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**The Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes:
Constructing a theory of how interpersonal difficulty in
gifted adults arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome**

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ABSTRACT

In the literature and research on giftedness there are ubiquitous references to interpersonal problems. This project investigated this by comprehensively bringing such references together and analysing them (textual analysis), and by interviewing 20 gifted adults about their interpersonal experiences. A Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology was employed to build a theory grounded in research data that could explain how interpersonal difficulty in gifted individuals arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome. A Psychosocial (Hollway 2016) interpretation of the data examined not just its explicit cognitive and behavioural content but also the more hidden nuances of intersubjective experience – termed ‘unconscious processes’ – that the giftedness literature neglects.

An ‘Overview Model of Giftedness’ was constructed to organize the research findings, which emphasizes the importance of person-environment interaction, belonging, competition, and collaboration. Interpersonal difficulty was found to arise predominantly through relating categorized as naïve (‘Child’, including autism) or arrogant (‘Emperor’, including narcissism). It was demonstrated how interpersonal difficulty is perpetuated through unconscious processes such as transferences, valencies, and intersubjective complementarities. It was found that interpersonal difficulty was overcome by changing environments (gaining contact with more similar others); changing the level of self-expressiveness (‘hiding self’); or changing the nature of self-expressiveness (such as tempering naivety and arrogance through improving interpersonal understanding and skill). These findings were consolidated in an original model titled ‘Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating’ that shows the optimal movement away from being interpersonally inhibited, despairing, or provoking, towards thriving.

Conclusion: Atypically efficient neural functioning, and minority status, make gifted individuals vulnerable to interpersonal difficulty. Recognising the individual differences involved, their impact, and their unconsciously perpetuating intersubjective patterns, and taking this into account when communicating with others, improves interpersonal relating and the actualizing of gifted potential.

The project’s main products are a website offering services designed to “help high-ability adults thrive”, and a book proposal.

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INTRODUCTION

In the “Handbook of Evidence-Based Psychotherapies” (Freeman & Power 2007), in the section titled “Psychological Treatment of Disorder and Specific Client Groups”, there is a chapter on “Intellectual Disabilities”. The authors of this chapter begin by delineating their topic, in the course of which they write:

One always wonders whether it would be seen as transparently ridiculous if one were to write a chapter on the evidence base for treatments developed for members of MENSA [*sic*], the society for those with superior intellect. (Do we detect one or two of you raising an eyebrow at the possibility of a new research field?) Similarly, no one is looking for a cure for giftedness. (Lindsay & Sturney 2007:193)

This quotation is written in a tone of taking it for granted that its assumptions are shared by the readership – the likely readership for such a book being psychotherapists; other mental health professionals and commissioners; anyone who is in psychotherapy or may be seeking psychotherapy, and their families; students of and teachers of psychotherapy and counselling; and those involved in other related psychological, psychiatric, social work and medical disciplines. Although the authors of this quotation accept without question that there are people who have something that can be labelled “superior intellect”, or “giftedness” – which is contentious – they assume that it would be “ridiculous” to consider giftedness as relevant to psychotherapy. Their jest at the possibility of this as a “new research field” reveals their assumption that there is not already a research field related to this phenomenon. Whilst the authors show that they accept variation in intellectual ability as fact, contrasting “intellectual disabilities” with “superior intellect”, the subtext is plain: people with “superior intellect” are fine, or even privileged as the word “gifted” connotes, and this is not something to be engaged with in therapy or in research. It is a manifestation of what I think of as ‘high IQ taboo’.

The above authors’ assumptions, ignorance, and dismissiveness around the subject of “superior intellect” or “giftedness” grow out of and reflect the dominant cultural milieu of Britain, where the book was published, but not only of Britain.

The aim of my Doctorate, quite simply put, is to fully engage with and to question these assumptions and their implications, and thereby to help tackle the ignorance and dismissiveness that surrounds giftedness and its associated unique social experiences and challenges.

But why have I personally chosen to tackle this particular project? In Part One of this dissertation, which provides a background to the project, Chapter 1 begins by contextualising it professionally, personally, and theoretically. A definition of giftedness and other key concepts is included, and I show how my focal research question emerged. Next is a literature review (Chapter 2). Part Two deals with the conducting of the research, with an explication of the methodology (Chapter 3) and methods (Chapter 4) that were employed in the research I have undertaken. The results of the research follow in Part Three, presented and engaged with over three chapters in increasing levels of abstraction. Chapter 5 presents the research data within an organising framework titled 'The Overview Model of Giftedness', which situates giftedness within the biopsychosocial lifecourse. Chapter 6 directly addresses the answering of the research question. It conceptualises the two main ways that interpersonal difficulty arises in gifted adults as "Child" (naivety) and "Emperor" (arrogance). Next, the data is interpreted to demonstrate how interpersonal difficulty is perpetuated through unconscious processes. The chapter concludes by drawing together all that has been presented up to this point in a consideration of how interpersonal difficulty can be overcome. Chapter 7 consolidates the research results with a conceptualisation of the data in a four-quadrant model titled 'Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating'. The last part of the dissertation, Part Four, offers a critical discussion (Chapter 8), and in Chapter 9 a conclusion and indication of further potential research. The impact of the project is presented in Chapter 10, detailing the products I have created out of it as vehicles of impact, the professional significance of the work, and further work that is planned post-doctorally. Finally, there is a supporting reference list and set of appendices.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

Chapter 1 – Contextualising the project

1.1 The professional context of the project

I began this Doctorate when I had been practising as a psychotherapist for 15 years, nine of which were post-qualification. These 15 years had included two periods of maternity leave. I started the Doctorate in the same month in which my youngest child started school, a milestone which freed me to spend more time focusing on my profession. By commencing the Doctorate I was seeking to engage in a sustained, intensive and challenging block of continuing professional development of a kind not experienced since completing my psychotherapy training.

For all of my adult life I had been involved in mental health: on leaving school I obtained an Honours degree in Clinical Psychology, followed by a Masters in Psychoanalysis, then I completed a full UKCP registered clinical training in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. I worked in the voluntary and public sectors in various capacities related to mental health, then settled into private practice. I was drawn to private practice because I wanted to be able to provide a service where people could easily self-refer for effective and open-ended (i.e. not time-limited) psychological help, avoiding the sometimes lengthy bureaucracy and disheartening revolving-door-syndrome I had witnessed within the NHS. In 2004 I launched at the Freud Museum my own counselling and psychotherapy service, Talking Cure, based in Harley Street, where I soon recruited other therapists to work for the practice. I developed and managed all aspects of the practice myself as well as handling a clinical load of 22 hours per week of my own clients, comprising adult individuals and couples.

Although with Talking Cure I did achieve independence of service provision, it has to be acknowledged that the kinds of clients who approached Talking Cure were very different from those whose lack of progress I had been so disheartened by within the limitations of voluntary and public sector services. In the latter services, clients presented with high levels of damage in their functioning, with backgrounds and current lives that were traumatic and chaotic, and with complex psychological, emotional, and even medical needs. In contrast my Talking Cure clients were high-functioning, tending to be professionally successful and high-achieving – some exceptionally so, with international renown – but experiencing personal difficulty, mainly concerning relationships. My Clinical Psychology thesis had been on

schizophrenia and in my early career I had worked with that most extreme of psychotic mental illnesses. With Talking Cure I came to work exclusively within the realms of neurosis. I found that I worked well with these clients and enjoyed the work much more, and I became increasingly fascinated by the sorts of issues that were bringing these high-functioning individuals to be seeking therapy.

My plan was to use the Doctorate to develop specific expertise in working with this population of clients, as well as to explore ways of engaging with and sharing the skills, knowledge and insights of my psychoanalytic psychotherapy practice in contexts that were not restricted to my private practice consulting room. As this Metanoia Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Professional Studies was billed as being suitable for 'mid-career' professionals who were seeking to evaluate their practice and then extend their reach, it seemed perfect for me.

Being 'mid-career' also equated with being 'mid-life', and at the same time as embarking on professional evaluation, I was undergoing personal evaluation.

1.2 The personal context of the project

The first task of the Doctorate was to write an RPPL (Review of Personal and Professional Learning). This required looking back over your life and asking questions that you might not have asked yourself before about your personal and professional experiences, motivations, and choices, and how these related to each other.

A question that haunted me was, what had become of the outstanding abilities I had always been commended for whilst growing up? At school I had stood out from my peers by fairly easily excelling at many things and consistently winning the top prizes, yet in mid-life my status and achievements were not commensurately outstanding. I wondered what I had done with my capabilities, and what achievements they could or should have led to. I felt clear that I wanted for the remainder of my life to make full use of my capabilities and energies.

Writing the RPPL drew my attention to something pivotal from my childhood: when I was seven (in South Africa) my school teacher called my mother in and said they wanted to send

me to a university programme for gifted children. My mother said no. “Sonja can’t have a conversation with figures,” she said (and repeated over the years each time she re-told the story), “or marry a book.” She recommended that when I finished my work way ahead of the other children, the teacher should occupy me by getting me to help the others. And ever since then, I now realised, I’d been helping others all my life.

My mother was proud of her decision. She always depicted it as the turning point that had saved me from becoming a social pariah. In contemplating this afresh I began to wonder – what did the term ‘gifted’ actually mean? In all those years I had never investigated that – so well had I complied with my mother’s desire not to pay attention to this ‘gifted’ identification, to want me to be ‘normal’. I now discerned that this attitude of my mother’s was based on an assumption, and a fear, that giftedness was somehow associated with interpersonal difficulty (and a concern that the priority future to secure for a daughter was marriage). I started wondering – where did this assumption come from of an association between giftedness and interpersonal difficulty? On what was it based? The effect had been that I grew up with a message that I could only not become a pariah by not fully developing my own capabilities.

In re-visiting this pivotal event I became curious about what had been going on and its longterm implications. In addition, decades and continents away from this pivotal event, my firstborn child was at his school in London identified as gifted, and I was concerned about what choices I as his parent would be responsible for making and what impact that would have on his future. For the first time in my life I started researching the term ‘gifted’ to find out all I could about it.

I think ‘gifted’ is an unfortunate term because it is judgment-laden rather than neutral, with connotations of privilege, and I dislike it for that reason. Although I dislike it, I use the term in this dissertation because this is the term that is most widely used to refer to the people who I am researching, i.e. a minority group who manifest a recognised cluster of phenomena that include evidenced neurological differences and well-documented typical behavioural characteristics (see section 1.3). Despite the fact that the term ‘gifted’, and its derivatives, is also the accepted term that is used in the research literature that pertains to such individuals, throughout this dissertation I maintain a critical stance towards the term. For example, I give

the history of the term in section 2.1.1 “The language of giftedness, talent, and achievement”, and explore its synonyms and their meanings. In that same section, on pg. 19, I explain how I find the synonym ‘high ability’ useful, and for this reason (and the fact that I have made explicit that I do not like the term ‘gifted’), in the website product of my doctorate (see section 10.1.4) my choice has been to use the term ‘high ability’ in my slogan rather than the term ‘gifted’. On pg. 182 I suggest a ‘re-branding’ of the phenomenon that is termed giftedness to a term that more neutrally conveys the learning difference that the condition involves. A problem with the term ‘gifted’, is that people often read it as meaning ‘better than others’, or ‘superior’, and react negatively to what they perceive as an implication that certain individuals are better than others. For this reason the term is often rejected, and individuals to whom the term is applied can be treated with negative prejudice. In section 1.4 I describe my own experience of grappling with personal distaste in relation to studying the phenomenon of giftedness, and I also link this to world literature and superstition and others’ related behaviour and work. Denise Yates, CEO of Potential Plus UK, explained to me (personal communication, June 2017) that this negative prejudice is why they rebranded their organisation from its original name of The National Association for Gifted Children. However, some people see ‘gifted’ as a term that should be protected and used with pride: this is redolent of the history of ‘queer’ as a term for homosexuals. Dominic Davies, founder of Pink Therapy, explained to me (personal communication, July 2001) how the term ‘queer’ was first outlawed for being derogatory and politically incorrect, and then it was reclaimed as a term to be celebrated and wielded in a spirit of political protest as a way of demonstrating pride in being different from the majority. In that ‘gifted’ denotes being different from the majority, it too could become a term that is insisted on as something to be proud of rather than shrunk away from in shame. It is this latter view that is supported by Dr Jerald Grobman, consultant to gifted individuals in New York (personal communication, March 2017). The usual work of advocates of minority groups is to change perceptions that members of those groups are worse than others because of their differences, for example specific disabilities they may have; the work of advocates of gifted individuals might have to be that of changing perceptions that gifted individuals are better than others because of specific abilities they have. If, however, the word ‘gift’ is meant to convey a good thing that one is pleased to have, then the term ‘gifted’ is a misnomer, because what it involves is an individual difference that causes individuals to be set apart in a way that is often difficult and

painful rather than being welcomed or gratefully received (see my interview data in Chapter 5). This is like the poignantly paradoxical song lyrics from the Eagles' "The Sad Café" (1979, EMI Music Publishing): "Fortune smiles on some and lets the rest go free". Whilst the hallmarks of giftedness are that such individuals can learn faster than the average, and can perform in certain respects better than the average, these are isolated capabilities that do not make such an individual a better person or a superior being. Such capabilities do not even guarantee, overall, higher achievement, because so many other factors are involved (see Chapter 2 for an extensive engagement with these various issues). Our society does tend to applaud performance that is perceived as impressive, for example by being unexpectedly advanced (see section 6.1), and so one can understand why it is hard to see individuals who manifest impressive performance in any domain as being anything except advantaged, and this is often reacted to crudely with either idolisation or envious resentment, neither of which are realistic, helpful, or compassionate responses to such individuals. So-called 'gifted' capabilities have to be understood, and guided, and integrated within the whole person, and others' reactions have to be managed, if a person so affected is to be able to function well, relate well with others, and live a fulfilled and contented life. It is this that my work is focused on engaging with.

1.3 Defining the term 'gifted'

There are numerous different conceptions of what giftedness entails (e.g. see Sternberg & Davidson 2005). My working definition of giftedness accords with the research and experience of several authors as follows:

- Giftedness is a **congenital, neurologically and physiologically based condition** (Nauta & Ronner 2013:2; Gagne 2013; Gallagher 2000; Geake 2009; Neubauer et al 1995, 2002; Grabner 2003; Jausovec 2000; Saccuzzo et al 1994; Haier et al 1988).
- It occurs in a **small minority of people** worldwide (Freeman 2005). How it is perceived, identified, and responded to varies significantly in different countries and cultures around the world (Freeman 2016a; Grobman 2017a).
- It involves being **statistically an extreme deviation from the norm** (Nauta & Ronner 2013:3; Silverman 2013).
- It **manifests in traits** such as heightened excitability, sensitivity and perceptiveness; speed of cognitive processing (e.g. rapid learning); high energy; and intensity of drive

(Lewis et al 1992; Jacobsen 1999b; Webb et al 2005; Daniels & Piechowski 2009; Grobman 2009; Nauta & Ronner 2013; Silverman 2013).

- All the above characteristics cause gifted individuals to **stand out from their peers** in how they behave, how they perform on tasks, how they are perceived by others, and how they feel about themselves (Nauta & Ronner 2013:3; Silverman 2013).
- **Intellectually gifted individuals are usually able to score top 2% results in a standardised IQ test.** Although the allocated points that would comprise this can vary on different tests, it commonly equates to a score of 130 and above. So for example in the US such a score on the commonly used Stanford-Binet or Weschler tests would gain a child admission to gifted educational programmes (Grobman 2017). The advantage of such tests is that they provide an objective measure, but the use of IQ tests alone to classify giftedness is controversial as these can be culturally biased and do not assess multiple intelligences (Sternberg & Davidson 2005; Gardner 2011) or behavioural characteristics (Renzulli 2005). Contemporary versions do not however only measure cognitive ability, as they include elements such as ethics, relationship with the tester, and maturity (Freeman 2016).
- **Outcomes of living with giftedness vary greatly** according to how the characteristics of giftedness are responded to, including whether giftedness is coupled with a disability that is identified and addressed or not (known as “twice exceptionality”, Stinson et al 2011), and according to socio-economics, opportunity, and effort (Gagne 2013).
- **Giftedness is a condition that is distinct from any of its potential developmental outcomes** such as high achievement or under-achievement; “success” (Nauta & Ronner 2013), or criminality (Streznewski 1999).

The above points can be summarised as involving a biological basis, related experiential and behavioural characteristics, and minority status.

Where I use the term ‘intellectually’ or ‘cognitively’ gifted, this denotes giftedness that has been classified through the obtaining of top 2% results on a standardised IQ test. Where I use the term ‘gifted adults’ I am referring to individuals aged 20 or over.

1.4 The curious ‘pull-push’ of this topic

What I was finding was that giftedness was something that was well-documented, with many stories similar to mine that I was pulled towards and found very moving to read. And yet,

interestingly, I found it also somehow distasteful and found myself wanting to push it aside.

Here is an entry from my Research Journal dated 20 October 2011:

I don't know why that word ['gifted'] is actually a source of shame for me. I need to explore that more. (As a child, I was identified as gifted, and I have, I think, spent a lot of my life trying to hide/ignore it.) But in researching it, I found a wealth of information. And when I read it, it chimed with me so much, it was very affecting. I felt like things about me and my life and experience were being recognized, perhaps for the first time...

Strong, direct personal experience was not, however, enough to prevent intellectual doubts from creeping back in. Three months later there is this entry, 11 January 2012:

I'm decided: okay here we go, decision: I'm done with this 'gifted' exploration, I don't like it.... The gifted label is not something I want to do anything specifically about, just park that one. I think it is not helpful in any way, and I want to move away/move on from that.

I reflected this struggle in my Learning Agreement:

In my thinking, reading, and project planning for the doctorate I kept being pulled towards, then away from, giftedness. Did I really want to, after all these years, ever since my mother had pushed it aside, revive it and give it a lot of attention? Or was it best left where it always has been in my life, in the closet, locked away? I found myself alternately compelled by it, then repelled. (Falck 2014:3)

More than a year after writing the above, at the SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) conference in Denver, Colorado, I attended a session conducted by American psychotherapist Lisa Erickson entitled "Coming out Gifted as an Adult" in which she presented research on stereotype threat by Claude Steele, PhD, and applied it to "the phenomenon of adults minimizing, forgetting or denying [their] giftedness" (SENG 2015:20). Lind (2000) has also done work on the process of coming to terms with a gifted identity.

The ambivalence I experienced about this appeared not to just be internal to me but also to be present externally, manifested in curious displays I experienced of other people appearing to want/not want to focus on giftedness. For example, in 2012 I received an enthusiastic email from a member of high IQ societies Mensa and Triple Nine, introducing himself and expressing a desire to work with me. However it took a full four years of sporadic communication from him before he finally did meet with me. Another example is a spirited email I received from psychologist and academic Liz Skringar in Australia inviting me to collaborate with her on a book on giftedness, who then shortly after we'd established contact

apologised that she needed to put the project on hold and in the two years since I have never heard from her again. It might be that this sort of thing goes on in other subject areas also and indeed in other areas of life, but there does seem to be something about the subject of giftedness that creates conflictual impulses of attraction and repulsion. This might be because of the disapprobation evident in our general cultural milieu, as introduced in the Introduction above, that we are all affected by, a sort of internalised 'giftophobia', in the same way as homosexuals who are grappling with 'coming out' can be deterred by internalised homophobia. However it could also be something much more primitive than this, perhaps even at the base level of superstition.

The word 'gifted' connotes having an advantage (whether this is accurate or true or not), something about a person that is special or exceptional, and right from the nursery we are taught not to speak of qualities of our own that could be perceived as worthwhile or impressive. This is viewed as boasting – 'blowing one's own trumpet' – and frowned upon. And why is there this prohibition? It might be at root a fear of inviting envious attack: it seems to be a superstition that an acknowledgment of having something good might or will make something bad happen. In Western society we are raised on fairy-tales that early on transmit their warning: in *Sleeping Beauty* a newborn princess has many gifts bestowed upon her before the wicked fairy swoops in and sentences her to an inevitable wound that will paralyse her for a century. Similarly *Snow White's* beauty attracts dogged attentions bent on nothing less than fatality. Such superstition is widespread in various Middle Eastern and Asian societies where it is encapsulated in the notion of 'the evil eye', an omniscient force based in jealousy that can cause serious harm and needs to be defended against. In Hindu society, for example, parents fear that if their newborn baby receives praise it could attract the danger of the evil eye, so they protect against this by drawing a black spot or 'kaala teeka' on the face of the infant to mar its beauty and thereby ward off praise. In Greek tragedy it is hubris that is always followed by nemesis.

Overall, whatever discomfort was involved for me in approaching the topic of giftedness, I was finding that it was becoming too gripping for me to turn away from. I wrote in my Learning Agreement (Falck 2014:3):

Since I finally accepted that – like it or not – this is what my doctoral topic is, it is as though it has led me into a hidden world, like Narnia through the back of the

wardrobe (Lewis 1950), where gifted adults who acknowledge their minority status seek to group together for example in high IQ societies such as Mensa.... and grapple with their experiences, needs, and positions in society.

And as Dr Marie Adams mentioned during a PK Seminar, William Faulkner (1950) said in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech that "...the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself....alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat."

1.5 The emergence of the research question

Given my personal history described above, I became curious about why individuals who manifest outstanding abilities whilst growing up might fail to develop commensurately outstanding status or achievements by mid-life. And how, conversely, did the development unfold of those who in mid-life did have outstanding status and achievements? In a Mensa research edition specially dedicated to the topic of "Gifted in the Workplace", a study by Perrone et al (2004) reported that academically talented individuals perceived the second main barrier to achieving career goals (after commitment to non-work roles) as being interpersonal relations in the workplace. There again was the theme of interpersonal difficulty.

Differences in workplace interpersonal relating competence, I found, had been correlated with attachment styles (Ainsworth et al 1978; Bartholomew & Horowitz 1991) in studies that used general population samples (Hardy & Barkham 1994; Mikulincer & Shaver 2007a; Harms 2011). The literature on giftedness did not relate difference in career outcomes to mainstream psychological thinking such as Attachment Theory. For my PEP I therefore decided to obtain an attachment styles profile for a sample of gifted adults and explore how this related to their giftedness and their workplace functioning. I collaborated with Mensa to recruit participants who fulfilled an objective criterion of being gifted, as all members of Mensa have achieved top 2% results in a standardised IQ test. Using a mixed methods research design, I collected quantitative data with Attachment Style Questionnaires (ASQ) (Freeney et al 1994) and a self-designed workplace interpersonal relating One-Item Rating Scale (n=229). I then selected a purposive subsample of two males and two females from each of the four attachment styles (n=16) and gathered qualitative data by undertaking a 1.5 hour semi-structured interview with each of these sixteen participants. The quantitative data

was analysed with SPSS, and the qualitative data with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006). The results of the PEP of main relevance to this dissertation are as follows:

- a) **The ASQs returned a significantly ($p < 0.001$) atypical profile of attachment styles for my sample of gifted adults, with much higher insecure attachment (33% secure whereas general populations have about 60% secure) (Falck 2013). In my study insecure attachment was associated with greater interpersonal difficulty ($p < 0.001$) and more mental health issues ($p < 0.001$) (ibid.), which accords with other studies (Mikulincer & Shaver 2007a; Howe 2011; Brisch 2011).**
- b) **In the interview results, a strong theme was the pairing of intellectual giftedness with interpersonal difficulty** (Falck 2013). Interpersonal difficulty could impede the utilising of abilities, and the two dominant causes of negative mental health effects were experiencing interpersonal difficulty, and not utilising abilities.
- c) **In the One-Item Rating Scale the majority of participants (69.8%) selected the “competent” workplace interpersonal relating options**, with the most frequent choice (42%) being a self-rating of “somewhat competent” (ibid.).

