.). Unionville, NY: Royal Fireworks Press.
- Piechowski, M. M., & Colangelo, N. (1984). Developmental potential of the gifted. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 28*(2), 80-88.

- Piechowski, M. M., & Cunningham, K. (1985). Patterns of overexcitability in a group of artists. *The Journal of Creative Behavior, 19*(3), 153-174.
- Piechowski, M. M., & Miller, N. B. (1995). Assessing developmental potential in gifted children: A comparison of methods. *Roeper Review, 17*(3), 176-180.
- Robert, J. A., & Piechowski, M. M. (1981). Two types of emotional overexcitability: Conserving and transforming. In N. Duda (Ed.) *Theory of positive disintegration: Proceedings of the third international conference* (pp. 158-178). Miami, FL: Xerox.