In these results the first two items, (a) and (b) above, appeared to verify that gifted adults have a particular susceptibility to interpersonal difficulty; however the third item, (c), appeared to contradict that. This contradiction might have had something to do with the reliability of the respective research instruments. The ASQ is a standardised instrument that has high reliability (Mikulincer & Shaver 2007:87-88; Ravitz 2010), whereas the One-Item Rating Scale had the least reliability, being non-validated and containing only one item. This same contradiction in results, however, is evident throughout the literature on giftedness: some sources depict interpersonal relating as problematic for gifted individuals (Lovecky 1986; Streznewski 1999; Jacobsen 1999a, 1999b; Corten et al 2006; Grobman 2009; Freeman 2010; Nauta & Ronner 2013; De Raat 2002; and Heylighen, n.d., n.d.a.) whereas others deny that it is a problem (Freeman 2013; Jones 2013). This contradiction intrigued me, but also the apparent preoccupation with the issue intrigued me: whether interpersonal difficulty was being affirmed or denied, it was being ubiquitously written about, suggesting that there was some sort of issue here or at least a grappling with a social stereotype that associates gifted individuals with interpersonal difficulty. It is this stereotype that my mother was reacting to in the decisions she made about my education during my childhood. How, I wondered, did this stereotype come to exist, and what did it entail? Some of my interviewees reported

experiencing interpersonal difficulty and some didn't, and some described having experienced it in the past but having overcome it, and I wanted to find out what makes those differences. As interpersonal difficulty is so influential upon well-being, both in its own right and for its impact on the prospects of utilising abilities (Falck 2013), I felt it was important to understand more about it. I therefore defined my research question for Part Two of the Doctorate, the Final Project, as follows, in three parts:

- a) **In gifted adults, what brings about** (a susceptibility to/risk of) **interpersonal difficulty;**
- b) **how might it be perpetuated** (which can impede their utilising of their abilities, and both interpersonal difficulty and not utilising abilities can lead to negative mental health effects); **and**
- c) **how might it be overcome** (without impeding the utilising of abilities, such as disavowing abilities in an attempt to smooth interpersonal relations)?

1.6 Theoretical contextualisation and key concepts

This project attempts to elucidate the intrapersonal and interpersonal development and functioning that is particular to gifted individuals, but in doing so it necessarily communicates with more than a hundred years' worth of existing research, knowledge, and theory relating to the intrapersonal and interpersonal development and functioning of human beings in general. The three major approaches to theorising human psychosocial development and functioning have been the Psychodynamic, the Humanistic, and the Cognitive-Behavioural. 'Psychodynamic' is an umbrella term that includes the original and pioneering Freudian psychoanalysis as well as approaches that share its premises that our behaviour and mental states are shaped by childhood experiences and by conscious and unconscious mental and emotional processes. The Psychodynamic, Humanistic, and Cognitive-Behavioural approaches are the three main approaches that are most commonly introduced to students of psychology, psychotherapy, and counselling in related textbooks (for example Short & Thomas 2015; Feltham & Horton 2006; Woolfe et al 2003) and academic and professional training courses. Every counselling and psychotherapy training programme will either emphasise one of these approaches (for example WPF's UKCP registered training in Psychodynamic Psychotherapy), or present an integration of two or more of these approaches (for example the University of East London's BACP accredited BSc(Hons)

Counselling programme which integrates all three approaches). My main training has been in the Psychodynamic approach, but I have had some training in the other two main approaches as well as the Systemic approach. Given this, it would be most accurate to say that by now my own thinking and professional practise involves an integrative stance. This integrative stance is also what informs my constructing of new theory within this doctoral project.

The bodies of theory that I will make most reference to in this project are Psychodynamic: Psychoanalysis (particularly the work of Sigmund Freud), Object Relations (particularly the work of Donald Winnicott), Attachment Theory (particularly the work of John Bowlby), Self Psychology (particularly the work of Heinz Kohut), and the Relational/Intersubjective developments (particularly the work of Jessica Benjamin). I am especially impressed by and convinced by Attachment Theory because of its decades of international multidisciplinary empirical research in the realms of ethologically-informed observation, biology, neuroscience, psychology, psychoanalysis and systems theory (eg. see Cassidy & Shaver 2008) as well as because it is very cogent and pragmatic and resonates most closely with my own personal and professional observation and experience. Apart from Freudian Psychoanalysis, all of the above-mentioned Psychodynamic bodies of theory share the thesis that right from birth human beings are fundamentally oriented towards seeking relationship with other human beings, that this relational need is primary and as compelling as the need to obtain nutrition, and that this is a need that remains with us throughout life. My work rests on an acceptance of this thesis as foundational.

A core distinguishing feature of the Psychodynamic approach is the assumption that much of our intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning involves processes that are outside of our conscious awareness, and that we actively participate in and can be dynamically driven by such unconscious processes. These unconscious processes are conceptualised in terms such as “transference” (Freud 1917, meaning the unconscious interpretation of something in the present as though it is the same as something that has been experienced in the past), and “defences” (Freud 1937), meaning various unconscious strategies for avoiding or distorting current perceptions so as to avoid discomfort or pain, for example through processes termed denial, splitting, projection, rationalisation, intellectualisation, reaction-formation, etc. My

work rests on an acceptance of the Psychodynamic approach's premise of unconscious processes.

My perspective is also informed by Systemic thinking (see Dallos & Draper 2000), which asserts that every individual is at all times inevitably connected with networks of micro- and macro-systems of other individuals, and that between such individuals and systems there are inexorable interconnectednesses and interacting fields of mutual influence and impact. Such fields of influence and impact within and between systems are also most of the time outside of our conscious awareness.

In this dissertation I will particularly make use of the Psychodynamic concepts of transference, countertransference, defences (for a full introduction see Hinshelwood 1989); repetition compulsion (Freud, see Laplanche & Pontalis 1988:78-80); and intersubjective enactments (Benjamin 2009); and Systemic theory's concept of valency (see Garland 2010). Where I specifically apply these terms to my research data, mainly in Chapter 6, I will make clear how I am using the terms. But throughout the project where I use the term "unconscious processes", I am referring collectively to these Psychodynamic and Systemic conceptualisations of aspects of intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning.

* * *

Having introduced my topic within the landscape of the contemporary field of psychotherapy practice and outlined the structure of this dissertation, I have in this chapter given a professional, personal, and theoretical contextualisation of my project, defined key terms, and detailed how the research question emerged. Although this chapter has already made reference to related literature, in the next chapter I present a more systematic review of the literature pertaining to my topic and its significant issues and debates.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

The topic of giftedness is full of puzzles and contradictions. In the previous chapter I described the curious ‘pull-push’ phenomenon I have experienced in myself and others in relation to this topic, and introduced the contradiction found in the literature and research – including in my own PEP research – regarding whether or not gifted individuals tend to experience difficulty with interpersonal relating. But what I see as the most striking puzzle of all is the more fundamental – and highly visible – contradiction that is evident between sources that accept versus those that deny that such a phenomenon as giftedness even exists.

2.1 Accepting versus denying the phenomenon of giftedness

Table 1 below provides a summary of books, journals, and organisations that accept giftedness as a fact, and several books within the last decade (since 2008) that deny it.

Table 1: Sources that accept versus those that deny the phenomenon of giftedness

Sources that accept giftedness as a fact	Sources that deny the existence of giftedness
<p><u>Books</u> Innumerable books from various publishers, at least since the publication in 1926 of “Gifted children: Their nature and nurture” by Leta Stetter Hollingworth. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the titles (more than 65) of American publishers Great Potential Press, from their first book “Guiding the Gifted Child” (James T Webb, Elizabeth Meckstroth, and Stephanie Tolan, 1989) to their most recent, “Bright Adults: Uniqueness and Belonging across the Lifespan” (Ellen Fiedler, 2015). • Titles from other publishers such as Springer, Routledge, Cambridge University Press, Ballantine Books, Basic Books, Shaker Media, John Wiley & Sons, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Prufrock Press. 	<p><u>Books</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outliers – The Story of Success (Malcolm Gladwell, 2008) • Talent is Overrated – What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else (Geoff Colvin, 2008) • Bounce: How Champions Are Made (Matthew Syed, 2010) • The Talent Code – Greatness Isn’t Born. It’s Grown (Daniel Coyle, 2010) • The Genius in All of Us: Why Everything You’ve Been Told About Genetics, Talent and Intelligence Is Wrong (David Shenk, 2011) • The Expert Learner – Challenging the Myth of Ability (Gordon Stobart, 2014)
<p><u>Journals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence • Gifted Child Quarterly 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Roeper Review • High Ability Studies • Gifted and Talented International • Advanced Development • Journal for the Education of the Gifted • Gifted Education • Exceptional Children • Learning and Individual Difference • Personality and Individual Differences 	
<p><u>Organisations</u></p> <p><u>In the USA</u> SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted)</p> <p><u>In Europe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECHA (European Council for High Ability) • IHBV (Gifted Adults Foundation) <p><u>International</u> High IQ societies Mensa, Triple Nine, Intertel, ISPE (International Society for Philosophical Enquiry), High IQ Society.</p>	

Looking at this table, the ‘denying’ sources, in comparison with the ‘accepting’ ones, are few and recent (and, though perhaps only of trivial interest, all written by men). It could therefore be asked whether their giftedness-denial constitutes a fashion, a backlash of some kind, a perhaps ephemeral trend? Or might it be the beginning of a Copernican Revolution? In assessing this situation, an important starting point is to clarify exactly what it is that these sources are dealing with.

2.1.1 The language of giftedness, talent, and achievement

The ‘denying’ books, as evident from their titles, are dealing with “success” (Gladwell 2008), “world-class performers” (Colvin 2008), “champions” (Syed 2010), “greatness” (Coyle 2010). These words are about achievement. Giftedness is not synonymous with achievement, but words related to giftedness and to achievement – such as talent, ability, genius, outliers, experts – are often used apparently interchangeably and without being clearly defined. Gagné (2013:193) provides a helpful differentiation of these terms, defining giftedness as “the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed outstanding natural abilities or aptitudes (called gifts)”, and talent as “the outstanding mastery of systematically developed competencies (knowledge and skills)”. He defines “outstanding” as that which is within the top 10% of age peers. He goes into some detail about the “development process”

that is involved in converting raw gifts into well-honed talents (ibid.). According to this differentiation, synonyms could be arranged as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: The language of giftedness, talent, and achievement

Synonyms of Giftedness	Synonyms of Talent
natural ability aptitude potential high IQ prodigy	skill achievement expert performance success world-class performance champion greatness
Terms like 'genius', 'outliers', and 'high ability', could appear in both columns, as a description of outstanding potential or of outstanding achievement.	

I use this vocabulary in accordance with Gagné's (2013) differentiation as presented above and Table 2's related arrangement of synonyms. I like the term 'high ability' because it can refer to both potential and achievement, and where I use that term I intend it to convey that duality of meaning. Out of all these different terms, in order to access the largest stores of academic literature on high ability, the necessary search term is the word 'gifted' (Appendix 1 details the literature searches I undertook). The literature and research on giftedness overwhelmingly relates to children rather than adults and is predominantly focused on questions of how to deal with giftedness in school education (as can even be seen from the journal titles in Table 1). The most frequent topics are identification of and nature of giftedness (assessments, measures, definitions, aetiology, brain functioning, relation of giftedness to domains such as intelligence and creativity), and what to do about it (educational options, models and outcomes, issues related to achievement and under-achievement).

Although usages of the term 'gifted' have been found dating back to 1825 (by Kearney 2009, cited in Silverman 2013), its origin is usually attributed to Sir Francis Galton, who first used it in 1869 in relation to children and adults who demonstrated exceptional talent in some area (Galton 1869). It is thought to derive from the concept of a person being given "gifts from the gods" (Silverman 2013:53). The term has been in common use to refer to individuals of high potential certainly since the 1926 publication of Leta Stetter Hollingworth's book "Gifted Children, Their Nature and Nurture". In the early 1900s Lewis Terman, a professor at Stanford

University, began a famous longitudinal study of 1,528 gifted children who he followed for several decades (Terman 1925; Terman & Ogden 1947, 1959). He defined gifted children as those with IQs of 140 or more. The concept of IQ or Intelligence Quotient as a measure of human intelligence had been developed by the German psychologist William Stern at around the same time (Hunt 2011; Lamiell 1996). Extending beyond cognitive performance, in 1964 Polish psychologist Kazimierz Dabrowski identified five areas of “overexcitability” or “supersensitivity” associated with giftedness: psychomotor, sensual, emotional, intellectual, and imaginal (Daniels & Piechowski 2009). These manifest as heightened intensity, sensitivity, excitability, perceptiveness, complexity, energy, and drive in each of those five areas (ibid). In 1978 Joseph Renzulli added to this the importance of behavioural characteristics of gifted individuals, identified as high levels of task commitment (motivation) and creativity (Renzulli 1978). A new significant contribution was made by the Columbus Group in 1991 (cited in Silverman 2013), who conceptualised giftedness as asynchronous development (Columbus Group 2013). This refers to the uneven development seen in gifted children where their advanced cognitive functioning can be far ahead of their chronological age and their emotional maturation can lag behind that expected for their chronological age. The word ‘gifted’ has, however, become controversial because it has negative connotations of privilege or elitism. There are people who might legitimately be identified as gifted who reject associating themselves with the word, whilst others – such as stereotypical ‘pushy parents’ – strive eagerly to be associated with it. Silverman (2013:20), writing of the USA, attributes these very different reactions to the conflict between “zealous egalitarianism and our country’s striving for excellence”. The website Hoagies’ Gifted (2014) ran a blog hop on “The ‘G’ Word”, where two dozen parents, teachers, counsellors, and others in what they refer to as “the gifted community” wrote about what the word ‘gifted’ means to them, whether it is good or bad, should be used or should be changed. The rich responses demonstrate the significant ambivalence that the word evokes.

A difficulty with seeking linguistic precision in this field is that it is problematic to differentiate potential from achievement. This is because anything that could be said to be an observable sign of potential – such as, for example, precocious verbal dexterity – could itself be said to be an achievement of a kind. As Stobart (2014:33) points out, the results of aptitude-assessing tests can be seen to be an indicator of achievement rather than a cause of achievement. As an example, probably nobody would contest that the scientist Stephen

Hawking has high ability, but the presence of high ability has been confirmed through this being manifested in his performance. Given that motor neuron disease rendered him paralysed and unable to speak, if he had not had the help of a computer through which he could communicate, no-one would be able to perceive his high ability. It could be said that without access to a computer he still has high ability, but it would not be manifesting itself, so would be unable to be assessed. Is his high ability, however, something that he was born with, or something that came about because he developed it through hard work? That is the main point of contention in the literature on high ability.

2.1.2 Nature versus nurture

The contradiction shown in Table 1 above, between what I have referred to as the ‘accepting’ versus the ‘denying’ sources, is essentially about nature versus nurture – i.e. whether it is believed that there is a biological basis for high ability or whether it is argued that any manifestation of high ability has come into being exclusively through longterm careful cultivation. Gagné (2013:192) terms the former the “Pronat” position (pro-natural ability) and the latter the “Antinat” position. Gagné asserts that Pronat (his own position) is the mainstream position and that Antinat is represented by “a small minority of researchers” (ibid), namely Howe, Davidson, & Sloboda (1998) in Britain and Ericsson, Roring, & Nandagopal (2007) in the USA. All of the ‘denying’ books cited above rely heavily on Ericsson’s work (which is voluminous – a few examples being Ericsson et al 1993, 2006, 2007), and include a surprisingly large overlap amongst them of citing his same research data. For example, a story from his research on memory is retold in several places: it involved an undergraduate student perfecting the fast memorisation of long sequences of random numbers by “chunking” these into units that had meaning for him because he was an avid runner and related them to his running times (see one such description in Foer 2011). The disagreement between the Pronat and Antinat proponents is intense, sometimes using ardent and emotive language (e.g. Shenk 2010); and even including accusations of scholarly misconduct on the part of their opponents such as the misrepresenting of research findings – see the debate between Gagné and Ericsson in Kaufman (2013).

Although there is such heated disagreement, there is also, curiously, contradiction to be found within many of these expositions. For example, Shenk introduces a third position, and

one that appears to be the most sensible, which he terms “Interactionist” (2010:16). He explains this as the process of interaction between genes and environment, or “GxE for short” (ibid:17). Even though genes are biological, he then makes statements that refute any biologically based contribution, such as a chapter entitled “The End of ‘Giftedness’” (ibid:44). Just below this chapter title, however, the chapter synopsis states “Everyone is born with differences, and some with unique advantages for certain tasks” (ibid). This latter statement fully supports there being innate foundations for talent in the form of “unique advantages”, which is what Gagné terms gifts. So while Shenk’s (2010) headline message is Antinat, the elaborating details, confusingly, are Pronat.

Gagné (2013) claims himself to be Pronat, but his Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) would identify him more accurately as Interactionist as it fully acknowledges an environmental contribution. His emphasis, however, is on the innate contribution – he proposes a hierarchy of components that bring about talent, in the following order of importance: natural abilities; intrapersonal (e.g. personality traits), developmental process, and environment (Gagne 2013:199). Pronat researchers have shown that with the same amount of practice, individuals achieve differently (ibid), and that for certain kinds of expertise, such as that demonstrated by savants and child prodigies, Ericsson’s rule of 10,000 hours of practice being necessary does not apply (Rutsatz et al 2014). Ericsson does show clear consistency in his position of fully denying natural ability, at least in intellectual performance – he acknowledges that differences in sporting performance are based in congenital individual differences in physique (Ericsson 2007). However, in all the ‘denying’ books shown in Table 1 above that repeat and build on Ericsson’s ideas, there are regular inconsistencies of the kind described above in relation to Shenk (2010), where the overt Antinat message of the book is contradicted by details that the author is not explicitly drawing attention to – even sometimes only appearing in the footnotes – that provide implicit acknowledgement that individual difference does exist as to what a person is capable of, so that even with all the same – or very similar – nurture, outcomes will vary across individuals.

A Japanese forerunner to this recent Antinat movement is Shinichi Suzuki’s (1969) treatise on “Ability Development” which gave rise to the unique Suzuki method of teaching musical instruments, predominantly the violin, to very young children (beginning under the age of

five). Suzuki spent his whole career asserting that ability is not inborn (1969, 1983) – a message continuing to be propagated world-wide by the International Suzuki Association – and that any child can develop musical proficiency. However, even in Suzuki’s message there is unpublicized ‘small print’ – in Book 1 of the teaching manuals that his method relies on, there is this caveat: “The same method may yield different outcomes in different children” (Suzuki 2007:4). And Suzuki too has attracted venomous criticism: Mendick (2014) claims he has been “unmasked as a liar and a fraud” who misled people to have confidence in him so as “to peddle a method of teaching...that netted him a fortune”. Mass popularity and commercial success does seem to back the Antinat message, as shown by the best-seller status of the ‘denying’ books by Gladwell (2008) and Syed (2010).

But has the pendulum begun to swing the other way? The debate between Gagné and Ericsson mentioned above (in Kaufman 2013) is, interestingly, formatted so as to give Ericsson with his Antinat position the advantage of having the last word. A year later he no longer enjoys this editorial advantage: in a special issue (Volume 45) of the journal *Intelligence*, eight papers by “experts on expertise” (Detterman 2014) are presented that oppose the arguments and methods of Ericsson (Hambrick et al; Simonton 2014; Plomin et al 2014; Wai 2014; Ruthsatz et al 2014; Ackerman 2014; de Bruin et al 2014; Grabner 2014). These are followed by a rebuttal by Ericsson (2014), then there is a published response to his rebuttal by the authors of each of the eight papers (Hambrick et al 2014a; Simonton 2014a; Plomin et al 2014a; Wai 2014a; Ruthsatz 2014; Ackerman 2014a; de Bruin et al 2014a; Grabner 2014a). See also Hambrick et al (2016). The specifics of all of these arguments make fascinating reading but are beyond the scope of this chapter.

To me it seems obvious that there is always a physiological corollary to functioning, whether that functioning is judged as constituting average, high, or indeed low ability, and whether or not that level of functioning is said to be largely present from birth. In the case of the manifestation of high ability or giftedness, this has been correlated with neural efficiency. Studies have shown that in higher IQ, less cortical activity is necessary to learn a new task (Grabner et al 2003), with more efficient use of brain resources such as glucose metabolism (i.e. consuming less glucose or energy) (Haier et al 1988). Studies using parameters of the electroencephalogram (EEG) as indicators for brain or cortical activation also accorded with the neural efficiency hypothesis (e.g. Jausovec, 1998, 2000; Neubauer et al., 1995, 2002;

Vitouch et al., 1997). According to Geake (2009:261), differences have been found in neural structure and functioning in gifted individuals that account for enhanced executive capability and a more efficacious working memory. Yermish (2010) cites the following sources as demonstrating brain activity in gifted individuals to have more efficient, effective, or mature patterns compared with average individuals: Alexander et al 1996; Jin et al 2007; Jin et al 2006; Martin et al 1993; Singh & O'Boyle 2004; O'Boyle et al 1994.

Although individual IQ has been shown to remain mostly stable over time (Schneider et al 2014), with more stability in low IQ groups than high IQ groups, it is clear that abilities can change – by becoming enhanced through longterm deliberate practice (Ericsson et al 1993), or deteriorating through old age (Deary et al 2009; Hunt 2011), suddenly expanding remarkably through a physiological event like a hard knock to the head or a lightning strike (Stobart 2014), or being just as suddenly lost through the sustaining of physiological damage such as traumatic brain injury (Arciniegas et al 2002). The much-mentioned “Flynn effect” refers to James Flynn’s studies which showed that average IQ within the populations of several countries had increased over time (Flynn 1984, 1987). Since then, the reverse effect has been documented, with intelligence test performance scores decreasing (Pietschnig & Gittler 2015; Teasdale & Owen 2005). Such changes always come with much discussion about what they could be attributable to.

In summary, it can be said that giftedness can predispose a person towards achievement because its cognitive characteristics enable rapid learning and enhanced remembering, and its temperamental characteristics of intensity, stamina, drive (Dabrowski 1964), and high levels of task commitment (Renzulli 1978), enable persistence of focus and application to a task. However, whether gifted or not, no person will achieve outstandingly without the inspiration or “ignition” (Coyle 2010:97) that provokes committing to a particular task, the motivation to sustain that commitment, and the environmental support to continue engaging with that task and improving performance. Environmental support includes resources, opportunity, guidance/tuition, and feedback (input from others that identifies which elements can be improved and how they can be tweaked to optimise performance – Coyle 2010). To these factors Gladwell (2008) added the role of luck, demonstrating how being born at the right time of year in the right historical era and in the right geographical

location can give a person advantages in achieving success. So whilst gifted individuals might have an innate advantage in terms of ability (Gagne 2013, Renzulli 2005), their capacity for achievement will only be realised if additional factors are in place.

How this debate is pertinent for interpersonal relating, is largely to do with expectations: if parents, for example, believe that their child should be able to achieve 'greatness' so long as he or she works hard enough, their expectation for that child will be very different than it would be if they held a belief that inborn abilities determine different limits for different children. Although not holding limiting conceptions of what a person might be able to achieve is usually held up as a good thing (e.g. Stobart 2014), it does have a dark side: a highly controversial example of a parent who pushed her children relentlessly to achieve was documented in a book (Chua 2011) that has introduced into popular language the term "Tiger Mother" to depict this phenomenon. Shenk (2010) explicitly states that it is the parent's responsibility to cultivate greatness in their child: holding such a belief will put tremendous pressure on parents. A sense of failure can then dog both children and parents if 'greatness' is not achieved, with various attendant relational problems of disappointment, anger, shame, and low self-esteem.

One thing that all of the above writers and researchers agree on, is that there is difference amongst individuals, because not everyone is a Mozart. But what they are disagreeing on, is whether or not every one of us could be a Mozart if given the right kind of nurture.

2.1.3 Individual difference

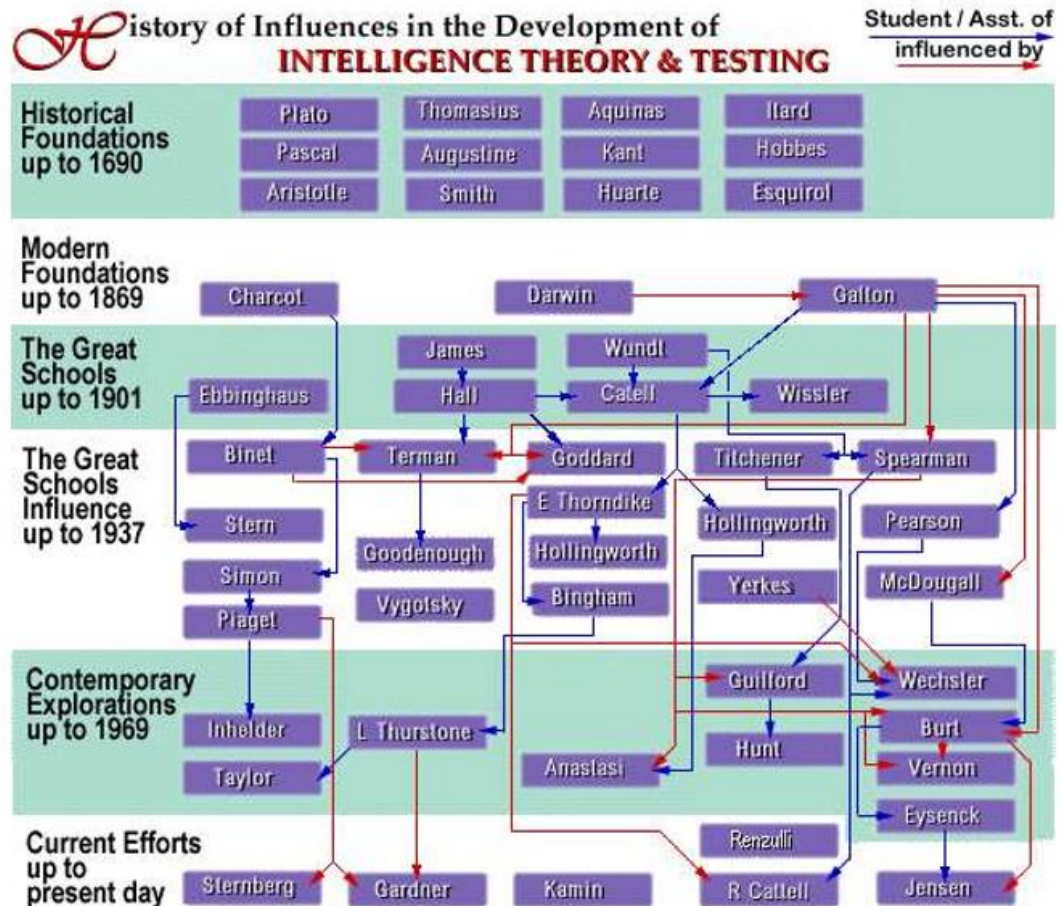
The idea that we all can achieve 'greatness' (e.g. see Shenk 2010) suggests that we are all the same, in that we all have, at least constitutionally, equal prospects of achieving greatness. This idea disregards difference and diversity amongst individuals. Loden & Rosener (1990) constructed the "Diversity Wheel" as a way of depicting the differences between people "that are particularly important in shaping our identities" (Lou & Deane, n.d.). Since it first appeared twenty-six years ago the Diversity Wheel has been updated by Loden (1995) and others (e.g. Gardenswartz & Rowe 1998), but in its various iterations it has retained as primary the six dimensions that Loden & Rosener (1990) in their original model posited as the core dimensions that constitute "the most powerful and sustaining differences, ones that

usually have an important impact on us throughout our lives” (Lou & Deane, n.d.), shaping our self-image and worldviews. These are: age, ethnicity, gender, ability, race, and sexual orientation. Each iteration retains “ability” but in slightly different wordings, e.g. “physical abilities and qualities” (Loden 1995), or in the Johns Hopkins University version, “mental/physical ability” (Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, n.d.). These various sources accept that ability is a fundamental aspect of a person that varies amongst different people and has a strong effect on their lives and identities (see also Thomas 1990:50). Giftedness is not listed as one of Moodley & Lubin’s (2009) “big seven stigmatised identities” but I would argue that it should be, given how controversial an acknowledgment of giftedness clearly is (see also Cross et al 1993). Chaudoir & Quinn (2010) write about the impact of disclosure when concealable stigmatized identities are revealed, and the ambivalence about and difficulty of “coming out gifted” certainly qualifies as a case of this (see Lind 2000).

The fact that “intellectual disability” persists as a category of disorder in the DSM5 (American Psychiatric Association 2013:33), and is referred to for example in the chapter I cited in the Introduction to this dissertation as a phenomenon about whose existence there is not any doubt, shows that this manifestation of difference in ability is widely accepted. Intellectual disability is confirmed by standardised intelligence testing (*ibid*). Such a diagnosis is therefore predicated upon the idea that intelligence is variable, and that a certain level of intelligence is considered normal, such that impairment of that is considered a disorder listed in a manual of disorders.

Intelligence, according to Schneider et al (2014), is the best studied psychological construct. The first designing of a test for determining levels of intelligence was undertaken by French psychologist Alfred Binet (1903), who was hired by the French Education Ministry to devise a way of assessing children to ensure they would be matched with educational programmes that would suit their capabilities (Hunt 2011). Prior to these developments, and since then, there have been numerous contributions to the attempt to define, understand, and measure human intelligence. Figure 1 below (from Favier-Townsend 2010) gives a sense of the complexity of this history.

Figure 1: History of influences in the development of intelligence theory and testing

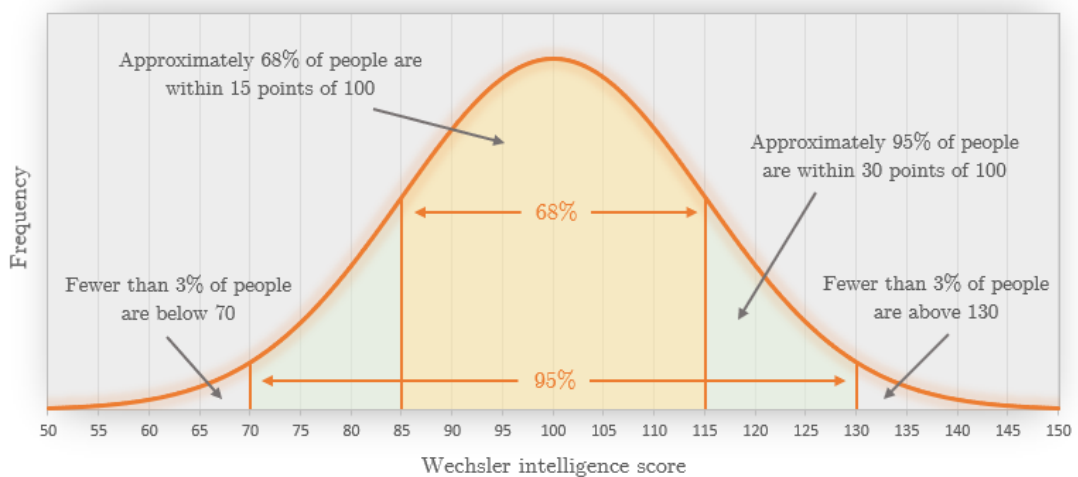


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Within this history, there are a couple of landmark ideas worth highlighting. The concept of “g”, for General Ability, was introduced by Spearman (1923). This derived from his findings that specific mental abilities were highly inter-correlated, from which he concluded that all cognitive abilities share a common core, or “g” (Favier-Townsend 2014). In contrast Gardner (1983) developed a theory of multiple intelligences that come in nine forms (Gardner 2011) – linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and spiritual. This conceptualisation has been very popular, but remains unsubstantiated by empirical evidence (Simonton 2009; Pyryt 2000). Horn & Cattell (1966) made the useful distinction between “fluid intelligence” (the active facility of analysing and processing stimuli) and “crystallised intelligence” (the accumulation of learned skills and facts).

When the IQ scores of a general population are plotted on a graph it creates a normal distribution or “Bell Curve” (see Figure 2 below), showing that the average IQ score is 100 (ibid). The majority of all scores (68%) lie between 85 and 115. About 2% of people score 70 or lower, and such a score would be cause for considering a person intellectually disabled (American Psychiatric Association 2013). About 2% of the population score higher than 130, and it is this section that is considered gifted.

Figure 2: The Bell Curve for IQ



Intelligence testing, and its criticism, is an extensive topic (see Kaufman 2009), a review of which is well beyond the scope of this project. Measures of intelligence have led to many abuses. Spearman was a eugenicist, who proposed that only people whose “g” exceeded a certain level should have the right to vote or procreate (Favier-Townsend 2014). Jensen (1969) and Eysenck (1971) claimed that the differences in intelligence test scores between races might have genetic origins. It is theories of this kind that underpinned major historical humanitarian disasters such as the politics and related atrocities of Germany’s Nazism that led to World War 2 and the post-war racially segregationist laws of South Africa’s *apartheid* regime. A more recent book taking this sort of line, the notorious “The Bell Curve” (Hernstein & Murray 1994), made the case of differential intellectual endowment and claimed the higher it was, the better. It might well be a backlash against these evils that has fuelled the Antinat movement, and that a discomfort with this history contributes to the described pull-push effect that presides over the topic of giftedness.

In the 'denying' authors' thesis that anyone can achieve anything with the right amount of the right kind of practice, there is no acknowledgment of the sort of limitation that the phenomenon of intellectual disability would pose. Ericsson (2007) does, however, mention that it is the "healthy" individual that has no limits, which begs the question then of how "healthy" is defined. Does his idea of health equate with norms of functioning, and therefore rule out "learning disability" or "intellectual impairment"? I find it interesting that in our language use, someone "is" gifted whereas someone "has" learning difficulties.

If individuals at the far left of the Bell Curve, more than two standard deviations from the norm, need special treatment because of how it affects their lives, it stands to reason that people at least two deviations from the norm at the far right end will also have their lives affected by this situation. Silverman (2013:86) writes about the "parallels at the extremes" of the Bell Curve, and how various problems have been documented to accrue to individuals who fall within either of the extremes as compared with those who fall within the mid-range majority. I believe that unusually high ability is something worth being interested in and understanding, just as much as intellectual disability is worth understanding and attending to. If a person's life is affected by being at the upper extremes of the Bell Curve, how are they affected?

2.3 Very high IQ as benefit or liability

General intelligence, or Spearman's 'g', is the one measurable characteristic of individual difference that has been shown to best correlate with the highest number of outcomes (Jensen 1998). People with higher intelligence have higher attainment (Schneider et al 2014), and better health and longevity even when socioeconomic variables are controlled for (Gottfredson & Deary 2004; Wraw et al 2015). The traditional access routes into universities and the high-paying occupations such as business and law rely on admission tests that advantage people with higher IQ (Sternberg 1995). For these reasons, intelligence remains a prized attribute. On the website of The International Society for Intelligence Research (ISIR), it says "the ultimate goal of all intelligence research is to understand how to increase intelligence". However, there is a point beyond which increased intelligence ceases to lead to increased advantage, and starts to be associated with disadvantage.

Research shows that it is IQs near the top of the normal range that are most correlated with success in professional status and leadership. For example, a largescale Swedish study showed that the average IQ score of CEOs was 115, which is one standard deviation above the norm (Adams et al 2016). The cut-off point for this band of advantage is where the gifted range begins (i.e. at an IQ score of 130 and above). Towers (1987:1) places the optimal IQ range “for the development of successful and well-adjusted individuals” as being between 120 and 140. Managerial success has been shown to be lowest at the upper and lower IQ bounds (Ghiselli 1963). Leaders are most successful when they have a higher IQ than their followers, but not too much higher: a 30 point difference causes the relationship either not to form, or to break up (Simonton 1984, 1985). A study by Ghiselli (1963a) showed that people with higher intelligence get higher positions and more job success, but only when the higher intelligence is combined with other traits (supervisory ability, initiative, self-assurance). This study was replicated 24 years later with the same results (Bowin & Attaran 1987). Very high IQ has also been documented as being a risk factor for mental disorder (Weismann-Arcache & Tordjman 2012; Cross & Cross 2015; MacCabe 2010; Gale et al 2013).

The next section looks at how these different factors might be classified into different kinds of general life pathways or outcomes within populations of high IQ individuals.

2.4 Categorising different gifted life strategies/trajectories

Five authors (Towers 1987, Streznewski 1999, Jacobsen 1999b, Nauta & Corten 2002, Persson 2009) have identified different categories of life strategy or trajectory that are noticeable within a gifted population, but none of these authors relate their work to each other's or to mainstream psychological theories. One author who has related her work to mainstream psychological theories, is Fiedler (2012, 2015), who looks at the development of gifted adults across the lifespan and maps this onto Erik Erikson's (1950) psychosocial stages of development. She is not categorizing different overall life strategies or trajectories, however, but looking at the challenges associated with particular age ranges from age 18 onwards and ways of handling such challenges. All of these authors are commenting on how gifted individuals relate to others and how they actualize their potential, and they all present these two issues as being highly inter-related. Each author emphasizes a slightly different angle, for

example socio-economic background (Towers 1987), individual career performance (Nauta & Corten 2002), or their function in society (Persson 2009).

Towers (1987) identifies three different kinds of adjustment, based on the type of childhood experienced and its socio-economic environment. The first, he calls the “committed strategy”. Here, an individual grows up in an upper middle class environment, with parents who are gifted and well-educated, attends prestigious colleges and enters matching occupations, and has friends with similar histories. Towers asserts that these are the gifted individuals who are optimally adjusted, who are “pillars of the community”. Those with a “marginal strategy” grow up in a lower socio-economic class, may not even have gone to college, and have perhaps menial jobs but in their own time pursue their original and less mainstream interests. He describes his third category, “dropouts”, as possibly having gifted parents but who themselves are maladjusted, who use the child to try to fulfil their own ambitions and gratify their own needs for accomplishment.

Streznewski (1999) describes having independently arrived at categories of giftedness outcomes that she then found matched those of psychologist Elizabeth Drews (1963). Streznewski’s descriptors for these are: “strivers” (“high-testing teacher pleasers”, who work hard, are career minded, and deliver reliably – *ibid*:6); “superstars” (stand out from others for excelling in various ways and for being happy); and “independents” (individuals who are seldom popular, or leaders; they are irritating to others, a problem for authorities, and don’t fit into workplace systems). Streznewski then curiously mentions another category that she does not name as one of the main three, but acknowledges as the one “we don’t like to think about” (*ibid*:9). She describes this category as comprising gifted individuals who “drop out”, “the ultimate waste of the best and the brightest” (*ibid*.)

Jacobsen (1999b) categorises the outcomes of giftedness as depending on the person’s attitude to life, what she describes as the “social strategy” that they adopt, and whether they develop skills. Her three categories are “exaggerated” (gifted abilities overwhelming the person and others, being “out of control” (*ibid*:253), and causing difficulty and negative reactions); “collapsed” (abilities being suppressed, not engaged with, causing detachment,

depression, substance abuse), or “balanced” (abilities are regulated but not suppressed, able to be well-channelled).

Nauta & Corten’s (2002) categories make mention of whether the person is aware of his or her giftedness or not. Their categories are: “Inconspicuous” (low profile, restricted personal development, not aware of giftedness); “Accepted” (has established connection with others at own level, no major adaptation problems); “Social” (has actively raised social skills to a high level and can therefore solve many adaptation problems, functions well); “Confrontational” (moves from conflict to conflict and even, occupationally, from dismissal to dismissal), “Isolation” (runs the risk of losing contact with society). Something that distinguishes Nauta & Corten’s contribution, is that they describe how individuals can move between the categories. So they say that an “Inconspicuous” who becomes aware of their giftedness can then develop into one of the other types, and that a “Confrontational” can progress to “Social” or retreat to “Isolation”.

Persson (2009) explains that he is proposing a “taxonomy of gifted social functions”. He associates each social function with a popular label, which I have inserted in brackets after the respective functions: societal maintenance (“the nerd”); societal entertainment (“the hero”); and societal change (“the martyr”). He sees stigmatization as a tool that is used to neutralise a gifted person who is seen as a threat, and marginalisation as a coping strategy employed by gifted individuals when they become stigmatised.

Each of the above systems of categorizing outcomes involves at least three different possibilities, and all of the possibilities are classified in accordance with the nature of the gifted individual’s interpersonal relationships. Where a person is described as doing very well in terms of realizing their abilities, they are also described as having interpersonal competence, for example Streznewski’s “Superstars”, of whom she says their concern for social relationships makes them popular with “everyone in their lives” (1999:6). At the other extreme, those who are categorized as least developing their abilities, are described in terms of interpersonal failure, such as Nauta & Corten’s category of “Isolation” (2002). The next section examines interpersonal difficulty more closely, looking at how very high IQ might constitute a liability specifically for interpersonal relating.

2.5 Interpersonal difficulties associated with giftedness

Freeman (2010:7) mentions the stereotype that gifted individuals are strange, referring to the “popular image” of the gifted child as lonely, with painful problems. American psychiatrist and psychotherapist Dr Jerald Grobman, who specialises in consulting with gifted individuals, writes that none of his patients liked being called gifted – they thought it connoted being odd, troubled, or just plain different, and that none liked feeling different from their friends (Grobman 2009). Why has such a negative stereotype of giftedness formed? What basis – if any – is there for this in fact?

2.5.1 Asserting versus denying interpersonal difficulties

As mentioned in section 1.5, in the literature and research on giftedness – the vast majority of which pertains to children, not adults – there are ubiquitous references to interpersonal problems. Some sources assert that there are such problems, for example Webb et al (2005) who maintain that the characteristics of giftedness strongly influence relationships and can lead to significant problems and a clinically significant impairment in functioning (also Neihart et al 2002). Guenole et al (2015) assert that it is common for intellectually gifted children to be referred to paediatric or child neuropsychiatry clinics for socio-emotional problems. Other sources deny that there are such problems, such as Freeman (2013), and for a meta-analysis on studies related to children, see Jones (2013). There is empirical support for both positions (Lopez and Sotillo 2009; Neihart 1999), i.e. that gifted individuals function well socially and that they do not function well socially. I have not found any studies that differentiate between interpersonal relating in a general social situation as opposed to more intimate one-to-one interpersonal relating.

There are many reasons for the conflicting results. One difference might relate to the age at which participants are evaluated. Peyre et al (2016) did not find in pre-school children, more behavioural, emotional, and social problems in those that were gifted as compared with those with normal IQ. However, a longitudinal study that assessed 1,326 high-IQ individuals in adolescence and again 30 years later, found that high-IQ individuals had better adjustment than those with average IQ during adolescence but “moderately worse” adjustment in midlife (with lower global life satisfaction and satisfaction with friend relations) (Zettergren 2014). Another reason for different results relates to the source of the sample. Studies that

obtain a gifted sample by recruiting from gifted educational programmes or groups of proven high-achievers (eg. American Presidential Scholars – see Kaufmann & Matthews 2012), are accessing participants who have already been selected for being able to function successfully rather than ones who might be suffering problems that could impede their achievement. Neihart (1999) found three factors that influence psychological outcomes across different age groups: the type of giftedness, the educational fit, and personal characteristics. A further difference was confirmed in a study by Guenole et al (2015), which found that children with a significant verbal-performance discrepancy on Wechsler's intelligence profile are more emotionally and behaviourally impaired than high-IQ children who have a more even profile.

The earliest studies on giftedness, by Terman (1925) and Hollingworth (1942), made associations between higher IQ and social maladjustment. The essence of this is that a very high IQ person has cognitive functioning that is so different from that of the majority of people – at least two standard deviations away from the norm on the Bell Curve as presented above – that they are not understood by, and cannot understand, the majority of others, and this is what produces difficulty in social interaction.

A lesson which many gifted persons never learn as long as they live is that human beings in general are inherently very different from themselves in thought, in action, in general intention, and in interests... This is one of the most painful and difficult lessons that each gifted child must learn, if personal development is to proceed successfully... Failure to learn how to tolerate in a reasonable fashion the foolishness of others leads to bitterness, disillusionment, and misanthropy (Hollingworth 1942:259).

There can be very different experiences associated with different bands of high IQ (Ruf 2009), and the higher the IQ, the more the problems. Hollingworth (1942) asserted that those in the high IQ range of 130-150 experience better adjustment than those with IQ above 150. To emphasise how rare this score is, those with IQ's of 150 and above occur about 5-7 times out of 10,000 persons (Powell & Haden 1984). Hollingworth (1942) describes how a gifted child has generally mastered the school curriculum several grades beyond his or her age peers, and this can lead to finding school intolerably boring. Not having intellectual equals in the peer group leads to isolation, and not being understood by or suitably catered for and challenged by the teachers and school system can lead to rebelliousness and negativity (ibid.), acquiring "a contempt for authority that will carry over into adulthood, causing...lifelong problems" (Towers 1987:1; Corten et al 2006). Hollingworth defined the

nature of the interpersonal problems involved as centering on “suffering fools” and becoming isolated.

These superior children are not unfriendly or ungregarious by nature. Typically they strive to play with others but their efforts are defeated by the difficulties of the case... Other children do not share their interests, their vocabulary, or their desire to organize activities..... As a result, forms of solitary play develop, and these, becoming fixed as habits, may explain the fact that many highly intellectual adults are shy, ungregarious, and unmindful of human relationships, or even misanthropic and uncomfortable in ordinary social intercourse (1942:262).

As Towers puts it,

If he manages to resist forming attitudes of rebellion and cynicism, he may find companionship in learned societies and the like when he reaches adulthood. But even so, he frequently never overcomes the habits of solitude, shyness, and self-depreciation that were forged for him in childhood. (1987a:1-2)

Webb et al (2005) cite A R Jensen as having stated in a personal communication that there is a “zone of tolerance” of about 20 IQ points. Towers maintains that a difference of 30 IQ points between individuals creates a communication barrier, and a child who is different by that much from the majority of, or all of, those around him or her, has a childhood “not unlike that of the deaf” child (1987:1).

Not very much has been written about gifted adults as opposed to gifted children (Corten et al 2006; Dijkstra et al 2012). What has been written, rather than being based on systematic research, is often based on the particular author’s personal experience, whether anecdotal (such as Persson 2009), or deriving from professional practice (such as Corten et al 2006; Grobman 2006; 2009, Nauta 2013; Jacobsen 1999b). Streznewski (1999) engaged in a kind of research by interviewing one hundred gifted adults aged 18-90, for a period of 2-3 hours each, getting them to respond to any statements that interested them out of a set of 104. This was, however, a journalistic study rather than an academic one, with no mention, for example, of a data analysis methodology. Freeman (2010) undertook a longitudinal study, and wrote journalistically/novelistically about the adult lives of her participants. What has been written about gifted adults has not been mapped onto mainstream psychological theories (Yermish 2010, Falck 2013). Heylighen (n.d.a), made an attempt to list all the problems of the gifted by going through other literature, though only using web-based references. Only some of these relate to interpersonal experience.

In terms of more systematic research projects on gifted adults, a Dutch study examined the personality characteristics of 196 gifted adults (Mensa members). Results showed that gifted individuals, compared with a general community sample, showed lower levels of conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional intelligence. In addition, among the gifted, conscientiousness was positively related to well-being, whereas in the comparison group, extraversion was positively related to well-being (Dijkstra et al 2012). My PEP research showed that a sample of 229 gifted adults had an atypical profile of attachment styles, with a much higher percentage of insecure attachment (Falck 2013) – predominantly of the avoidant style – which was associated with greater interpersonal difficulty. Both of these latter two studies suggest lower levels of social engagement in gifted adults.

For me the issue is not to seek an ultimate ruling on whether gifted adults tend to have trouble with interpersonal relating or not, it is about finding out, where there is trouble, what the nature of the trouble is, how it comes about, and what can be done about it. Also perhaps, where there isn't trouble, what makes the difference between those who do and those who do not experience such trouble.

2.5.2 The nature of the interpersonal difficulties

Jacobsen (1999b) sees relationship problems as expressions of problems with what she designates as the three hallmarks of giftedness: complexity, intensity, and drive. She writes about how gifted individuals shock others with their intensity, exhaust them with their complexity, and overwhelm them with their drive. There is support from other authors for each of these (Heylighen n.d., n.d.a; Webb et al 2005; Fonseca 2016; Streznewski 1999; Daniels & Piechowski 2009; Lovecky 1986). Drive can be expressed through high energy and perfectionism, and complexity means that gifted individuals see things from more angles, and in more depth, than others do or want to, which can cause others confusion. This can delay decisions and cause frustration for self and for others. Other hallmark characteristics of giftedness that are documented to cause interpersonal difficulty are as follows:

Asynchronous development: Uneven cognitive, academic, and psychosocial profiles (Morelock 1996; Winner 2000), which can be exacerbated when there are learning disabilities or psychological disorders (Yermish 2010). Reaching developmental stages earlier and more intensely than others (Webb et al 2005) can make a gifted individual stand out from others, confuse others' expectations, and be difficult to manage particularly in groups that are organised according to age.

Multipotentiality (Jacobsen 1999b; Heylighen n.d.; n.d.a; Webb et al 2005; Daniels & Piechowski 2009): Gifted individuals usually have a lot of interests and can do a lot of things well. They crave stimulation and novelty and can get bored quickly (Lovecky 1986). This can make it difficult for them to choose a path, or stick to something and follow it through, which can be bewildering and frustrating for others (Nauta & Corten 2002).

Speed (Jacobsen 1999b; Heylighen n.d.; n.d.a; Webb et al 2005; Streznewski 1999): A gifted person thinks and talks quickly, with rapid learning and mastery of new concepts. Problems arise when others cannot keep up. Misunderstandings arise when others assume that the gifted person couldn't possibly, in the time available, have already thought through something properly or taken it seriously.

In carrying out my PEP research project (Falck 2013), my analysing of my data brought me to define a few main categories of interpersonal difficulty. Through my literature review for the current project, I found that these categories remained accurate and could provide a useful way of summarising the overall nature of the interpersonal difficulty encountered by gifted individuals that was documented in the literature. I present a review below of the nature of these interpersonal difficulties, grouped into the three main categories derived from my PEP.

A. Hostility from others:

- Being disliked and excluded, rejected (Falck 2013; Lovecky 1986).
- Being called derogatory names (Falck 2013). Includes teacher put-downs in class (Freeman 2010), and parent comments like "if you're so gifted why did you forget your lunch" (Webb et al 2005:186).
- Being obstructed – being prevented by others from utilising abilities and making a contribution (Falck 2013).

B. Own challenging behaviour (including hostility from self):

- Showing boredom, frustration, impatience with others (Webb et al 2005; Falck 2013; Jacobsen 1999b; Streznewski 1999; Lovecky 1986).
- Being critical of others (Grobman 2006; Nauta & Ronner 2013; Falck 2013). Intolerant of others' needs if they regard these as superficial (Lovecky 1986). Can use advanced vocabulary to "beat people up" with words (Webb et al 2005:187).
- Challenging others (Falck 2013). Not listening to/accepting what others say (Nauta & Corten 2002). Being argumentative, questioning (Webb et al 2005; Netz 2014).
- Obstinate wanting own way, insisting on being right and being in control (Webb et al 2005; Nauta & Ronner 2013; Falck 2013). Being opinionated and stubborn rather than co-operative; reluctant to compromise (Heylighen, n.d.a).

- Not respecting authority/status: Questioning of rules/authority, non-conforming (Heylighen n.d.a; Webb et al 2005; Falck 2013). What Lovecky (1986) calls “divergency”.
- Being manipulative, exploiting own power (Webb et al 2005; Maupin 2014).

C. Being relationally ‘out of sync’ with others (this involves neither actual hostility nor obstruction but things just not going well with others, not ‘clicking’ or ‘flowing’):

- Experiences of misunderstandings, confusions, friction, and unintended offences (Falck 2013).
- Receiving complaints of being too serious, sensitive, intense (Webb et al 2005; Jacobsen 1999b).
- Having strong reactions even to things the other might not have seen as important or extreme (Grobman 2009; Nauta & Ronner 2013, Webb et al 2005; Falck 2013; Fonseca 2016).
- Expecting others to keep up with their speed and efficiency and not understanding why they don’t (Webb et al 2005; Falck 2013).
- Not respecting social etiquette (Grobman 2006; Corten et al 2006), out of not being aware of it, or out of not judging it important. Not very diplomatic or tactful, not “saving another person’s face” (Corten et al 2006). Asks embarrassing questions (Heylighen n.d.a)
- Strong content focus and can ignore social context (Corten et al 2006). Task-oriented to the neglect of office politics, dress and grooming (Webb et al 2005).

Reasons for these difficulties are presented as follows:

A. Reasons for hostility from others:

- Others not being tolerant of exceptions (Webb et al 2005). Negative reaction to difference.
- Envy (others being envious) (Falck 2013).
- Threat (others feeling insecure and threatened) (Falck 2013).

B. Reasons for own challenging behaviour:

- Others seem slow, uncaring about quality (Webb et al 2005; Falck 2013; Jacobsen 1999b; Streznewski 1999).
- Intellectual self-confidence: preferring to investigate something independently rather than deferring to authorities or experts (Heylighen n.d.a); belief in own ideas being right (Nauta & Corten 2002).
- Intrinsically motivated, autonomous, rather than compliant with others’ agendas and instructions (Heylighen n.d.a).
- Perfectionism (Daniels & Piechowski 2009).

C. Reasons for being relationally out of sync:

- Energy and creativity exhausts others (Webb et al 2005; Jacobsen 1999b).

- Extreme sensitivity and intense emotions (Daniels & Piechowski 2009).
- Not understanding that others are unable to be as quick and efficient as they are (Nauta & Corten 2002).
- Not having a natural capacity for grasping social rules and etiquette such as office politics (Falck 2013).

These kinds of difficulties can then lead to compounding intrapersonal and interpersonal consequences in the following ways:

- Feels different, out of step with others, sense of alienation and aloneness (Heylighen n.d.a; Streznewski 1999; Grobman 2009).
- Does not communicate effectively with others (Corten et al 2006; Fonseca 2016), leading to awkward social interactions and being misunderstood by others (Heylighen n.d.; n.d.a). Bad at socialising small talk (Webb et al 2005; Corten et al 2006; Falck 2013). In a study by Kaufmann (1992), 67% of gifted adults reported no participation in social activities outside work.
- Difficulty fitting in (Fonseca 2016; Nauta & Ronner 2013).
- Regular conflicts (Corten et al 2006).
- Being bullied (Fonseca 2016).
- Receiving put-downs from others, and experiencing things with others not going well, leads to feeling bad about self, feeling there is something wrong with self, underrating themselves (Heylighen n.d.a; Powell & Haden 1984), developing low self-esteem (Webb et al 2005).
- The frustration of not having constructive communication with others causes withdrawal (Corten et al 2006). Withdrawal can also arise out of fear of failure, fear of others' envy, feeling strange/different (Grobman 2006; Corten et al 2006).
- Gifted individuals have been associated with being introverted (Lovecky 1986; Heylighen n.d.a), and showing an avoidant attachment style (Falck 2013). In the workplace, those with an avoidant attachment style did less socialising than others, preferred being physically positioned at some social distance, and didn't seek social involvement (ibid).
- Becomes isolated, not belonging, feeling others are against you (Nauta & Ronner 2013; Hollingworth 1942), what Persson (2009:5) calls "voluntary marginalisation".

Such difficulties can have a considerable impact on gifted individuals' prospects of actualising their potential. Towers maintains that those with IQ above 145 will often require special attention "if they are to make the most of their gifts" (1987:1). The following are further mentions of how relational issues interact with the process and prospects of realising gifted abilities:

- Unable to find good way of using abilities (Streznewski 1999), as ways of utilising abilities always involve relating with others (Falck 2016).
- Limiting performance out of guilt that you have more than others (Grobman 2006).

- May impose restrictions on ability to learn as a way of trying to resolve conflicts about their giftedness (Grobman 2009:112) – to be differentiated from a “true neurologically based learning disability”.
- Attempt to regulate the information others get about them so as to manage others’ expectations and to balance needs for achievement with needs for affiliation (Coleman & Cross 1988).
- Hides gifts – giving up on passion and ideals – so as to fit in: “deviance fatigue” (Webb et al 2005:193).

Given my practice as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and a systems-psychodynamic executive coach, both of which pay attention to unconscious intersubjective processes (see definitions in section 1.6), in my reading of the above reviewed literature I noticed that its presentations of interpersonal relating lacked attention to such unconscious processes. Interpersonal difficulty is largely presented in a positivistic, stimulus-response, kind of way, portraying gifted individuals as having certain qualities, and having certain problems with others as a result. Such presentations are usually purely descriptive, such as “Gets impatient with others’ slowness”. What is missing is attention to how gifted individuals are involved in constructing their interpersonal relations, the contributions of their internal worlds, their personal meaning-making, and what might in these ways be going on more unconsciously that they bring to the situation and that influences the sort of outcomes they experience.

In all the literature I reviewed there was only one author who paid specific attention to unconscious processes. Grobman (2006) writes about discovering that an individual’s fear of the destructiveness of their giftedness could be an unconscious projection of their sadism. Later (Grobman 2009) he writes about the often unconscious guilt that gifted individuals have for having more than or doing better than others. He details how they often use primitive methods of denial and avoidance to manage their internal conflicts and anxieties, and how trying to eliminate conflict by these methods leads to underachievement, self-destructive behaviour, and severe psychological symptoms (*ibid.*). The only other mention I found of the notion of unconscious phenomena was one sentence in Corten et al (2006): “They tend to compete unconsciously at the level of knowledge”. There is one reference in Webb et al (2005) to the fact that there might be a matter of interpretation or construction of interpersonal experience, where it is mentioned that sometimes gifted individuals truly

are seen as different but sometimes it is just the gifted person's inaccurate perception that others see them as different.

2.6 Clarification of the focus and intended original contribution of my project

Whatever labels are used or whatever criteria are used to define or measure high ability or giftedness, the very construct of high ability is always dependent on a social event: that is the event in which the attributes and performance of someone are identified and judged by an observer as being in some way exceptional relative to the general attributes and levels of performance with which that observer is familiar. My focus is not on the forms of measurement of or classifications of different levels of ability – my focus is on what the social implications are of someone being related to as outstanding. (By 'outstanding' I am referring both to excellence of some kind, but also to the fact of standing out from others.) In whatever context this occurs, it is the experience of standing out for being outstanding and its intrapersonal and interpersonal implications that I wish to examine. From my perspective it does not therefore matter if what has caused a person to stand out in this way is genetic, epigenetic, the way the brain is wired, or particularly enriched environments and intensive practice. Whatever has caused it, and whatever you call it – whether "the 'g' word" is applied to this or no word at all – it is the unusual capability being noticed and reacted to by the self and others that I am interested in. Whatever the reasons might be, it is a reality that there are variable levels of attainment noticed amongst age peers in any given environment. What I am interested in is how this being noticed and reacted to affects a person and interacts with the way they view themselves and others, and what implications/consequences this has for the kinds of interpersonal relationships that are then developed.

I do not maintain that the kinds of interpersonal difficulties presented in the previous section are exclusive to gifted individuals: these can arise amongst human beings in general in different ways and to different degrees. However, with gifted individuals there is a predominance of certain kinds of experience because of their particular characteristics, and that is what my focus is. Neither do I maintain that all gifted people experience these problems. For those who do experience them, my interest is in how they arise and are perpetuated, and how they can be overcome. I am also interested in what makes the

difference for gifted individuals who do not experience – or who have ceased to experience – such problems.

In studying the interpersonal relating of gifted adults, an original dimension that my project aims to contribute to the field is a perspective on the unconscious processes that are involved.

* * *

This chapter has looked at the main historical landmarks and some of the main issues in the literature related to giftedness, talent, and achievement, including the nature versus nurture debate, and individual differences in human intelligence. It has provided a review of how the existing literature reports on interpersonal difficulties in gifted individuals, and has clarified the focus and intended contribution of the current project. In the next chapter I explain how I selected a research methodology that could best investigate the specific nature of my interest in gifted adults' interpersonal relating.

PART TWO: CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

Chapter 3 – Research methodology

In considering how best to seek answers to my research question about how interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome, I first of all contemplated what lessons I could learn from my PEP research.

3.1 Epistemology

In my PEP I adopted an essentialist/realist epistemological position. This meant focussing on the phenomenon of my research participants' experience rather than on how it is constructed socially or by discourse. My epistemological position remains that I think there is a reality 'out there' that stimulates our senses, which we are constantly experiencing, interacting with, and interpreting. In this view a pure, objective, singular truth cannot be attained, but neither is 'reality' entirely socially constructed: there are certain objective facts such as that at the time of writing this there is a Sainsbury's supermarket located on Fortis Green Road, London N10. If I give you directions to follow, you will find it there.

Looking at my topic in this way, it can be said that the fact of giftedness is an objective reality, given the biological bases that have been identified in neural structure and functioning that differ from the norm (Geake 2009; Grabner et al 2003; Jausovec 1998; Vitouch et al 1997; Neubauer et al 1995; Haier et al 1988). These differences manifest in noticeable features of performance such as rapid cognitive learning (Nauta & Ronner 2013; Daniels & Piechowski 2009; Webb et al 2005; Jacobsen 1999b; Lewis, Kitano & Lynch 1992). The reality of such effects are then perceived, reacted to, and interpreted intrapersonally and interpersonally, bringing about various consequences. And the current project sought to examine how these characteristics of giftedness play out in, and can cause difficulty for, interpersonal relating.

Wendy Hollway's distinctive contribution to social science research methodology combines psychoanalytical concepts with social observation – a tradition termed 'psychosocial research' (2008:2) – and I felt this could throw light on the contradiction that was evident in the findings of my PEP research and other giftedness research regarding whether or not gifted individuals have difficulty with interpersonal relating (see sections 1.5 and 2.3.1). As I wrote in my Learning Agreement (Falck 2014:7):

There is a question of degree of giftedness, as the more profound the giftedness the more problems there are in social adjustment (Silverman 2013). However, another crucial question is what research methods were used in the different studies and what is it that these were accessing.

By thinking of my research participants in terms of Hollway & Jefferson's (2013:4) conceptualisation of the "defended subject", I raised the question of whether the specific research methods used in the various giftedness studies were accessing the research participants' anxiety concerning interpersonal relationships, or accessing their defences against such anxiety? In my PEP research the One-Item Rating Scale might well have produced a social desirability skewing effect (De Vellis 2012), causing participants to answer the question in accordance with how they would like to present themselves publicly rather than how they felt more privately. In other words, that research instrument accessed the participants' defences against anxiety. The interviews, however, provided interviewees with an experience of, as Hollway & Jefferson put it, "recognition and containment" (2013:45-47), which allowed them to manifest their anxieties and this therefore brought about different findings.

Given the complexity of this, my first methodological decision for the current project was that I wanted to conceptualise my research subjects as "psychosocial subject[s]" (Hollway & Jefferson 2013:21) – definition in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Definition of the psychosocial subject

The subject "is psychic because it is a product of a unique biography of anxiety-provoking life-events and the manner in which they have been unconsciously defended against. It is social in three ways: first, because such defensive activities affect and are affected by discourses (systems of meaning that are a product of the social world); second, because the unconscious defences that we describe are intersubjective processes (that is, they affect and are affected by others); and, third, because of the real events in the external, social world that are discursively and defensively appropriated. It is this psychosocial conception of the subject that we believe is most compatible with a serious engagement in researching the 'what', 'how' and 'who' of [certain] issues...." (Hollway & Jefferson 2013:21)

This conceptualisation would be congruent with my wish to include in my research an attentiveness to the unconscious processes involved in interpersonal relating. However, in thinking about how my research might produce knowledge that includes knowledge about unconscious processes, my epistemological engagement instantly became more complex.

In Hollway's psychosocial research approach she explicates a "radically alternative theorisation of knowing from the cognitive one that underpins dominant research methodology" (2016:1). Hollway acknowledges that psychotherapists "trained in the use of self in knowing their clients (technically the countertransference)" (ibid.) can adapt this practice to become a researcher whose subjectivity is used as an instrument of knowing. However, how such knowing can plausibly be communicated to others, particularly others who are uninformed about and/or unsympathetic to psychoanalytic or psychodynamic theory, is a definite challenge, and one which Hollway has been grappling with in her research and numerous writings over many years. Such a psychosocial epistemology has implications for every aspect of the research process including the conception of the ontology of the research participant (and researcher), the ethics and the data analysis.

Although I wanted to incorporate Hollway's approach into my research as introduced above, I did not want to adopt her methodology exclusively. I did not want to rely as heavily on psychoanalytic theory as she does, nor engage in aspects she has been criticized for (eg. by Spears and Wetherell in Hollway et al 2005) such as overinterpreting the data or positing unconscious 'phantoms' that are pragmatically unnecessary for making sense of the data. In the next section I explain what methodological options I considered and how I came to the choice of methodology that I finally settled upon.

3.2 Methodological options considered

Following my completion of the PEP I was in a state of thorough absorption in its data and all the thinking that that was stimulating in me, and I felt that I wanted to have some freedom to explore where to go next with my topic. As Heuristic Enquiry supports such freedom in choice of direction, that was the first methodology I fully considered. From the Doctoral Research Seminars I understood Heuristic Enquiry as involving the researcher going on a personal journey of discovery, which was just what I wanted to do given my ongoing process of interrogating myself about my experience of my topic and the journey I had already been going on with this. I wanted something, as I recorded in my Research Journal entry of 1 March 2013, with "trial and error capability". However in that same entry I also wrote that "the thing about Heuristic Enquiry that on impressionistic reading puts me off, is all the phenomenologically-based terminology, which sounds pretentious and philosophical rather

than pragmatic" (ibid). From the outset I have been interested in creating work that could form a product such as a book that could be similar to contemporary, popular, but well-researched and well-referenced books on specific topics that are written for a wide general audience rather than a specialist one. An example is Jon Ronson's "The Psychopath Test" (2011), which I saw as a form of Heuristic Enquiry, and I imagined creating something similar, perhaps "The Intelligence Test". So in terms of what sort of knowledge-production or dissemination I value, what I definitely value is creating something well-researched and intellectually rigorous but that is also accessible to a wide, general audience.

After reading the complete Moustakas (1990) volume "Heuristic Research", I decided against that approach: its focus on interrogating one particular kind of experience was not suitable for my research question. I liked that the methodology facilitates a passionate finding out about an experience which is looked at through the lens of the researcher's own experience. However, I had a problem with quite how central the researcher's own experience was meant to be. I recognized that the researcher is always central to the research as an experiencing, analysing subject, but for the content of the researcher's own experience of the research topic to be given centre-stage was not what I was interested in. I felt that, for the kind of wider audience I had in mind, data from a range of sources would be more relevant than a more in-depth or extended focus on one source.

In reading Creswell's (2013) presentation of potential research designs, I ruled out Narrative and Case Study as I didn't want to look just at a gifted individual's life story, or examine a case to show the complexity of an issue – I wanted to try to understand causes and effects, i.e. effects of giftedness in interpersonal relating and within that the causes of interpersonal difficulty. Phenomenology appeared more suitable: it was described as the focus on a concept or phenomenon, and the "essence" of the lived experience of persons about that phenomenon. I could see giftedness as the phenomenon I'm focusing on, with emphasis on the lived experiences of gifted people regarding their interpersonal relating. However, Creswell explained further that the researcher "collects data and reduces it to develop description of the experiences about the phenomenon that all individuals have in common – the essence of the experience" (2013:122). In reading this I identified that I'm interested not just in what individuals all have in common, but in differences, and reasons for differences,

and that the latter was even perhaps what I was most interested in. Furthermore, Creswell (2013:81) asserted that phenomenology focuses on a research subject's conscious experiences, and brackets out the researcher's experience. I was interested in attending not only to conscious experience but also to unconscious processes, and was wanting to use my own experience, as per Hollway's (2016) idea of the researcher using her own subjectivity as an instrument of knowing. I wanted to find out about a phenomenon, but go beyond just describing it. I therefore also ruled out Phenomenology.

3.3 Methodology chosen: Constructivist Grounded Theory

Creswell (2013:124) writes that one of the questions to ask in choosing an approach is, what is needed most by the scholarly literature in one's field? As I have established in Chapter 2, although in the giftedness literature there is a ubiquitous preoccupation with interpersonal difficulty, what is missing is attention to the unconscious intersubjective processes involved, and an explanation as to why some gifted individuals experience interpersonal difficulty and others do not. I started thinking therefore that what the field most needs is a theory that could explain this.

A methodology that precisely aims to build theory, but theory that is grounded in research data, is Grounded Theory, originally devised by Glaser & Strauss in the 1960s (Gray 2009; Creswell 2013; Silverman 2013a). I envisaged that my theory could show how specific experiences (interpersonal), and specific actions (including intrapsychic such as decisions, defences) lead to individual outcomes. Creswell (2013:88) state that "Grounded theory is a good approach to use when there is not a theory available to explain or understand a process", or when theories may be present but are incomplete "because they do not address potentially valuable variables...of interest to the researcher". In my topic, it is psychotherapy knowledge such as unconscious processes that is missing and which I wish to contribute.

In further looking at what Grounded Theory entailed, I didn't like its positivist assumptions as presented by Strauss & Corbin (1990, 1998) nor the prescriptiveness of complex systematic steps to be adhered to in conducting it. However, as I wrote in my Learning Agreement (Falck 2014:9), this was very much solved for me by Charmaz (2006):

[Charmaz] has a constructivist take on Grounded Theory. She removes it from a positivist paradigm, placing it in an interpretive one (Ibid:130). She emphasises the flexibility of the steps used (Ibid:9) and their versatility (Ibid:12), that they are not to be followed as prescriptive. Instead of “discovering” a theory as per Glaser & Strauss (1967, cited in Charmaz 2006:10), you are “constructing” a theory (Charmaz 2006:10). And instead of just analysing your research participants’ contributions, you use reflexivity to also analyse your contribution as researcher (Ibid:31). In addition, Charmaz’s approach does not preclude using Hollway & Jefferson’s (2013) conceptualisation of the psychosocial subject: she stresses that Grounded Theory methods “can complement other approaches to qualitative data analysis rather than stand in opposition to them” (Charmaz 2006:9). Neither does her approach preclude attending to unconscious processes: she invites this dimension by mentioning the importance of “hidden” phenomena (Ibid:130, 20).

Charmaz (2006) also portrays Grounded Theory as being a ‘make it up as you go along’ process, which is the sort of trial-and-error process that had motivated my initial attraction to Heuristic Enquiry. She describes seeing along the way what is needed next, continually looping between data collection and data analysis, and undertaking “memoing” or memo-writing (Ibid:72-94 – see excerpts in Table 4 below, reproduced from Falck 2014) throughout the research process before finally bringing the project to a conclusion.

Table 4: Memo-writing

“Memos chart, record, and detail a major analytic phase of our [research] journey. We start by writing about our codes and data and move upward to theoretical categories and keep writing memos throughout the research process. Writing memos expedites your analytic work and accelerates your productivity....When you write memos, you stop and analyse your ideas about the codes in any – and every – way that occurs to you during the moment....Memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue. Through conversing with yourself while memo-writing, new ideas and insights arise during the act of writing.” (Charmaz 2006:72)

I realised that in my state of intense absorption with my data during and since the PEP, memo-writing is what I had already been naturally doing. In choosing Constructivist Grounded Theory as my methodology, I would be able to properly incorporate my PEP as the first phase of a much larger Grounded Theory project and build on it further for Part Two of the doctorate. In combining a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology with a conceptualisation of my research participants as psychosocial subjects, I would be able to examine not just the more explicit cognitive and behavioural aspects of interpersonal relating that the current giftedness literature reports on, but also the more hidden, harder to

articulate, nuances of intersubjective experience that Psychodynamic and Systemic approaches provide a language for, but which is currently unrepresented in the giftedness literature.

* * *

In this chapter I have explained the epistemological stance that underpins this project, and detailed the process that I went through in considering various methodological options. I have argued for the precise suitability of Constructivist Grounded Theory as my chosen methodology, combined with a Psychosocial conceptualisation of my research participants.

When I considered the prospect of Phenomenology as a methodology, my reaction was “Yes, I can do that”. With Grounded Theory, my reaction was “Wow, actually very exciting, and what a respectable challenge – *can* I do that?” The next chapter shows how I set about tackling that challenge: I show how the philosophical underpinnings detailed above are put into action, explicating the research methods that were carried out.

Chapter 4 – Research methods

This chapter details the way the data were gathered and analysed, which then led to more abstract conceptualisation and theory construction. The next three chapters (chapters 5, 6, and 7) present and theorise the research findings. As it is fundamental to the methodology of Constructivist Grounded Theory that the theory constructed should be grounded in the research data that has been collected, I have devised a system whereby data codes are numbered and correspond with identically numbered files that contain relevant excerpts from the interview transcripts. By this system, wherever a data code or category is mentioned, the associated raw data can be referred back to. Where conceptual work is done this is also linked with the data codes and categories that can be traced, via the identically numbered files, back to the excerpts from the original interview transcripts. I have included a sample of these files in the appendices, using the same numbering as the data codes and files (for example Appendix A1, “Gifted qualities”, and Appendix E3, “Improving interpersonal understanding and skill”). For ease of reference, this chapter is structured so that section 4.3, “Data analysis, memo-writing, and constructing of original theory”, is the section in which the explanation is contained of how the raw data has given rise to the research findings that are later presented and theorised.

4.1 Qualitative research design

In order to investigate each of the three elements of the research question, a qualitative research design was used that incorporated two research instruments – semi-structured interviews and textual analysis.

An overview of how the research methods that were used targeted each element of the research question is shown in Table 5 below. This table is adapted from my Learning Agreement (Falck 2014:10), as the Learning Agreement was describing what would be done and this dissertation is reporting on what has been done.

Table 5: Research Design

	Part Two research question	Related research method employed
a)	In gifted adults, what brings about interpersonal difficulty;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected by undertaking semi-structured individual interviews with gifted adults about their interpersonal relating, and by reading extant texts on gifted adults' interpersonal difficulties. • Analysis of interview data (from the 16 No. PEP interviews plus 4 No. further interviews) and textual data to produce a categorisation of different orders of interpersonal difficulty experienced by gifted adults and an explanation of how interpersonal difficulty appears to arise.
b)	how is it perpetuated;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosocial interpretation of the above data, applying psychotherapy knowledge on unconscious processes to the data so as to elucidate how interpersonal difficulty might be perpetuated in gifted adults' lives even though they experience it as problematic and might have no conscious intention of perpetuating it.
c)	and how can it be overcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of gifted adults' own accounts of their experiences of overcoming interpersonal difficulty as told in the interviews plus analysis of depictions of this in extant texts.

4.1.1 Rationale for using semi-structured interviews (20 No.)

I chose interviews as my main method of data collection because of their proven ability to access research subjects' difficulties in interpersonal relating rather than risking accessing only the defences they have in place against the anxiety of interpersonal difficulty (see section 3.1). Also Creswell (2013) mentions choosing research approaches that play to one's strengths. My training as a psychotherapist, twenty years of practice as a psychotherapist, and ongoing teaching and supervising of trainee therapists, have developed in me skill and experience at one-to-one confidential conversation that facilitates depth exploration and the containment of anxiety, and this is very applicable to and useful in the conducting of research interviewing. Hollway (2016) too recognises the strengths that trained psychotherapists can bring to the role of research interviewer.

Interviews were semi-structured so as to help focus the conversation whilst avoiding the rigidity of a fully-structured interview which could exclude participants from offering responses unforeseeable by the researcher during the designing of the research instrument. In my PEP interviews I gathered data that were far too extensive for inclusion within the scope of that project, but which were ideal for Constructivist Grounded Theory, for which you collect “rich data” that are “detailed, focused, full” (Charmaz 2006:14). There were 12 questions used in the PEP interviews (highlighted on the PEP interview schedule, Appendix 2) which were not analysed for the PEP project as the latter focused on the workplace whereas these 12 questions pertained to developmental experiences and experiences around giftedness and interpersonal relationships in general. As Constructivist Grounded Theory specifically allows for returning to data already collected so as to make fresh coding (Charmaz 2006:71), a return to the 24 hours of PEP interview material was approved by the Doctorate’s Programme Approval Panel as my first data collection method for Part Two of the programme. It was also approved for me to carry out a further four interviews which would bring the total number of interviews conducted for my whole Doctoral project to 20. As I wrote in my Learning Agreement (Falck 2014:11), a figure of 20 interviews is

consistent with the recommendations of Creswell (2013:86), and Green & Thorogood (2009:120) who maintain that "the experience of most qualitative researchers is that in interview studies little that is 'new' comes out of transcripts after you have interviewed 20 or so people".

4.1.2 Rationale for using textual analysis

I selected textual analysis of extant texts as a second research instrument because by this means I would be able to access much more data through others’ published work than I could collect on my own. Also, various writings on gifted adults visit the theme of interpersonal difficulty but I have not found a source that brings all of these together in one place and analyses them. Charmaz (2014) asserts that the use of documents as data is one of the key Constructivist Grounded Theory methods of collecting rich data. For the textual analysis I analysed extracts of the published books and journal articles reviewed in Chapter 2 that related specifically to interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults.

In the next sections I explain in detail the methods of sampling, data collection and data analysis used, as well as the related issues of ethics, quality control, and the limitations of the study.

4.2 Sampling and data collection

How does one recruit a sample of gifted adults? That is a question that Yermish (2010) addresses very fully in her PhD thesis entitled “Cheetahs on the Couch”. “Cheetahs” is a reference to Tolan’s (1996) article “Is it a Cheetah?” on the identifying characteristics of gifted individuals. Tolan’s (1996) central thesis is that giftedness is to do with the nature of a person rather than to do with performance, and likens this to cheetahs: by their nature cheetahs can run very fast, but if a cheetah is confined in a zoo enclosure and is never seen to run very fast, is it still a cheetah? Yermish writes:

...I answered one questioner, “When you define ‘African-American’ for me, I’ll be happy to define ‘gifted.’” My point....was that not every commonly used term has a clean and clear definition, yet we can still think constructively about these ill-defined people in the theoretical, clinical, and research literature... Like many other aspects of identity, giftedness does not and probably cannot have sharp boundaries. People disagree about what the proper basis for the boundaries would be, where the boundaries should be drawn, who should be allowed to decide whether a given individual is or is not a member of the group, what role the individual’s own self-perception should play in that decision, whether acknowledgement of one’s membership to oneself or professing that membership to others is a good thing or not, how one can identify other members of the group, whether or how one can move into and out of membership, and even whether the group exists as a real thing. Naming issues are highly contentious. (2010:10-11)

Clearly the issues involved are many and complex. Yermish makes use of Ossorio’s (2006) method of paradigmatic case formulation. This involves defining a particular identity classification by creating a description of that identity that is “anchored by a case example which most observers would agree clearly falls within the class” (Yermish 2010:13). This description forms the ‘paradigmatic case’ of what comprises that particular identity classification. Various parameters of this paradigmatic case can then be changed, but the more extensive the transformations, the more arguable the case’s membership of the identity classification becomes. For the purposes of this project, I considered it would be too difficult to justify by what criteria I had evaluated a prospective research participant as being gifted if he or she was not identifiable by some externally noticeable criteria. This means that my recruitment criteria were biased towards performance criteria. Based on my work with gifted individuals to date as well as my review of the literature (Chapter 2, and see also section 1.3), my paradigmatic case of a gifted individual is someone who:

- a) has at any time scored top 2% results in a standardised IQ test; and
- b) has regularly manifested performance in at least one domain that is unusually high relative to that of his or her peers and/or seniors and relative to effort, in the past and/or currently; and
- c) has regularly had others respond to him or her (formally or informally) in ways that express their perception of him or her as having outstanding ability, in the past and/or currently.

Changes to this can allow for any of (a), (b) or (c) to stand alone and still be classifiable as gifted. What would cast doubt on the classification however is if there were transformations to the parameters of time and of relativity: for example, if someone performs a rapid solving of a complicated mathematical problem only on one occasion, or if everyone of their age group and/or younger than them is solving the same level of complicated problem equally rapidly and with equal regularity, then the classification as gifted would not hold.

My first 16 interviewees fulfilled criterion (a) above, as confirmed by the fact that they were all members of Mensa, whose sole criterion for gaining membership is earning 98th percentile or higher results on a supervised, standardised IQ test. During interview it became apparent that all of those interviewees additionally fulfilled criterion (b) and/or (c). These first 16 interviewees comprised a sub-sample of a much larger group who had self-selected to participate in my research by answering an advert that was distributed to Mensa members (Appendix 3). The 16 chosen for interview were chosen as follows (Falck 2014:12):

...I acknowledged individual difference in a manner unprecedented in the literature on gifted adults, by selecting two males and two females from each of the four different attachment styles. In addition, interviewees were from a range of national origins, occupations, and age groups. This is a helpful initial sampling strategy for Grounded Theory, accessing a range of differences so as to be able to test one's emerging theory against different cases.

For my four final interviews, however, I had agreed with the Doctorate's Programme Approval Panel that I would specifically not recruit Mensa members (Falck 2014:12), so that if the data was in any way skewed through interviewees having voluntarily joined a high IQ society, this would not apply to the data from the final four interviews. The final four interviewees were approached individually on the basis of being classified as gifted by criterion (b) and/or (c) above, although in interview it emerged that sometimes criterion (a)

also applied, and in accordance with Grounded Theory’s concept of theoretical sampling (Charmaz 2006, 2014). As Charmaz (2014:197) writes, “Initial sampling in grounded theory gets you started; theoretical sampling guides you where to go”. Table 6 below elaborates on this further (reproduced from Falck 2014:12).

Table 6: Theoretical sampling

<p>Theoretical sampling is the “strategy of obtaining further selective data to refine and fill out your major categories.” (Charmaz 2006:12)</p> <p>It “involves starting with data, constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examining these ideas through further empirical inquiry.” (Ibid:102)</p> <p>“You choose the next people to talk to or the next cases to find based upon the [theoretical] analysis and you don’t waste your time with all sorts of things that have nothing to do with your developing theory” (Jane Hood, in Charmaz 2006:101).</p>
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Charmaz writes (2014:200): “When you engage in theoretical sampling you seek statements, events, or cases that will illuminate your categories.” Table 7 below shows which facts about each of the final four research participants caused me to select them for interview, and how I saw these facts as being of relevance to the theoretical categories that were emerging through the process I was engaged in of iterative data analysis and theory development.

Table 7: Selection of final four interviewees using theoretical sampling.

Interviewee reference no.	Facts of interest that caused me to select that person for interview	Emerging theoretical category of relevance
2.1	Over time, in a professional context, I heard this person – who had achieved highly in several domains which he then in some sense moved away from – making statements about his withdrawal from opportunities to ‘get the top position’, and his concern about others perceiving him as ‘too big’.	Holding back on giftedness because of own guilt in relation to others.
2.2	This is someone who had served four years in prison: a psychotherapist colleague who worked with her in prison reported on her being ‘very bright’ and having had a significantly difficult upbringing.	Disavowal of giftedness because of disillusioning, even traumatic, interpersonal experiences.
2.3	A colleague spoke of this person as having “extremely high IQ” but “channelling it well” and being “very successful”, and compared this person with a relative who	Fully expressing giftedness unhindered by interpersonal anxieties.

	had high IQ but had failed to find good expression of it in his life and was struggling.	
2.4	This person is a psychotherapist (in the USA) who specialises in working with giftedness, and who herself is identified as gifted by her surrounding community.	I anticipated that this person could yield data that could clarify and enhance all of my categories, because of the fact that she had consciously interrogated her personal experience as a gifted individual and then integrated it into a professional expertise which she had developed over many years of working with numerous gifted clients.

It is important to note that as the aim of my project was to investigate interpersonal relating in gifted adults, I was not employing a methodology that would have benefited from a control group: what I needed was research subjects whose experience of interpersonal difficulty could be investigated. Neither was I sampling specifically for representativeness of the whole gifted population: even if gifted adults who experience interpersonal difficulty should turn out to be in a minority, it is that minority then that I am concerned with, with the aim of understanding how the interpersonal difficulty that they experience arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome.

The 20 interviewees (10 male and 10 female) ranged in age from 26 to 58 (M=38.7) and were highly cosmopolitan, representing 11 different national origins, with the majority having experienced education and/or work in different countries. See Table 8 below.

Table 8: Profile of interviewees

National origins	England (7), Wales (1), Ireland (1), Spain (1), Sweden (2), Germany (1), Russian-German (1), Hong Kong Chinese (1), New Zealand (1), USA (2), India (2)
Education	All had at least one tertiary educational qualification, with 30% either already having achieved or currently working on a PhD.
Sectors of occupation	Financial, medical, law, local authorities, academia, trade, professional services, IT, human resources, arts and entertainment (music, film and television).

Attainment within career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some had reached levels of substantial seniority within their occupations, for example overseeing up to 250 staff globally, or in law being called to the Bar in more than one country. • Two had been headhunted internationally, one of them on more than one occasion. One had received several musical awards. <p>These achievements came at relatively young ages, given that the eldest interviewee was aged 58.</p>
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All 20 interviewees read an Information Sheet on the research (Appendix 4 shows the Information Sheet that the first 16 interviewees received, and Appendix 5 that which the final 4 received). All interviewees filled in and signed a Participant Information form (Appendix 6) and an Informed Consent form (Appendix 7). Interviews took place at the researcher's office in Central London (14 No.), by remote video (Skype) (5 No.), or at a venue of their choice (1 No.). The literature referred to (King & Horrocks 2010:83-85) showed no difference in implications for the data collection of it being carried out by face-to-face interview in real time either using or not using Skype technology. Each interview lasted for 1-2 hours and was audio-recorded and transcribed. See Appendix 26 for the semi-structured interview schedule used for the final four interviews.

4.3 Data analysis, memo-writing, and constructing of original theory

In writing up this project, at first I divided "data analysis", "memo-writing", and "constructing of original theory" into three separate headings. I then realised that they cannot be separated from each other, because the research process I engaged in involved an ongoing iteration of all three of these activities. And a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology does prescribe looping from each of these activities to the others and then back again repeatedly, with "data collection" being another activity that is included in this (Charmaz 2014). I am therefore writing this up in a manner that reflects this process rather than dealing with each activity separately.

I began the data analysis process by returning to the 16 PEP interviews and making fresh coding with the Part Two research question in mind (i.e. how does interpersonal difficulty arise, how is it perpetuated, and how can it be overcome). In Constructivist Grounded Theory, coding begins with open coding, and then these initial open codes are grouped into focused codes. Table 9 below shows the focused codes I arrived at for each part of the research question through this first round of data analysis. So as to provide an audit trail, the numbers

identifying the research data codes in Table 9 correspond to identically numbered files that contain relevant excerpts from the transcripts of the source interviews. A sample of these files has been included as appendices (Appendices A1, B2, C1, C3, D1, D2, E1, E3).

Table 9: Research data focused codes

Research Question	Focused codes
	A1. Gifted qualities
	A2. Place of giftedness in identity
	A3. Importance of utilising abilities
	A4. Implications for well-being
Arising	B1. Workplace satisfaction
of interpersonal	B2. Differences in place/context
difficulty	C1. Others recognising giftedness
	C2. Realising you're different
	C3. Effort and speed
	D1. Belonging or not belonging
	D2. Interpersonal difficulty
Perpetuating	
of interpersonal	
difficulty	D3. Transference from past to present
	E1. Hiding self
Overcoming	E2. Change of environment
of interpersonal	
difficulty	E3. Improving interpersonal understanding and skill

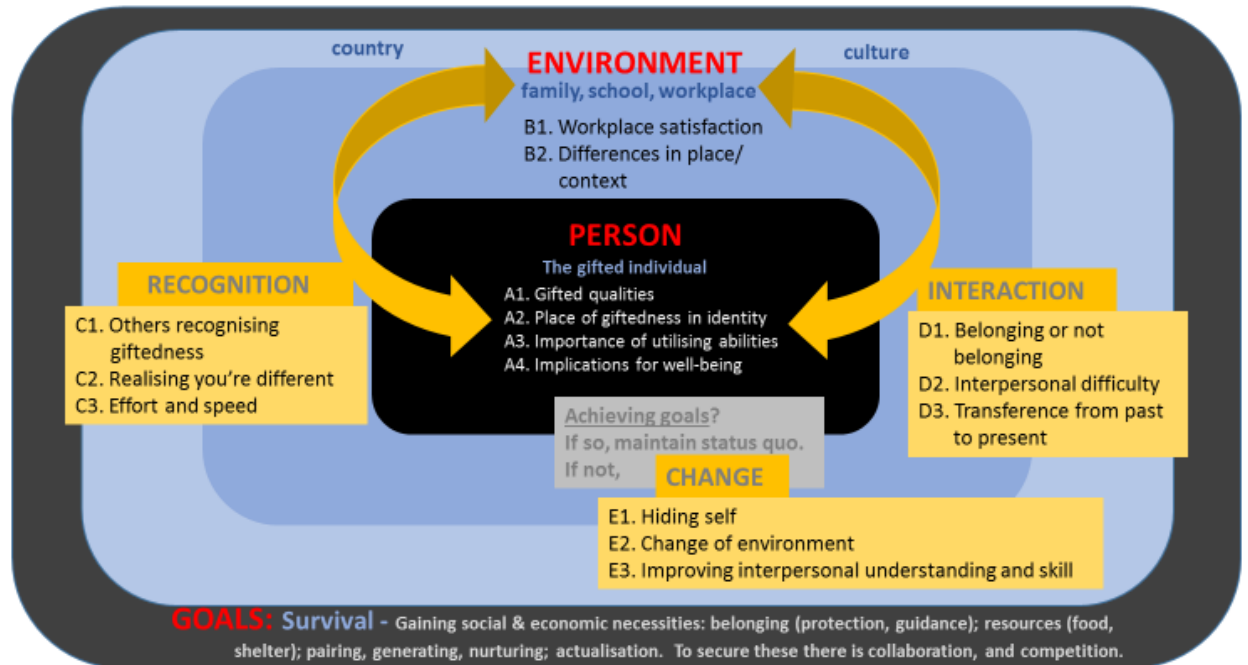
The next part of the data analysis process involved distilling theoretical categories out of these focussed codes. Table 10 below shows the categories I arrived at:

Table 10: Research data focused codes and theoretical categories

Research Question	Focused codes	Theoretical Categories
	A1. Gifted qualities	A. Person (nature of the person)
	A2. Place of giftedness in identity	
	A3. Importance of utilising abilities	
	A4. Implications for well-being	
Arising of interpersonal difficulty	B1. Workplace satisfaction	B. Environment (nature of the environment)
	B2. Differences in place/context	
	C1. Others recognising giftedness	C. Recognition (recognition by person and environment of their respective natures)
C2. Realising you're different		
C3. Effort and speed		
Perpetuating of interpersonal difficulty	D1. Belonging or not belonging	D. Interaction (interaction between person and environment)
	D2. Interpersonal difficulty	
	D3. Transference from past to present	
Overcoming of interpersonal difficulty	E1. Hiding self	E. Change (person making a change)
	E2. Change of environment	
	E3. Improving interpersonal understanding and skill	

Through this process, I was constantly ruminating about how all of these elements related to each other. Holton (2010) describes this process as requiring trust in the “power of preconscious processing for conceptual emergence”. As the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology involves constructing original theory that is underpinned by, or grounded in, research findings, through my many months of analysing the research data I created a theoretical structure that shows how the above-presented research data codes and categories dynamically relate to each other. As this structure involves an ‘overview’ organising model, I named it simply the Overview Model of Giftedness. This is depicted in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: The Overview Model of Giftedness – incorporating research data focused codes and theoretical categories



This model will be fully explicated in the next chapter (Chapter 5).

I then undertook another layer of analysis that involved looking specifically at the “Interpersonal difficulty” codes (Appendix D2). Through months of living with all of this data and constantly thinking about it, I kept finding myself fixating on something that one of my research interviewees said in the course of explaining what she saw as the root of the interpersonal difficulty she had suffered. She said:

It's like the emperor's child, the emperor's clothes, the child doesn't want to tell other people they are stupid, he just says the emperor is naked, and I think when you grow up as a gifted child and people not recognising that, which happened to me, maybe that's why I'm so aware of that, is they get irritated by that and they push it down, which happened to me... (No.41, p.10)

My contemplation of this included engaging in memo-writing (Charmaz 2014). The box below contains an example of a memo, showing how my writing of memos involved my processing of an amalgamation of reflexivity, reading, and research data.

Memo dated 2 January 2014

My thoughts on the Office Politics book [James 2013] and how it relates to my research project, are mingled with my reflexivity. I'm thinking about, in my own life, my naivety and ineptitude in politics.... And I think of the parallels with my target population, as also exemplified in my patient TH. The gifted person thing of lack of artifice, honesty, strong moral integrity – the “child” of my emperor analogy – and how this makes such a person disastrous at politics. There is definitely an angle here. What is it that makes a gifted person so “straightforward”, so unable to read the complexities, and so resistant to accepting the complexities, of the ordinary dissimulation of human social intercourse? This relates to the difficulty with conversation, in so far as conversation often involves avoiding or concealing, rather than engaging with, real issues. And there is something about how this relates to emotional intelligence, and the Asperger's thing. A certain kind of intense, sensitive, naïve person, not made for this world. But can they learn, and do they want to learn, to better adapt? And can I help?

...The thing of being authentic, or learning skill that doesn't annihilate authenticity, but how purist is a gifted person, can they see the difference between learning skill and forgoing authenticity?

Through this process I eventually came to name my conceptualisation of the two main orders of interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults “Child” and “Emperor” (naïve child, arrogant emperor). I then went back to all the “Interpersonal difficulty” interview excerpts and tested how these concepts fitted with the data, inserting “Child” or “Emperor” in the far left column (see Appendix F, “Child and Emperor”). In Constructivist Grounded Theory, when a code is made up of the language that a research participant has used it is called an “in vivo” code (Charmaz 2014:134). In my case I constructed two in vivo theoretical concepts. This Child and Emperor conceptualisation is fully explained in Chapter 6, section 6.1.

I later used memo-writing to work out how these concepts related to my Overview Model of Giftedness. This model accepts Attachment Theory's demonstration of the importance of security. It shows how the fact of interviewees' giftedness could affect their experiences in relation to others of belonging, competition, and collaboration, and cause interpersonal difficulty. In the memo shown in the box below I was wondering about how such interpersonal difficulty can be overcome.

Memo dated 16 January 2017

Are naivety and arrogance both problematic because they trigger security-related reactions, activating people's attachment systems? Does priming an ally interpretation of relational status affect naivety and arrogance? Is it necessary to “cure” naivety and arrogance **because** they get in the way of collaboration by triggering security-related phenomena? Or are they unrelated? Think about this.....

This thinking is reflected in section 6.3.

In the data analysis processes presented above, my treatment of the data involved analysing the readily accessible cognitive and behavioural aspects of my interviewees' interpersonal relating as reported to me by them. What I wanted to do next, was find a way of analysing the more hidden, harder to articulate, nuances of interpersonal experience, the unconscious processes (as defined in section 1.6) that Psychodynamic and Systemic approaches provide a language for, but which is virtually unrepresented in the giftedness literature. This would involve not just describing the data, but undertaking a Psychosocial (see section 3.1) interpretation of the data. This would allow me to analyse the interesting links I had noticed between interviewees' developmental experiences and their current workplace experiences; how different individuals perceived and presented themselves differently in relation to their giftedness and interpersonal relations; and how all of this manifested in the way the interviewee and interviewer (myself) interacted with each other. I realised that to interpret these aspects of the interviews, I would need, as Hollway & Jefferson (2008) advocate, to look at the interview as a whole or gestalt. Hollway reminded me (2017, personal communication):

There are so many different approaches to data analysis and none is 'correct'. One approach...suggests analysing data through three layers of questions: in terms of its content (what was presented); in terms of its performative qualities (how it was presented) and for its unstated, partly unconscious and socio-cultural significance (why it was said in the way that it was).

The traditional qualitative research technique of fragmenting the data from several interviews into codes and then reconstituting these fragments into an across-cases abstraction causes the data to lose its within-case coherence (Hollway & Jefferson 2008). I therefore went back and read through each original transcript again, copied out extracts that pertained particularly to the research question, and made notes (in blue) of my own feelings, reactions, observations, thoughts, and ideas in relation to the interview material (see Appendix 8 for a sample page from such an analysis document). Next, I wanted to demonstrate in action the kinds of unconscious intersubjective processes that I wanted to argue were a contributant to the perpetuation of interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults. To do this, I decided to present one of these analyses in full, showing in detail how the

intersubjective processes unfolded between the interviewee and myself as interviewer from the beginning to the end of the interview. I named this “the barrister’s case”, and it appears in Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.

From the analysis documents described above, I then wrote up a short interpretative story, like a brief case study, for each interviewee. In contemplating how the abstracted aspects of these interpretative stories related to each other, noticing trends and having ideas about how to conceptualise these, I was memo-writing and starting to think of how to explain the categories, i.e. construct a theory to explain what the analysis was showing. I condensed the kinds of interpersonal relating evident in these interpretative stories into a four-quadrant model titled “Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating”, which is presented in Chapter 7. It was around this point that I began to engage in theoretical sampling. This led to the recruitment of the four further research participants, the carrying out of the four final interviews, and the carrying out of textual analysis (described below), to see how all of this related to the theory I was developing of The Overview Model of Giftedness, the Child and Emperor, and the Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating four-quadrant model. Throughout this I was engaging in constant comparison between the already collected data, the newly collected data, and my conceptual work (Holton 2010). I also used a talk I gave to Mensa members on 19 August 2016 as an opportunity to informally test out my emerging theorising with an audience of gifted adults.

The way I used textual analysis was as part of the theoretical sampling strategy of Constructivist Grounded Theory. This meant that instead of treating it as data which I took through the preliminary stages of initial coding in order to try to find categories, what I was doing with it was searching through texts to find data to flesh out existing categories. Charmaz (2014:205) describes how, for theoretical sampling, you need to have tentative analytic categories to pursue, and that you conduct theoretical sampling “after you have already defined and tentatively conceptualized relevant ideas that indicate areas to probe with more data” (Ibid.). It was therefore appropriate that after I had already sketched out my Overview Model of Giftedness, Child and Emperor categories, and Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model, I commenced the textual analysis. I studied extant texts (the published books, journal papers, and internet sources cited in the literature review in Chapter

2) that contained representations of gifted adults' interpersonal difficulties in order to gather more data with which I could probe these theoretical frameworks and see whether the further data would fit within them, flesh them out, or challenge them. How the textual analysis supports my theorising is presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

4.4 Ethics

This research was approved by the DREC (Departmental Research Ethics Committee of Metanoia's Post-Qualification Doctorates Department) and ratified by the Metanoia Research Ethics Committee (MREC). The participation of the first 16 interviewees, who were all members of Mensa, was also approved by Mensa. The research was carried out in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants (2006). I am registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office and all data was handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), being stored securely and separately from participants' names and contact details to protect participants' identities from being linked with any of the data collected. A signed confidentiality agreement was obtained from the typing service that assisted with transcribing the interviews (Appendix 9). The typing service had no access to the names or contact details of any of the interviewees.

Table 11 below shows the potential benefits and risks to participants of their participation, also listing the mitigating strategies that were employed to minimise risk. The main potential benefits related to having the opportunity to explore confidentially a topic of personal relevance. The main potential risks related to any negative effects that such exploration might instigate such as difficult memories, thoughts or feelings. The main mitigating strategies were that full prior information was provided to, and informed consent obtained from, all participants; participants were made aware of their right not to answer any question and to withdraw from participation at any point; and every participant was offered a free debrief session, up to four free sessions in a coaching format if there were any negative effects to be attended to, plus sign-posting to any further services necessary.

Table 11: Ethical considerations

Potential Benefits to Participants	Potential Risks to Participants
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being provided with the opportunity to explore a topic that is of personal interest to participant. 2. Having the opportunity to talk confidentially about an aspect of their lives that might be underacknowledged or rarely if ever discussed with others. 3. It could act as a stress-reliever, to 'offload' private thoughts/struggles/etc. about this kind of experience in a safe space, anonymity preserved, and be heard/acknowledged/validated. 4. Having the opportunity to discover how their experience relates to that of others who are in similar situations, ie. feeling less alone in their situation. 5. Participation could offer participants helpful ways of structuring their thinking about their experience. 6. If they find the experience beneficial and/or useful they might use it as a starting point for finding further opportunities to engage in related activities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whilst talking about the subject matter, especially if for the first time, participants might encounter unpleasant surprises about what they find or feel. 2. Talking about things might change something for a participant in a way that they find unsettling/disturbing/unpleasant. 3. Participants might not enjoy the process or find it or the results interesting or useful and might feel they have wasted their time. 4. They might be disappointed in/disturbed by the results, not feel it gave them what they hoped for/expected. 5. Participating in the research might make them more self-conscious about these aspects of their experience, which might be experienced as a negative thing by them and/or by others around them.
<p><u>Mitigating Strategies</u></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participants will be given full prior information about the study so they have an accurate sense of what will be involved. b. Informed consent will be obtained that warns about the potential risks. c. Interviewer skill will keep the level of exploration entered into appropriate to the limitations of the interview setting. d. Participants will be informed that they can choose not to answer any question they would prefer not to answer. e. Participants will be informed that they have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. f. A free debriefing session will be offered to every participant following their participation in the study. g. If necessary, in addition up to four free sessions in a coaching format will be made available for dealing with any difficulties that might have arisen as a result of their participation. According to the interviewee's choice, the coaching sessions could be taken up with the interviewer or with someone else whom the interviewer could arrange. h. Sign-posting will be provided to any further services that might be indicated as necessary eg. counselling or psychotherapy. i. Participants will be sent the draft research report to ensure they are satisfied with the accuracy and anonymity of how their contributions have been incorporated. 	

- | |
|--|
| j. Every participant will be given the option of having the final research report emailed to them. |
|--|

In practice these measures proved satisfactory. The respondents expressed interest in the study and eagerness to participate. They were given the opportunity towards the end of the interview to comment on what the experience had been like for them, and all who gave feedback reported having found the experience enjoyable and worthwhile (see interview excerpts, Appendix 10). No participants reported ill-effects or required sign-posting to other services. Only one interviewee requested the offered debrief, and one (other) interviewee requested the four free coaching sessions (not because of experiencing negative effects from the research participation but out of a wish to explore the issues further). I carried these four sessions out with her over a period of a few weeks at my Central London consulting room which is the same venue where the research interview had taken place.

A further ethical consideration arises in relation to how the interview data were processed. The informed consent forms that my research participants signed did not include mention of the nature of interpretation of the data that I as researcher would engage in. Using a Psychosocial approach in interpreting the data is, as Hollway asserts (2005:179), “the best way of going beyond superficially descriptive” analyses of subjectivity. However, it also involves venturing into contentious territory, because to suggest that interpersonal processes are at play that individuals are being influenced by but are unconscious of could be perceived as objectionable, and such interpretation has attracted criticism (e.g. Spears and Wetherell in Hollway et al 2005). A person could however also find such interpretation illuminating and even helpful, which is after all the *raison d’être* of psychoanalysis. There is the risk that any kind of research findings or interpretation of data could displease participants in and consumers of research, but for the most part research is entered into by researcher and research participants in the good faith that something worthwhile can come out of it. Hollway (2013:90) argues that for something worthwhile to come out of it, discomfort or even distress might have to be gone through and that this is not necessarily a bad thing. However, the discomfort or distress that the interpretation of unconscious processes might trigger in the course of an ongoing psychotherapeutic relationship can be attended to and worked through in a manner that a research setting does not allow for. This is one of the reasons that crossing over such methods from a clinical to a research context

has to be thought about carefully (see Clarke 2002). The informed consent form that my research participants signed (Appendix 7) included the statement that they understood that they might encounter unexpected personal feelings or consequences that they might experience as negative. The word “consequences” can reasonably be understood to include the nature of data interpretation that is undertaken by the researcher or by anyone else with whom the researcher has shared the data (the anonymous sharing of data verbally or in writing is something that the research participants signed their consent to).

The main point here is to try to minimise the risk of negative effects. In my use of a Psychosocial approach in interpreting the data I have felt a responsibility towards my interviewees and I have been careful to maintain the integrity of the data and only propose readings that can be well-justified by the material, or in Hollway’s words, to “take the analysis only as far as evidence permits” (2013:90). In Hollway’s (2015) interpretations, she includes as evidence the interviewee’s pacing, tone, pitch, speed, and pressure of speech, and body language. I did not include such phenomena as evidence, as this would not be able to be verified by anyone who had not been present to witness the interview or had at least listened to the audio-recording of the interview. I therefore applied the rule that I would not make any interpretation that could not be supported by the content of the interview transcripts alone. Throughout my data interpretation I have also applied the ethical principles that Hollway (2013:90) argues for of honesty, sympathy and respect.

Ethical considerations do not arise in relation to my undertaking of textual analysis as I only used texts – books and journal articles – that are already in the public domain.

4.5 Quality control

The interviews showed a high degree of accordance with Kvale & Brinkmann’s quality criteria for interviews (2009:164) – see Table 12 below (adapted from Falck 2013:12).

Table 12: Quality criteria for interviews.

Criteria	Examples
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A pattern of short interviewer verbalisations followed by much more extensive interviewee responses.	See Appendix 11
A great extent of “spontaneous, rich, specific and relevant” interviewee replies (Kvale & Brinkman 2009:164).	Evident in Appendix 11 and in Appendices A1, B2, C3, D1, D2, E3.
The interviewer throughout checking meanings and understandings, clarifying, summarising back to the person and obtaining their verification of the summary’s accuracy.	See Appendix 12
Interviewer picking up internal contradictions during interviews and querying them.	See Appendix 13

An audit trail (Gray 2009:516) was maintained throughout should subsequent scrutiny be required. All the chapters of the write-up in draft form were critiqued by my academic advisor, at least one of my two academic consultants and sometimes both, and two ‘critical friends’. Feedback indicated that the research met validity criteria of coherence (Stiles 1993) and grounding in examples (Elliot et al 1999).

4.6 Limitations

This project is not using a control group to try to ascertain whether a sample of gifted adults experiences more interpersonal difficulty than a sample from a general population. It is also not seeking to establish what the frequency of interpersonal difficulty is within a sample of gifted adults. What it is doing is studying the interpersonal difficulty that has been reported to arise within a sample of gifted adults, and to investigate how that interpersonal difficulty arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome. Although the experiences my interviewees described are typical of the experiences of gifted individuals that are represented in the giftedness literature, because my sample is small and largely self-selected with self-reporting, it can only be firmly claimed that my sample is illustrative – rather than representative – of gifted adults.

The cross-sectional design of the study is a limitation, because it is examining only what participants said about themselves at that one point in time, with no corroboration by other investigative techniques and no follow-up. Having a sole person (myself) as interviewer and analyser of the data from the interviews and textual analysis is also a limitation. The theory constructed in this project, which is grounded in the data from interviews with 20 gifted adults and the analysing of literature and research on giftedness, comprises a scholarly rather

than a scientific contribution. Further research would need to be done to ascertain how generalizable this project's findings are to greater numbers of gifted adults.

* * *

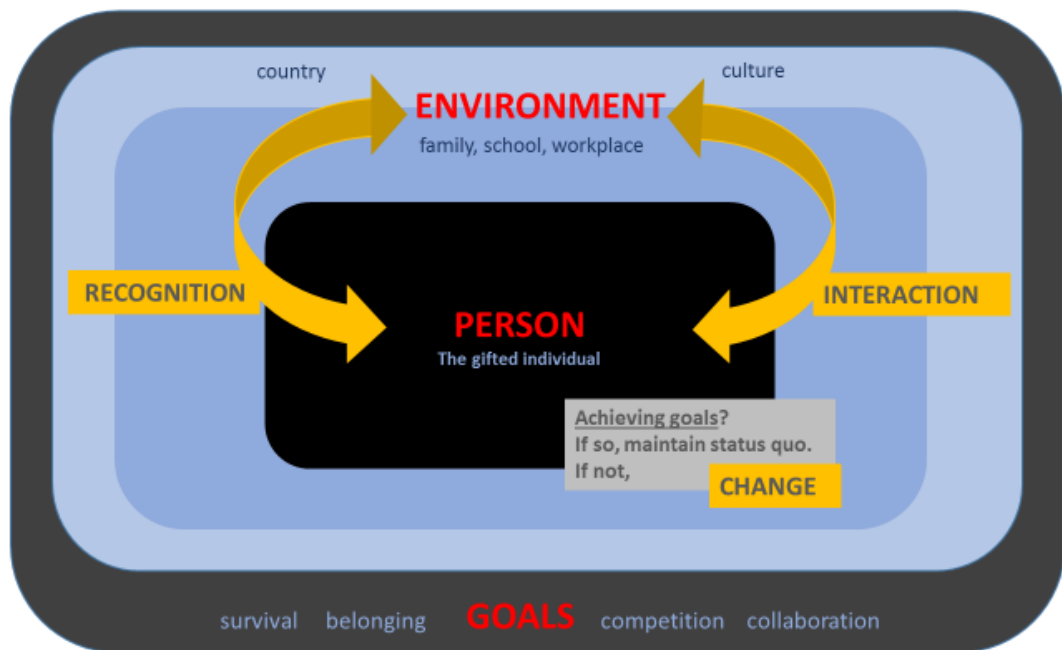
In this chapter I have detailed my qualitative research design that involved semi-structured interviews and textual analysis. I have explained the preliminary processes I went through of sampling, data collection, and data analysis, as well as the processes that are unique to the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology of theoretical sampling, memo-writing, and the constructing of original theory. I have outlined my original way of combining with this methodology, a Psychosocial interpretation of the data. I have discussed issues of ethics and quality control, and the limitations of the project. The next chapter begins the presentation of the research findings, organising these into the theoretical structure of the Overview Model of Giftedness.

PART THREE: RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter 5 – Presentation of the data within an organising framework: Overview Model of Giftedness

This chapter begins the presentation of my research findings by organizing these into a theoretical structure titled the “Overview Model of Giftedness” (see Figure 4 below). This model situates giftedness within the human biopsychosocial lifecourse and emphasises the importance of person-environment interaction, belonging, competition, and collaboration – all of which depend on interpersonal relating. The previous chapter (section 4.3) has demonstrated how this model is grounded in the raw data from the research interviews.

Figure 4: The Overview Model of Giftedness



At its most abstract, the essence of this model involves a **person** who exists within an **environment**. There is **recognition** and **interaction** between the person and environment. Learning occurs from such interactions and **change** is accordingly made as may become necessary for the achieving of **goals**. This model therefore contains certain elements (in red - person, environment, goals) plus related dynamic processes (in yellow - recognition, interaction, change). Each of these will be dealt with one by one in the next sections. The first section below anchors the model in the general biopsychosocial realities of the human condition, and then the sections that follow concentrate on the specifics within this of the experience of giftedness.

5.1 Elements of the Overview Model of Giftedness

5.1.1 Goals

The first goal of any organism is survival. The human infant is born helpless, vulnerable, and utterly dependent for its survival on the care of an other – principally usually a mother – for protection, nutrition, and even regulation of its own body temperature (see Winberg 2005). From an evolutionary perspective, it is those humans who learned to group together to help each other to secure safety from predators and to secure resources such as food and shelter who were more successful at survival, and this has bred an instinct for seeking to belong within a group (see Brewer 2007). Belonging is communicated and facilitated by interpersonal relating. Throughout the human lifespan, belonging and the constitutive interpersonal relating remain vital, as do the securing of fundamental necessary resources such as food and shelter. As the human grows and matures, other goals develop such as those of pairing, generating, and nurturing. Such goals are associated with the unfolding of our genetic design, with biologically punctuated milestones such as the production of certain hormones setting in or increasing (for example during puberty) or ceasing (for example during the female menopause). The concomitant physiological and psychosocial processes that are experienced have to be negotiated, from childhood growth spurts through to adult sexuality and finally old age and dying. When the fundamental survival-related goals are met, other goals can arise. This is what Maslow (1943) depicted in his famous model of the Hierarchy of Needs. The need that can be called the most privileged of needs, as it is the one that arises only when all the others in the hierarchy have already been met, is the need for what Maslow called ‘self-actualisation’ (Ibid.), which is about seeking self-fulfillment through realising one’s potentials. Erikson (1950) built a widely cited eight-stage theory of how different psychosocial goals typically play out over the lifespan of the human being whose basic needs of safety and nutrition are being adequately met.

The key elements of Attachment Theory correspond with the above outline of the human lifecourse. Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) theorised the “attachment system” as a genetically programmed regulatory system that governs from birth onwards the human infant’s seeking of security through sophisticatedly nuanced interpersonal relating that is designed to maximise the meeting of needs for safety and belonging. The kind of interpersonal response

that the infant predominantly experiences establishes what Bowlby (1969) termed an “internal working model”, which predicts what to expect of people based on previous experience. The internal working model accordingly shapes what patterns of interaction – or “attachment styles” (Ainsworth et al 1978; Bartholomew & Horowitz 1991) – the infant will predominantly use in relating with others. Once a person’s attachment style has developed it remains largely stable throughout life unless disrupted by specific intervention or intense experience (Howe 2011).

When a threat to security is perceived – which could be a threat directly to the person or a threat to their protective other/s or needed resources – it is said that the attachment system is activated, and this triggers the well-known “fight, flight, or freeze” response (Cannon 1939). A visceral fear persists throughout life – felt and expressed more or less keenly at different developmental stages – of loss of the protective other who is termed “the secure base” (Bowlby 1988), with whom there is an enduring affectional tie or attachment relationship, and to whom a maintaining of proximity is sought. Separation from the secure base arouses protest and distress (Bowlby et al 1952; Bowlby 1988), which at its original and most extreme form is distress at a perceived threat to survival. The infant’s attachment system correlates with the parent’s caregiving system, and humans who are in an attachment relationship with each other have been evidenced to form a co-regulating unit where the physiological, psychological, and emotional states of one become synchronised with those of the other and reciprocally affect each other (Stern 1985; Sroufe 1989). At around puberty the adolescent shifts his or her primary attachment from his or her parents or other adult caregivers to peers. At this stage pair bonds (romantic relationships – see Hazan & Shaver 1987) are sought and established and with the maturation of the adolescent’s own caregiving system, he or she in turn might procreate and nurture new infants.

Throughout life there are innumerable potentials for threats to security, whether in the form of threats to the person directly or to their protective other/s or their required resources, and evolution has selectively propagated humans who are most effectively alert to such potential threats so that danger to survival can best be averted. I view this alertness to threat as being what constitutes the propensity for anxiety that is endemic to the human condition, and I see the attempt to cope with and defend against such anxiety as being what has for all

time fuelled the endeavours of religion, philosophy, psychology, politics, and industry. As Hollway & Jefferson (2013:21) have written in their definition of a person as a “psychosocial subject”, each person is “a product of a unique biography of anxiety-provoking life-events and the manner in which [these] have been unconsciously defended against”. They go on to say that “such defensive activities affect and are affected by discourses (systems of meaning that are a product of the social world)”; that such defences “are intersubjective processes (that is, they affect and are affected by others)”; and that “real events in the external, social world...are discursively and defensively appropriated” (Ibid.). I agree with Hollway & Jefferson (2013) that conceiving of persons in this way, as psychosocial subjects, is the conceptualisation that is most conducive to a serious engagement with researching human experience and behaviour.

In our ordinary course of life that is involved with seeking to meet the various goals described above, two major primary social phenomena are encountered: competition, and collaboration. Between members of any social group, and between groups, there is competition for the resources that exist at varying levels of scarcity and abundance at different points in time and circumstance, and there is the prospect of collaboration in order to help each other to secure resources. It is my thesis that whether and when to compete against another person versus collaborate with another person is a primary quandary that at the most primitive level underlies all interpersonal relating. In other words, a constant (though not necessarily at all conscious) question is: are you my ally or my adversary?

5.1.2 Person

The person in my model is the gifted individual. In analysing my research interview transcripts, I listed all the references interviewees made to what they saw as constituting their giftedness. I summarised and collapsed similar depictions together into one description, then grouped all of these descriptions into main categories (data code A1, “Gifted qualities”, see Appendix A1). In order to arrive at key shared features of giftedness, I sought descriptions that were mentioned by the highest number of interviewees. This would naturally eliminate qualities that were more associated with individual differences such as qualities that my PEP research (Falck 2013) had suggested were associated with attachment

style, for example emotional sensitivity which was particularly reported by respondents who had a 'preoccupied' attachment style.

Of the most frequently mentioned qualities, some take their essence from a quantitative comparison of performance with that of others, and involve the fact that it is noticed by the gifted person themselves and by others that the gifted person achieves more than others can in the same amount of time (eg. speed of seeing solutions; deeper, better and faster understanding; number of different aspects perceived). Other qualities relate to a qualitative experiencing of living, such as having a passion to always be learning, and an enjoyment of and need to keep busy with challenges such as solving problems. I formed these most frequently mentioned qualities into three main categories: way of perceiving the world, way of engaging with the world, and performance relative to that of others. It turned out that these three categories corresponded exactly, respectively, with biological bases of giftedness, associated experiential and behavioural characteristics, and minority status, which were the three elements involved in defining giftedness that I arrived at in section 1.3. So for example I grouped a love of reading within the category of 'way of engaging with the world', but placed the fact of having learned to read at a very young age into the category of 'performance relative to others'. Table 13 below shows this final depiction of the key features of giftedness as derived from my research data.

Table 13: Key features of giftedness

Way of perceiving the world <i>(Corresponds with biological basis)</i>	Way of engaging with the world <i>(Corresponds with the associated experiential and behavioural characteristics)</i>	Performance relative to that of others <i>(Corresponds with minority status)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity for seeing the whole picture, seeing patterns, and thinking strategically. • Sees a lot of different aspects to everything. • Creative, original thinker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment of and need to keep busy with challenges, such as solving problems. • Passion to always be learning. • Loves reading. • High confidence in own ability to do anything. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly sees solutions. • Deeper, better, faster understanding than others. • Found school very easy. • Has had an identity of being best at things. • Special facility for language (good with words and spelling) and/or maths. • Speaks fast. • Started reading very young.

All of my interviewees spoke of seeing the constitutive elements of what could be called their giftedness as being innate, in that they described that there was never a time in their lives when this was not the way in which they were experiencing themselves and relating to the world around them. (This view of theirs might also be culturally constructed, as there is more of a tendency in the West rather than in the East to see gifts as innate – Freeman 2016a.) The make-up of giftedness has “pervasive effects” (Yermish 2010:vii; Webb et al 2005:176) on a person’s life: giftedness is a “quantitatively, qualitatively, and motivationally different way of experiencing life” (Jacobsen 2008:19). In my PEP (Falck 2013) the interviewees rated – on a scale of 1-10 – how important giftedness was in their personal identity. Fourteen out of the sixteen chose the high end of the scale, from 7 to 10. More than half went as high as the highest rankings, 9 or 10, indicating that they experienced giftedness as an extremely important part of their personal identity.

When the key gifted features of having the ability to learn fast and the associated drive to be regularly learning (what Meier et al (2014) identified as a “need for cognition”) are engaged with and satisfied, the individual feels happy and fulfilled (data code A3, “Importance of utilising abilities”). When such abilities are not engaged with and are frustrated and wasted, the individual is unhappy and can develop low self-esteem and mental health problems such as depression (data code A4, “Implications for well-being”).

5.1.3 Environment

The person is born into, and always exists within, an interpersonal environment that is made up of the macrocosm of a particular country and culture, and the microcosm of a particular social group and structure such as family, school, or workplace. The nature of this environment will have a major influence on how the gifted individual develops. This process is complex, given the various dimensions involved such as gender, socioeconomics, ethnicity, and sexuality. However for the purposes of constructing a schematic model, the focus here is restricted to considering how this relates to giftedness.

What my research results have shown is that in terms of the development of gifted individuals, the single most important basic point about the environment that they find themselves in is whether that environment is benign, supportive, welcoming and

encouraging towards or even valuing of manifestations of giftedness and able to engage with these or not. In my PEP I demonstrated how job satisfaction was highest for interviewees who had mentioned having a work environment that was in this manner conducive (Falck 2013, data code B1 "Workplace satisfaction"). For Part Two of the doctorate, I looked at the nature of the environments that affected the interviewees during their developmental years.

Starting with the macrocosm of country and culture, many interviewees had experience of living and working in different countries, and several comparisons were made between different countries and cultures (data code B2, "Differences in place or context" – see Appendix B2). In presenting here what interviewees said about their experiences and views of their environments, I want to point out that any individual's comments on, for example, a particular country or culture, will be coloured by that individual's particular personal circumstances: the environment of which they speak can be viewed as an 'environment in the mind' (inspired by Armstrong's (2004) notion of 'the organisation in the mind') – one which they have constructed their own particular view of – and I am presenting here these personal views of theirs rather than a view that has been corroborated against wider socio-cultural or historical data. Where page numbers are cited in relation to interviewees, these always refer to the page number of the related interview transcript.

A main comparison made by two interviewees was between Eastern Bloc countries – Eastern Germany and Russia – and Western European countries. The former were described as having a culture where "you don't show yourself" (No.41, p.14). Interviewee No. 189, who grew up in East Germany and then moved to West Germany at the age of 15, described a "very, very competitive" boy who was in his class in West Germany: "Never met such a person before in East Germany, 'cos they wouldn't exist" (p.15). In this new school in this new country, he experienced that, after a culture where "I almost tried to hide that I knew more than the teacher. Now suddenly, I was in an environment group that was very much encouraged to know more, to be better" (p.14): there was "suddenly no holding back" (p.16). Interviewee No.41 described how Russian and East German culture "pushed her down" (p.9) so much – "it's a big suffering" (ibid.) – that when she came on a trip to London where this was not the case, "I fell in love with myself" and decided "I need to move there" (p.2).

Two interviewees spoke of the egalitarian societies in Scandinavia, where “people are expected to be equal” (No.17, p.11, speaking about Sweden) and “when you just turn up in a normal class there and you perform very well...then people might...treat you a bit badly” (ibid.). No.189 described how in West Germany, the UK and the US he experienced needing to write “the CV, the resume” in a way that is “all about my fantastic achievements”, whereas in Denmark after his CV written in that style was read at a job interview he was told “You’re quite a show off” (p.26).

An interviewee from Hong Kong introduced a gender angle: she talked about how she had to be careful not to “too much out-perform” her husband in family and social contexts because Chinese culture required a female to “respect your husband more being head of the family and so on” (No.68, p.28). Within her professional context in London however she could “absolutely be myself” (p.29). London was repeatedly described as a place that was valued for offering great diversity and freedom – “it’s brilliant...yeah...I mean, I love it. I wish it worked like this everywhere. London is particularly special in that respect” (No.189, p.29). Although several interviewees had moved from other countries to be in the UK, and almost idealised London where they were now based, there were British-born interviewees who spoke of wider British culture in more structured terms as follows:

Brits don’t like putting themselves forward or being better, there’s this natural reservedness about British people that says don’t stand out, don’t celebrate achievement in many ways (No.2, p.59).

The average person, especially the average British person, mocks intelligence (No.36, p.2).

There were also British interviewees who grew up outside of London who in their family environment experienced a strong discouragement of giftedness, even to the extent of being regularly physically beaten for manifesting precocious curiosity and eloquence.

I was out of line over and over and over again. I had opinions and I articulated them and I insisted on coming back to them and even after he [*his father*] might have told me to shut up or he’d make me shut up, I would just keep going and keep going and keep going...He was just trying to crush me. I mean he was just trying to make me shut up and toe the line... (No.2.1, p.29)

The latter is something that was also experienced growing up in other countries, such as was described by an interviewee from India:

...in my own family I was bullied big time, especially by my father, yes. So he felt intellectually threatened... definitely till 11 I used to get beaten big time by my father. And I said something very sharp or, for example, if he asked me a response to, ...a simple example would be like two plus two is four, but then hey one and a half and two a half is also four, do you see what I mean? So I was able to think out of the box and come up with different kinds of solutions, but if that was not the answer he was expecting he would beat me up. So that was really horrible and I hated him all the way. (No.156, p.16)

In contrast, an interviewee who also grew up in Britain was encouraged so much in her gifted qualities that she did her GCSE exams a full three years early, at the age of 13: “some of the time I felt I was also being a bit too pushed, it was a lot of, “You have to do this, you have to do well” (No.6, p.8). This interviewee, like No.189 above, also had very different experiences of school based on whether it was a school environment that promoted gifted accomplishment or did not support it. She described having had “a very rocky up and down time” at school (No.6, p.7):

I suppose the comprehensive school that I went to, I did definitely get, I wouldn't go so far as to say I was bullied but I got teased for achieving well and I certainly felt I needed to dumb myself down to fit in more... (Ibid).

She then went to a grammar school which was “a lot easier, I felt much happier there, it did make a difference” (Ibid.).

This section has given a taste of the different kinds of environments gifted individuals can find themselves in in terms of country, culture, family, school, and workplace, and how much these can differ as to whether the individual's manifestation of gifted abilities is welcomed and even encouraged, or frowned upon and even violently deterred.

5.2 Dynamic processes within the Overview Model of Giftedness

By “dynamic processes” I am referring to the ways in which elements of the model act upon each other, causing various consequences. These actions involve the person and the environment recognising the nature of each other, interacting with each other (which includes learning taking place and habits and expectations being formed), and changes being made to the person and/or the environment.

5.2.1 Recognition

The first people that newborn infants usually come into regular close contact with are their parents and the other members of their family of origin, so these are the people that form

their first social environment and who respond in one way or another to the nature of the child they are beginning to experience. Usually the next social environment that a child is most regularly exposed to and therefore most influenced by is that of the school/s he or she attends. What these early interpersonal experiences are predominantly like for the child is highly formative of him or her, as is delineated by every major body of theory and knowledge that is concerned with human development such as Psychoanalysis, the Person-Centered approach, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Transactional Analysis, etc.

Something I am taking for granted (see Chapter 2) is that the gifted child's particular biology and associated character traits and behaviours are atypical, making such a child in certain aspects of experience and functioning dissimilar to 98% of the population. The gifted child might in these early influential environments encounter a few, or many, or zero, others who understand this and/or relate to this and/or themselves have similar experience and functioning. My research shows that within that first social environment of the family of origin, there is some variation as to whether the gifted individual has experienced finding others who are similar, and others who are sympathetic (whether similar or not). As mentioned above in section 5.1.3, "Environment", interviewees experienced a range of different reactions in their family environments, from being beaten for showing precocity to being pushed hard to excel and achieve in a timescale far ahead of their peers. What seems apparent from my research however, is that no matter what kind of environment the gifted child finds him- or herself in, that environment will come to recognise in the child the manifestations of giftedness, whether or not these are labelled as such, and will react to it in some way: there is a moment, or event, of recognition, or a series of these. Such recognition could be informal, for example:

...it was sort of identified early on, oh, you know, you're intelligent. You're not so good at sports... Like no one sort of said, "Hey (*name*), you know, do you wanna go up for the football team or the baseball team?" but they did say, "Hey (*name*), do you wanna join the chess team or the debate team?" (No.167, p.10)

Or such recognition could be formal, for example:

...what happened eventually, when I was about eight or nine I got taken in the office one day after my latest bout of misbehaviour. I was in the office with one of the senior teachers, this was in England, and I was introduced to a gentleman, I remember his name actually, it was Dr (*name*). I actually remember his name. This is going back into the 70's. My dad came up the school, he was there, with Dr (*name*), the teacher and me, and I got these tests to do. They asked me [questions]... And

...they all looked at each other and nodded and smiled and they carried on with more questions, and I had questions about probability, like playing cards. I didn't know anything about cards at that age so they explained to me what a pack of cards was, so I worked the answers out and got them all right. That was it. About half an hour later I went back to class and my dad went home. Later that evening I've come home from school, my dad came home from work... I said, "What was all this about, what were these questions about at school?", and he said to me, "I've got a genius", and he laughed. That's all I knew, because it must have been an intelligence test, it must have been an IQ test. Obviously the teachers had become concerned about me and they'd obviously explained to someone I messed around a lot at school but I was very clever, so obviously they set up a test for me, but I didn't know about it until it happened and thereafter I was given harder work to do. (No.1, p.5-6)

The recognition and reaction that comes is rarely neutral. At the two extremes, it can be positive (rewarding), for example receiving affirmation/validation, compliments, approval, praise, awards, popularity, and later in life securing desired jobs, promotions, and remuneration packages, or it can be negative (punishing), for example being clashed with, disapproved of, rejected, excluded, blocked. Several interviewees reported having been bullied at school for achieving well. In the example above, the positive smiles and nods are noticed by the child and remembered decades later. Yermish (2010:16) states that

A person's self-concept can be construed as the sum of all of their own beliefs about their status, including traits, social roles, relationships, and the like, and is built upon the accreditations and degradations they have experienced.

She draws on Garfinkel (1956), Schwartz (1979) and Ossorio (2006) in explaining that "accreditation and degradation ceremonies" (Yermish 2010:16) involve three players – someone who has some personal characteristic or performs some behaviour; someone who reacts to this in some way, who is seen as a member in good standing in a community of people who share certain values, skills, or personal characteristics; and someone who witnesses this reaction taking place. The playing out of this event is termed a ceremony, where the reaction of the 'member in good standing' as observed by a witness results in the person who is being reacted to being either accredited (assigned a better status within the community) or degraded (assigned a worse status within the community). In the ordinary course of daily life growing up, a gifted person will experience a series of accreditations or degradations, building their self-concept and sense of whether or how much they are approved of and belong within the community or interpersonal environment in which they find themselves.

Most of my interviewees described school as being the context in which they remembered their giftedness as having first been recognised by others. Whether the way it was recognised accorded accreditation or degradation is, however, not always clearcut, as the incidents involved could be quite nuanced or multi-layered. For example, No.68 (p.9) described her chemistry teacher saying to her “You’re just too brilliant, I can’t find a question that you can’t answer.” But he also said “Why do you need to be so good in chemistry? You’ll just end up in the kitchen anyway” (Ibid.). A school teacher counts as a member in good standing in the community, and the witnesses to his reaction to this interviewee would be the other children in the class. But would this reaction of his constitute a ceremony of accreditation or of degradation? He is complimenting her – “you’re brilliant” – but there is another message in there: this is not actually what is required/desired within this community; as a Chinese female your real place is in the kitchen. What she’s being told is that what she’s exhibiting therefore is irrelevant or inappropriate/useless – you are “too” brilliant.

For several interviewees, recognition of their giftedness by others came in the form of standing out during regular school rituals that typically involved levels of attainment, perhaps set up as a competition, and the gifted individual would get to the top in unexpectedly rapid time and then stay at the top, sometimes in a band all on their own, with nowhere further to go (No.55, No.30, No.2, No.74). Consequences would be the gifted individual feeling bored (No.55, p.5: “school was...an unmitigated hell...”, “intellectually it was a dead zone”; No.69, p.18: “School was absolutely boring”) and perhaps start to misbehave (No.1, p.3: who was disruptive as “I had no challenges”) or be feared to be liable to start behaving badly (No.2, p.2: “she’s gonna be bored and she’s gonna rebel soon”). On the teacher’s part there could be a fear of how this might affect the other children:

That was the same year they had a times table tournament and I stayed at the top of the tree so long that they actually had to stop it, because it was bad for everyone else’s self-esteem apparently. (No.55, p.10)

Or the teacher might display an obliviousness as to how drawing attention to the gifted child’s capability might place the child in an awkward position in relation to her peers, even bordering on humiliation:

With spelling tests...the teacher would say at the end “Okay, (*name*), all those words now, you’re going to tell the whole class what they all mean.” (No.2, p.4)

Whether the recognition was formal or informal, positive or negative, a frequent consequence would be that the gifted individual who was already in some way naturally standing out from others, would come to in some way be specifically set apart from others (see yellow highlights on Appendix C1). The way of being set apart might be subtle, such as the way in which the child is referred to, or it might be very obvious, such as interviewee No.55 who skipped two years of school or No.6 who was put through her GCSE exams three years earlier than her peers.

Because giftedness is a minority condition, gifted individuals are unlikely to come into contact with many similar and/or sympathetic others in ordinary environments such as general mixed-ability schools and workplaces. From my research it is apparent that the likelihood of gifted individuals coming into contact with higher numbers of similar and/or sympathetic others rises with the increased selectivity of the environment, and that the propensity for negative reaction is inversely proportionate to the number of similar and/or sympathetic others in the gifted individual's environment. This was evidenced with interviewees who experienced for example moving from a non-selective/mixed school to a selective one (No.189, No.6) and found that the trouble with fitting in and being bullied ceased in the new environment.

In this section so far I have focused on the environment's recognition of the gifted person's attributes, but something else that interviewees talked about is a recognition they came to on their part that they were different from others around them. The way they noticed this could be described as incremental, organic:

There's no single point of time when I thought that this thing [*high IQ*] is manifesting itself, it's just that there would have been a time when I realised that something I was taking for granted was not so commonplace. (No.69, p.10)

Or there might have been a memorable moment for them when they came to this realisation:
I expressed frustration that why aren't these people better at what they do? If they just tried they could just learn how to do it, and a friend of mine told me that no actually, some people they may actually be trying right now. So I guess that's when I realised that, "Oh, okay, so maybe it is easier for me to learn similar things". (No.43, p.5)

Several interviewees spoke of the difficulty for them in working out what this difference meant for them and the way that they related to others.

It's one of the great difficulties actually in interacting with other people, because you assume subconsciously that everyone else thinks the same way you do. Everyone else functions the same way you do and I don't think of myself on a day-to-day basis as a particularly... well, as an extraordinarily unique human being. (No.55, p.30)

It's the same obstacles but worse because you haven't been in someone else's head so you don't know that your head works much better, and even if along the way people tell you, "Oh you're quite smart", you don't put that into context because you have no context. (No.41, p.13)

I do think being gifted, to be completely non-gifted or a low IQ in one way, it's the same disability because you then can't understand the norm. (No.68, p.27)

What my data showed was that a main differential that was repeatedly noticed between the gifted individual and others was within the dimensions of effort and speed. Over and over again I heard accounts from my interviewees of how they had required much less effort than those around them in order to achieve the same result or better, and because it required less effort from them they would get to a result faster than others did.

...when I was at school, at primary school, I never carried my books back home. I never did homework because for me it was so easy at school, just in a break, like five minutes, I would do the homework very quickly (No.74, p.3)

I remember....especially on the math side, being able to finish it and grasp the concepts quicker than my peers. (No.167, p.8)

Adjectives to do with speed were regularly applied to their descriptions of their functioning:

...it frustrates the heck out of me to work in a team sometimes 'cos people are too slow... You just want people to get there quicker and they don't (No.2, p.4)

There were descriptions of their speed of verbal communication: "I talk fast" (No.36, p.6), or No.41:

...the best experience I ever had with a guy was he was as fast as me at understanding what I was about to say. We never had to finish sentences, we had the most condensed conversation ever possible because we were speaking at double speed half the time. (p.10)

Descriptions of things being experienced as easy or 'coming naturally' to them without effort were also frequent, for example: "I never bothered to learn anything, I just got it" (No.68, p.22); "Maths came very easy to me" (No.1, p.3); "[IT] just comes naturally. It's not actually a lot of effort" (No.189, p.11); "I don't have to work for a lot of it. I have colleagues who sit for hours on end learning scores. I sing it twice and it's in here. *[taps her head]*" (No.55, p.19).

Two interviewees described having missed a lot of school, No.5 through illness and No.2.2 through truanting, and yet still having done well at their exams.

How the recognition of these differences affects gifted individuals and those around them, and how this influences their interpersonal relationships, is what is presented in the next section.

5.2.2 Interaction

As shown above, the gifted individual in some way stands out naturally from others, typically along the dimensions of effort and speed. He comes to realise that he is different from others, and the way that others recognise and react to this difference tends to in some way set the gifted individual apart. How does this affect the gifted individual? How does it make her feel?

No.74 said "I feel sorry sometimes, because I, you know... I see people working harder than me, but... And they are not so lucky" (p.30). A few other interviewees also referred to themselves as lucky (eg. No.69, p.6), and some expressed feeling sorry for others, expressing that "sometimes I think it's unfair" (No.55, p.29). No.74 said "It's something that I don't feel guilty because it's not my fault, I never feel guilty but I would like it to be more fair" (No.74, p.21). Asserting that "it's not my fault" seems to indicate a prior sense that it might actually be your fault, followed by wanting to be absolved of having responsibility for the unfairness. For example No.2 spoke of her team at work being "slimmed down":

...so there's competition for places and it's clear that the management want me to stay, and it'll be at the expense of somebody else. I can't help that, they just know that I do a good job. (p.11)

This suggests she does feel bad that keeping her job will mean somebody else losing theirs, but she comforts or reassures herself of no wrongdoing or culpability on her part by saying "I can't help that". One interviewee spoke of specifically feeling guilt because her brother didn't do as well as she did and "my parents used me to compare me with him and it's completely unfair" (No.68, p.25). She said that maybe it would have been better for him if she hadn't done so well. She went on to say that she feels *less* guilty about her achievements if she knows she's gifted, because "I couldn't help it, I'm just born that way" (p.27). If she'd put in a lot of effort, then "it's like me trying to push everybody away from me". She said that she would feel guilt if it was her own will to "really leave everyone behind and just focus to

get to where I am". However, by just doing her personal best at the tasks she is confronted with, "it's not something I plan to be ahead of everyone": "in that sense, it's almost like I'm helpless. To me gifted could be seen as a disability....we're just wired that way"(p.27). In this way she is describing her own feelings about effort and achievement and guilt, however later she talks about other people's feelings in relation to this, saying that other people can be more accepting of your achievement if they think it cost you some effort rather than "you almost just get there" (p.31).

As the above shows, the recognition of giftedness brings about a grappling with how this bears upon others and how that in turn bears upon the gifted person's own conscience, with the gifted person having to do some internal work in order to arrive at feeling vindicated of blame for the unfairness of apparent differences in individual ability. Both the internal feeling of being different from others, and having the external environment treat you as different, can lead gifted individuals to feel that they don't fit in, they don't belong. As No.6 said, "I often feel definitely the outsider in a group" (p.7). A few other interviewees (Nos.17, 6, 2, 1, 74, 69, 55) also used the term "outsider" for describing their experience.

No.1 described a situation of not fitting in as follows:

...at school there's two groups of people. You've got the first group of people which is very well behaved and very academically minded, and you've got the group of rougher people who mess around and aren't really interested at school. So I was in the position where I had kudos with the academic ones because I was getting better test results than they were, but I used to hang around with the rougher lot, the rougher people, so in the end I worked out that I wasn't popular with either group because I didn't fit in the social circles of the better off and more academically minded children and I wanted to be in the easiest, lowest denominator, which was the rougher kids and muck around, play football, be naughty. But they always knew that I was clever as well so I wasn't really one of them either. So I was neither here nor there at school but I was good at passing exams. (p.3-4)

The above interview excerpt introduces the socio-economic aspect, where doing well academically is associated with being wealthier – "the better off *and* more academically minded" (my emphasis). This link was evident in other interviews also. For example No.5:

...there were two girls who took an instant dislike to me and I think it was because I sounded slightly more posh than they did... they might've said something about being stuck up and clever (p.23)

And there were interviewees who described distressing experiences of not fitting in not because of intellectual differences, but because their intellectual capacity had brought them into an environment with others of that capacity who were well-initiated into a socioeconomic culture and lifestyle that they were completely unfamiliar with.

[Talking about attending admissions interviews at Oxford University]...we were sort of touted around parties and literally a sherry party. And we were all Mr and Miss surnames and it's just like off the scale of discomfort for me... I mean I was pained by this. [T]alking about sort of the shame, ...I remember going down one morning and going into the wrong room for breakfast and literally sort of not quite twigging that everybody around me was some venerable old don. And then somebody came over and was, probably very kindly, but a little bit, 'What are you doing in here young man?' And I was just... you know, I would have just eaten myself alive with embarrassment. (No.2.1, p.21)

...it was just a total culture shock for me when I went to uni.... I couldn't relate to anybody, because I hadn't had any of the same experiences as them...And I think my brain just shut down a little bit and it just went... oh, I just can't deal with this. Yeah, I mean I lost two stone in about two months...Just absolutely miserable and I just couldn't handle it...[I]f I hadn't had the issues at primary school, then it might not have, you know... I hung around with people who were also very intelligent, also slightly socially awkward, you know like, because we got on with each other.... I hadn't fitted in for so long, to fit in with these people felt amazing. And then I got to uni and all of a sudden I didn't fit in with anybody again... (No.30, p.68-70)

Both of these examples are about making the transition from a school environment to a university environment where the interviewee came into contact with a different element of society for the first time, and an element of society that is much more readily associated with intellectual achievement. Freeman (2010) also details a case where a gifted adolescent's abilities won her a place at a university which, on starting there, she could not adapt to, and dropped out of.

In the second example above, the interviewee makes it clear how important a feeling of fitting in or belonging was, how she had finally attained this at school and then when it was lost again on starting university the effect on her was extreme – losing two stone in weight, being “absolutely miserable”, “brain just shut down”, “just couldn't handle it”. As described above in section 5.1.1, one of the goals of the human organism is to find belonging, which has an evolutionary rationale for gaining a group's assistance with protection and securing resources. A feeling of not fitting in, not belonging with a group, is painful and anxiety-provoking, linked with the primitive fear of threat to survival that being rejected or

abandoned could constitute or at the start of life did constitute. Most of the interviewees mentioned ways of trying to find belonging. As No.30 mentioned above, she had found a way of belonging with others who, like her, were “intelligent, slightly socially awkward”. She also said of this group “we got on with each other, but nobody else got on with us kind of thing” (p.69). So here, those who do not feel they fit in form a group together so as to belong with each other. No.2 mentioned this also:

I remember teaming up with the unpopular kids, the girl who was ginger and everyone took the mick out of her because she was ginger, or this girl whose dad had died of a brain tumour, and everybody took the mick out of her. This is what children are like, they’re horrible, but we banded together a little bit, an unpopular clique really to work against the popular kids. (p.4)

Many interviewees spoke of longing for, or specifically seeking to be with, “like-minded” others (No.17, 189, 2, 55, etc. – data code D1, see Appendix D1), and the pure delight of feeling fully accepted and understood by others with whom a sense of belonging is felt. No.2 said of her partner:

...she’s not threatened by it [*giftedness*], she loves it. She accepts it, she revels in it, she wants to learn from me, she wants to encourage me to... she sits there, she does it all the time, she says, “tell me about something, tell me about anything, explain something to me”. If we’re in the car or something, she’ll say, “tell me about Russia in the 19th century”, or something and it’s really lovely... (p.26-27)

And the joy of this in a professional rather than personal context was shown in my PEP theme of “Working well together” (Falck 2013, Appendix 14), which shows examples of interviewees feeling their abilities are fully being engaged with together with others and things are going well together.

The importance of belonging with a group for safety is shown for example by No.5. She talked about having a group of friends – “...there’s the four of us who were the strongest friends and we would’ve been the quite er geeky swatty group I suppose” (p.18) – who were split up when she started senior school and at that point, when she’d lost her group, was when she began to be bullied (p.19).

Another aspect of the attempt to safeguard a belonging with the group can manifest in the way that parents react to the recognition of giftedness in their child.

My teacher was trying to get my parents involved but because my parents were so working class...to the point that on the back of the IQ test and my teacher’s

intervention, I was offered a place at a grammar school, a very prestigious grammar school in the area that I grew up, and my parents wouldn't let me go because they said, "you'll think badly of us". (No.2, p.2)

In this example there is again the association between doing well academically and social class, and in this case a fear that a child will get separated from the family group if she is afforded opportunities for developing herself that have been foreign to her parents. Sadly it was their holding back of her in an attempt to hold on to her, that ultimately drove her away: "I had a massive row with my dad" (p.14); she moved out of home – "I'd just turned seventeen" (p.13) – and (for a period) "dropped out" (p.17).

I suppose I was quite resentful really of my parents because they didn't understand me remotely. They'd really stopped me from flowering if you like, and I knew that, I knew that when I was eleven. (p.14)

Through all these experiences of the person and environment interacting with each other, the gifted individual is learning from the interactions, and based on these experiences is forming habits and expectations. For example take this quote from interviewee No.30 about her transition from school to university:

I found it baffling that there were intelligent people there who were also, you know, socially brilliant and wonderful and everyone wanted to be around them and I was like, but you're clever. You know. So I found that... you know, I found it really hard, really hard. (No.30, p.69-70)

She had formed a strong association between being "clever" and being socially undesirable, which she found "baffling" and "really hard" to have to adapt to a re-evaluation of. That association had been formed in a particular school environment which she recognised was different from other kinds of school environments. She said of a colleague:

He went to a very good school full of similar people and yeah,...you know at those schools it was cool to be intelligent. At my school..... you know, in a sort of like village comprehensive with, you know, real mixed ability, you know variety of levels, it was not cool to be clever. (No.30, p.70)

Here she has formed expectations based on her experiences in one environment – i.e. "it was not cool to be clever" – and then carried that expectation over to other environments, such as university, for which it was not apt. Similarly, interviewees formed habits based on their experiences in one environment which they might then inappropriately apply in a different environment. Given the differentials in effort and speed that are encountered between gifted individuals and others in ordinary mixed environments (as described above in section 5.1.3), in such environments gifted individuals would become accustomed to needing less

effort than those around them to achieve what was required of them, and this could make them form a habit of laziness. As No.6 said,

I think it is something that in the past I have possibly been complacent with and thought, "Oh I'll do well in this without doing any work", which isn't always the case obviously. (p.24)

No.43 described how he was "caught off-guard" when he started going about in his habitual way within a new working environment that was highly selective and how he was surprised by the differences he encountered:

At previous workplaces, it seems like I had more time, certainly more time than now, but I had more time than the average person. In that time people would ask me things, how this or that worked, and that was interesting to explain so you became, I was like an oracle for things, so achieving less than I do now where I was but explaining more because now I don't have to explain things because people know, either they know it or it's much quicker for other people to understand things, to the point where people have caught me off-guard. I just do a couple of words and they're quicker than you think they'd be able to understand the sentence, they reply and you're, "Wait that's completely right", it was almost like they replied so quickly you didn't think it was a serious answer. So I have to explain things a lot less now. (p.16)

The gifted person experiencing themselves as being good at things, perhaps particularly without much effort being required, and this being noticed by others, sometimes with the result of gaining an identity as the person who is best at something, "an oracle" as above, can create in the gifted person a sense of unswerving confidence in their own ability.

I'm very particular and very pushy about how something has to be done, because I have this unfailing belief which is a fault of mine, I must admit, that my way is the best way or the right way, and occasionally other people will say oh he's very sure that this is right, he's very confident. (No.1, p.29)

In the excerpt above the interviewee cites this attitude of his as a fault: maybe his regular experience at getting the answers "all right" (No.1, p.5) and "being good at passing exams" (No.1, p.4) set up for him a belief in being right, which has been formative for him and continues even into situations where perhaps he has come to experience that he has not been right, and that is why he now sees it as a fault. However he might also be seeing it as a fault as a consequence of feedback from the environment that leads him to realise that others find such behaviour objectionable. As No.74 said, "Nobody wants to be around somebody that's every time right" (p.7-8). It is in this process of person-environment interaction that gifted adults' experiences of interpersonal difficulty get played out. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

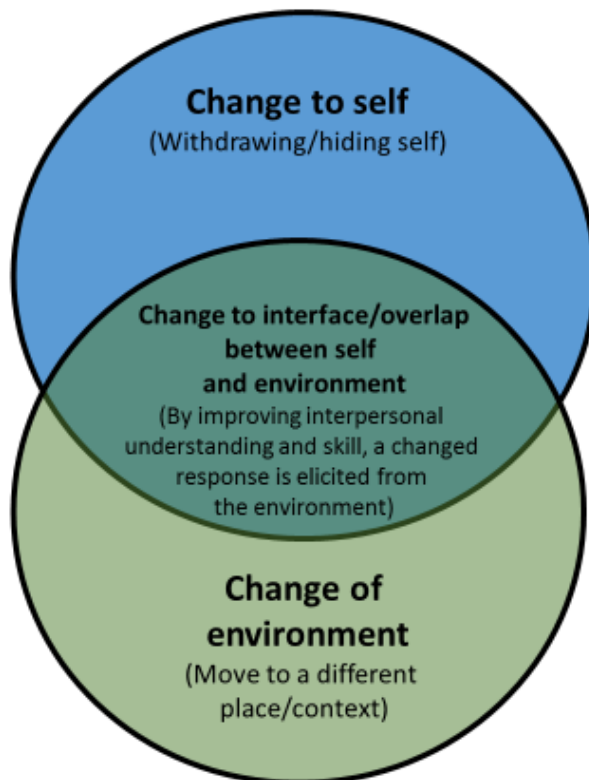
This section has shown how the interaction between the gifted individuals in my sample and their environments led to learning from experience and forming habits and expectations which could be transferred from one environment to another for which they were not appropriate. The next section looks at the process that ensued when experiences of interpersonal difficulty became so unpleasant, distressing, or obstructive, that my interviewees sought to make some sort of change in order to try to improve their situation and better achieve their goals.

5.2.3 Change

In general, if an organism is achieving its goals there will be no reason to effect changes to the status quo, as changes require endeavour and a general principle of conserving energies and resources means that change will not be entered into without a convincingly motivating rationale. In relation to interpersonal difficulty, it is the negative effects of this (such as negative mental health effects, as referred to in section 5.1.2 above) that provide the catalyst for seeking to modify some aspect of the status quo to try to bring about improvement.

I saw within my research data three main ways that interviewees had been involved in changes that had helped to overcome interpersonal difficulty (see Figure 5 on the next page): changing themselves in some way (such as withdrawing or hiding themselves from participation in the world and engagement with others, giving up on their aspirations); changing their environment by moving to a different place; or making a change to the interface or overlap between self and environment by changing the way they related to their environment through improved interpersonal understanding and skill which would bring about a different response from the environment.

Figure 5: Change



Whichever of these kinds of change might be made – and they might not be discrete alternatives, as activity in all three areas might be involved – the first part of the process is a perceiving of something as being significantly unsatisfactory, or a glimpsing of a significantly desirable potential, which provides motivation for a change. This is followed by a decision at some level to make a change, then an actual implementing of the decision: I say a decision “at some level” because this whole process, or any component aspect of it, can vary as to how accessible it is to conscious awareness.

No.74 described how this process occurred for him, instigated by what he was experiencing as a significantly unsatisfactory situation of having had “very few friends” (p.11 of his transcript), and not managing to relate to girls. He noticed “people developing social skills naturally. For me they never came naturally” (p.7). He described reading the article “The Outsiders” (Towers 1987):

It’s about this guy who is the most intelligent person ever, IQ of 220, and then at three years old he taught himself Greek, and then at 16 he decided to be celibate, he never married, he never had children, and he spent the rest of his life doing many works. So I could actually understand him, it’s like a breakdown. The world is cruel

and big and if you try to do this attitude, “I’m right, the world is wrong”, it’s the end. (p.9)

...I had this feeling that I wanted to be normal, and people will say I’m weird and it would really hurt me...I have always wanted to be a normal person in the sense that having a normal job, having a girl. Now I’m immensely proud of being brave and saying, “I was an asshole, I want to change”. It’s something that takes a long time and it’s very difficult, but now I’m very normal, I don’t have any health problems, I have many friends, I’m doing well at the office. (p.14)

He is describing having made a change to himself, to his attitude, and a change that involved reaching out to others, finding how better to relate to others.

Another way that my interviewees reacted to interpersonal difficulty by changing themselves was – instead of reaching out to others – to hide themselves. Thirteen out of the first sixteen interviewees spoke about doing this in one way or another (data code E1 “Hiding self”, see Appendix E1). This could involve instances of hiding their full abilities, achievements or affiliations in order to ward off interpersonal difficulty that was being experienced or being anticipated. For example, five interviewees mentioned that they never disclose that they are members of Mensa (Nos. 156, 5, 6, 1, 68). Another example is knowing an answer but not giving it, mentioned by Nos. 2, 6, 1, 68, 2.3. Interviewee No.68 (p.16-17) likened her experience to the film *Groundhog Day*, where “you already see the ending”, “you know what to expect”, but you “sit back and let the event unfold itself” so as to encourage others to contribute rather than rushing ahead with the conclusion yourself. She said being able to go through things slowly, step by step, was something she was weak at: “It is a learning process for me, but I think one good thing is I worked out what I need to learn” (Ibid.). These examples of choosing to hold back on certain things at certain times constitute a way of improving interpersonal skill, and being in control of consciously and deliberately making that choice. Someone behaving in this manner can ‘lift’ these controls and be spontaneous and fully self-revealing when in an appropriate and amenable environment. However, there could also be a more extreme version of hiding oneself. No.69 spoke about overall, in all situations, wearing a mask, avoiding social contact because of the effort of having to “put on my mask” (p.27), and fearing that others “might discover who I am” (p.28). Here the person has made a change to themselves that might entail never fully expressing themselves spontaneously, and may not even be aware of how extreme this hiding of self has become.

Another area of change is changing the environment by moving to a different location. As has been shown above (in section 5.1.3 "Environment"), because of the differences in different kinds of environment, interpersonal difficulty that is experienced in one environment might not be experienced in a different environment. A few interviewees described very different experiences in different environments, for example No.6 (change from comprehensive to grammar school), No.41 (change of country), No.43 (change of workplace), and No.189 (change of culture in different school in a different country). Sometimes an interviewee would change environments for reasons other than a decision based on seeking to improve interpersonal relations, but would discover that consequent upon the changed environment, improved interpersonal relating ensued. However, sometimes such a move of location would be instigated by the interviewee glimpsing a significantly desirable potential elsewhere, as with No.41:

...my family went [*to a wedding in London*] and after about five days I fell in love with myself and I was quite surprised, and I tried to analyse what was the reason and I figured out that the behaviour of people here, the cultural context means that no one treats you badly ever, it's considered not good, so you're not being honest, which Germans are, or you're not being patronising, which Russians are, so it was a massive difference for me not to be... whatever I said no one ever said, "Oh that's weird, we don't do that", or, "How can you?". No one criticised, no one made me feel awkward or wrong, and by just treating me as if everything I do or think or say is okay it did something to me and I fell in love with myself and I thought, "If people behave like that and I need a good energy to understand who I am, I need to move there". (p.2-3)

Experiencing something different created for this interviewee the fantasy of London as a better place, which she then tried to make real by moving to London. Other interviewees also talked about a fantasy of a better place, whether or not it was something they had managed to realise: No.1 harboured the fantasy that if he'd grown up in communist Russia "I would have been singled out and the government would have made something of me" (p.14). No.55 described how she felt as an adolescent:

"I wanted to go to America... I wanted more than anything to get out of New Zealand...Too small. Too far away from everywhere. Too dismissive of anything intellectual or cultural. (p.18-19)

Webb et al (2005) also write about how a gifted adult might travel to locate peers.

A less dramatic version of change than making a change to oneself or moving to a different country, is to make a change to one's way of dealing with the environment. A change of this

kind could elicit a desirable change in the environment's response, avoiding what might otherwise emerge as a need to relocate to a different environment in order to improve things. Change to one's way of dealing with the environment involves improving interpersonal understanding and skill (data code E3, "Improving interpersonal understanding and skill" – see Appendix E3 for interview excerpts relating to this form of change).

Thirteen out of the first sixteen interviewees described changes they had exerted specific effort to effect as a result of their learning about what had caused interpersonal difficulty so as to make their interpersonal relating better. One such social skill is the use of humour. Three interviewees mentioned humour in the context of using it as a way of dissipating or smoothing over interpersonal difficulties, for example:

...you mention about the envy earlier, one thing I try and deal with it is to be humorous, and I think I'm gifted to that extent that I can crack jokes and find humour in different situations, like making impressions of people and how they might say in so and so situation, and my work colleagues find that very, very funny, which is great and once you crack up somebody it breaks the ice...(No.156, p.25).

Changes were implemented for personal reasons (such as wanting friends, a girlfriend - No.74) or professional reasons such as being able to make more effective work collaborations. No.156 emphasised that in his experience social skills are much more important for work success than anything else such as qualifications (p.2). No.167 spoke of regretting his lack of focus on social skills as he realised, now that he had his own business, how helpful it would be if he had in previous years been more mindful of developing social networks.

What the changes in interpersonal skill most frequently involved (as can be seen from the colour-highlighted codes in Appendix E3) were the following:

- a) Gaining a better understanding of individual differences: not everybody has the same capacities you have (turquoise highlights).
- b) Then accordingly adapting the way you operate so as to a) temper what does come naturally (which often involves having to slow yourself down) (green highlights) or b) develop what does not come naturally (appreciating the value in all others, and becoming aware of their perspectives and how they might be experiencing you) (light grey and cerise highlights respectively).
- c) Making adaptations so as to better include others (olive highlights).

- d) Interviewees spoke of the effort that was needed to bring about improvement in interpersonal skill, and of how continuing effort was needed in order to sustain improvements (dark grey highlights).

The essence of these insights can be summed up in what Fonagy et al (2004) term “mentalisation”. Mentalisation refers to the recognition that we all have minds, and minds that are different from each other’s; that what we have in mind influences our behaviour; and that we are constantly being affected by – and are interpreting – each other’s behaviour. It has been shown that interpersonal relating improves with increasing skill at mentalisation, meaning that mentalisation is taken into account and actively practised (ibid.).

Resources that interviewees mentioned as having made a difference for them, assisting in this change process (red highlights on Appendix E3), included a book, role models, and feedback from others (No.74); coaching at work (No.74, 68); convening a group where social skills could be taught and learning could take place from each other within the group (No.156); insight from a friend (No.43); therapy (No.41); seeking and finding a like-minded friendship group (No.55, 36, 17); and a ‘rescuing’ romantic relationship (No.2). Interviewee No.2 (p.18) described how a partner “saved” her at a time when she had very much shut down, and how finally experiencing being fully accepted is what changed everything for her. Interviewee No.2.2 had a more dramatic input into her change process, through an institutional stay: she spent four years in prison where she also had therapy and participated in groups. As she gave birth to her first baby whilst in prison, she was incarcerated within a special mother-and-baby unit. In that very contained environment she experienced the support she received with bonding with and parenting her developing baby, in tandem with her own development, as transformative.

Something that all of these experiences of helpful assistance have in common is that they involved relational learning and healing that acted on what in essence had involved relational difficulty or even trauma: the trauma or difficulty that has come about in the realm of relationships is best healed through relationship. Or in other words, interpersonal difficulty (rupture) improves through attentive interpersonal engagement (repair). The interpersonal repair that took place involved individual relationships (with friends, colleagues, romantic partners, therapists, coaches), and/or groups (remedial and therapy groups, networking and

skills sharing groups, friendship groups). In the case of interviewee No.2.3, he described how meeting together with a group of friends to play niche board games every weekend in adolescence honed his interpersonal skill in ways that became directly applicable to his later career as a senior executive on corporate boards. It was apparent how much the interviewees valued successful interpersonal relating. For example, interviewee No.2.3 said that he takes particular pride in the fact that throughout his life he has only lost one friend. When I asked interviewee No.2.1 what he was most proud of or most pleased with in his life so far, he replied “Undoubtedly my relationship with my spouse” (p.9-10).

But relationships as a resource could also be experienced as inadequate, or at worst distressing. Interviewee No.41 spoke about a bad experience of therapy, where she felt the therapist was not able to understand her and be responsive to her needs, and how this significantly increased her distress. Interviewee No.30 talked about an experience of coaching at work that was ineffectual through being far too simplistic. In the UK there is currently no training to prepare therapists or coaches for working effectively with the special needs of gifted individuals. A practitioner such as a coach or therapist might find it particularly challenging to be confronted with a gifted client – see, for example, the article “Help... My Client is Brilliant! Coaching People with High IQs” (Gordon n.d.). There is a growing literature on the need for specialist understanding and skill in therapists to equip them to work effectively with gifted clients (Yermish 2010; Grobman 2009; Silverman 2013; Peterson & Moon 2008; Peterson 2015).

Yermish (2010) points out that in conducting psychotherapy with gifted adults, it can be surprising how rapidly they can make progress. In the course of my research I noticed how much use my gifted participants were able to make even of that one research interview. For example, interviewee No.6 started independently (i.e. without any direct therapeutic intervention) coming to an awareness and shift in perspective during the interview, just by being facilitated to talk reflectively about her experiences. During the interview she clearly came to realise how much the sensitivity and caution from her early years (see section 5.1 above) was still affecting her life, and towards the end of the interview she spontaneously said “Thinking about it like this and going through it has made me realise really that’s my main problem at work, is that I probably shouldn’t be quite so afraid to show what I can do I suppose” (p.28). And “possibly I need to speak up more anyway” (p.29). Several interviewees

in their feedback on their experience of participating in the research, said that they had found it “therapeutic”.

The making of the kinds of changes in interpersonal relating described above resulted in the interviewees becoming much more attuned to their impact on others. As No.30 put it, “I’m very like uber sensitive about saying the right and the wrong thing to people” (p.28). It was acknowledged, though, how difficult the sustaining of such changes could be. This was put candidly and amusingly by No.74 as follows: “...you always get this feeling that, ‘Oh I’m the best...I want to be the boss of everybody’, you have to fight with it” (p.13:4-5); “...we always still have this inner baby saying, ‘I’m very clever, I’m always right’ (p.23).

* * *

This chapter has presented data from my research by organising it into an Overview Model of Giftedness. It has shown how the different elements and processes of this model depict the development and predicaments of gifted individuals as relationally-oriented beings who, through their biopsychosocial lifecourse, play out their needs for belonging, collaboration, and competition, within environments that can differ markedly as to how much understanding or support they provide for such individuals. The next chapter raises the analysis of the data to a higher level of abstraction and interprets the data to specifically answer the research question of how interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome.

Chapter 6 – Interpretation of the data: Answering the research question

So far we have looked at how there is, from an evolutionary perspective, a need socially to belong within a group to collaborate for safety and the securing of resources, and there is also a need to compete against rivals for resources within the group or between groups. In order to be able to successfully both collaborate and compete, effective interpersonal relating is essential. Why might interpersonal relating become problematic for gifted individuals? To look at this in more detail I will start at the beginning of life.

6.1 How does interpersonal difficulty arise?

A baby is born. “Every child is a gift”, as people commonly say, or “a gift from God” as the original biblical reference puts it (Psalm 127:3). As Freud (1914:91) famously put it, we are born “His Majesty the Baby”, commanding the rapt attention of those close to us who attend to our every need. At first, every little thing we do is greeted by our parents as phenomenally interesting and brilliant. But as Kaufman (2008) writes, every child is a gift and every child has gifts, but not every child is gifted according to the definition of what giftedness is. Soon comparison – what Theodore Roosevelt (n.d) termed “the thief of joy” – sets in. People compare their babies with each other: they check which one has reached which developmental milestone, being worried if their baby seems delayed, feeling proud if their baby seems advanced. Right from the beginning of life there are sets of developmental yardsticks (such as Sharma & Cockerill 2014) that establish what the norm is for things such as when babies are meant to have gained a certain weight or used their first two-word phrase, and parents and health professionals measure growing infants against these. Partly this is about checking whether there are developmental problems present which might require intervention, but on a more visceral level for parents this comparing is driven by a fear of their child being delayed as this could mean being left out, ‘left behind’, when staying within the group is what is safest. But there is also satisfaction and pride if their child is advanced because that is reassuring of the prospect of being able to successfully compete.

Being able to compete successfully can lead to a more secure place in a group, even becoming the leader of a group, and being the leader is associated with high status and lower levels of stress (Sherman et al 2012). In human and animal groups there is generally a hierarchy of

positions of varying status, and high status amasses certain advantages (see Magee & Galinsky 2009). With hens there is the exemplar pecking order. In primates, the species most similar to our own, individuals with higher status in the troop often have less stress, better health, more success in accessing food supplies and in mating, and live longer (Sapolsky 2005). In human evolution too, higher hierarchical positions are associated with better health and longevity (Wilkinson 2000). In our society there are selection procedures, often involving IQ tests, for gaining admission to prestigious professions that command superior income and lead to a high status position in society and a more comfortable and privileged lifestyle (Sternberg 1995). As a resource that can be used in competing successfully, intelligence is valued. However, as shown in Chapter 2, it is IQs near the top of the normal range that are most correlated with success of this kind. What seems to be most desired therefore is to be safely within the norms of the group, but just ahead enough to ensure the best survival prospects for yourself and your offspring. That is what parents are checking for by comparing their children with each other (though they are very unlikely to be consciously formulating or expressing that this is what they mean to be doing). And then when the children start school, they themselves engage in comparing. In Erikson's (1950) life-stage model, for school-aged children (aged 5-12 years) he names the psychosocial crisis that has to be navigated as "industry versus inferiority", and cites the virtue that is gained through mastery of this stage as being that of competence. The developing child derives his or her own sense of competence by comparing and measuring his or her performance against that of others (Eccles 1999), and by comparing others' perceptions of him or her with their perceptions of others (Erikson 1968). According to this, comparison is an inevitable component of seeking to build self-esteem.

Children at school quickly pick out and label as 'clever' those who do best – the child who drew the best picture, or knew the most answers, or was quickest at completing a task. Status is accorded to this. In this way it is registered who is likely to prove to be either the most formidable adversary, or, with their admired competence, the most confidence-inspiring potential ally. What comes to be judged 'the best' is also bound up with noticing what reaction their respective efforts have produced: who got the most praise? The highest grades? There is a naturally inbuilt competitiveness to gain approval because having the caregiver's favour and attention ensures survival by being kept in mind, protected, provided

for, and not at risk of being neglected or abandoned. And because of that competitiveness, there is a fine line between admiration and denigration: those who have a position of status can also be resented and attract attempts to destroy their advantage (overt envious attacks) or at the least stimulate others to take pleasure in any misfortune they should suffer (the more covert or insidious *Schadenfreude*).

In the well-known originally Danish story *Keiserens nye Klæder* (Andersen 1837), two tailors set out precisely to denigrate, exploit and humiliate someone who is in a position of high status and advantage – an emperor who loves fabulous clothes. The tailors – strangers to town – offer to make for him what they promise will be the most marvellous new garment ever: it will be woven of thread that is invisible to anyone who is unfit for their position or stupid. The day comes when the emperor is undressed to fit it on. The two tailors make a great show of adjusting the new clothing on him, but he and all the onlookers find that they cannot see anything there. As no-one wants to be judged unintelligent (demonstrating the importance within that society of intelligence), they all pretend to see an exquisite garment. The emperor goes out on a public procession to show off his apparently magnificent gown. The crowds of spectators – no-one wanting to be exposed as stupid – mimic each other in making robust exclamations of appreciating the fabulous new clothes that they can't actually see. Then a small child says, "But he hasn't got anything on". The emperor hears this but ignores it and continues strutting along as though the nakedness he fears might indeed be true has not been suggested.

During my research interviews, one participant brought up this story in the course of explaining what she saw as the root of the interpersonal difficulty she had suffered:

It's like the emperor's child, the emperor's clothes, the child doesn't want to tell other people they are stupid, he just says the emperor is naked, and I think when you grow up as a gifted child and people not recognising that, which happened to me, maybe that's why I'm so aware of that, is they get irritated by that and they push it down, which happened to me... (No.41, p.10)

As I pondered on this and engaged in memo-writing, I thought that it might well be that a gifted person can be like the small child in this story, as a gifted person has much more of a tendency to act independently, not honouring group rules and sensibilities (Favier-Townsend 2014:62). And when a gifted person says things as she sees them, she might trigger an

unfavourable reaction that she might find difficult to handle. However, I then thought about how a gifted person can also become the emperor in this story. A person who notices by comparison with others his own capability and perhaps receives regular praise from others for this, can become dependent on preserving that beguiling sense of having superior capability and ignore evidence to the contrary that threatens that image of himself.

6.1.1 The two main orders of interpersonal difficulty: Child and Emperor

In analysing my research data, the interpersonal difficulty encountered seemed to be of two main orders. The first centered around an incapability of reading social cues and politics correctly, blurting things out honestly without cognizance of the interpersonal nuances present, and not having awareness of others' processes or being able to tune into these accurately, for example experiences that formed the theme that I named in my PEP "relationally out of sync" (Falck 2013:28). This related to the child in the story, as my interviewee above described, so I have categorised this order of interpersonal difficulty as the "Naïve Child" syndrome. The second main order of interpersonal difficulty centered around impatience, arrogance, seeing others as slow or stupid, for example experiences that formed the theme I named in my PEP "own challenging behaviour" (Falck 2013:30). I saw this as relating to the emperor in the story because he is self-centered, ignores feedback from others around him and marches ahead intent on preserving his inflated view of himself. I therefore categorised this order of interpersonal difficulty as the "Arrogant Emperor" syndrome.

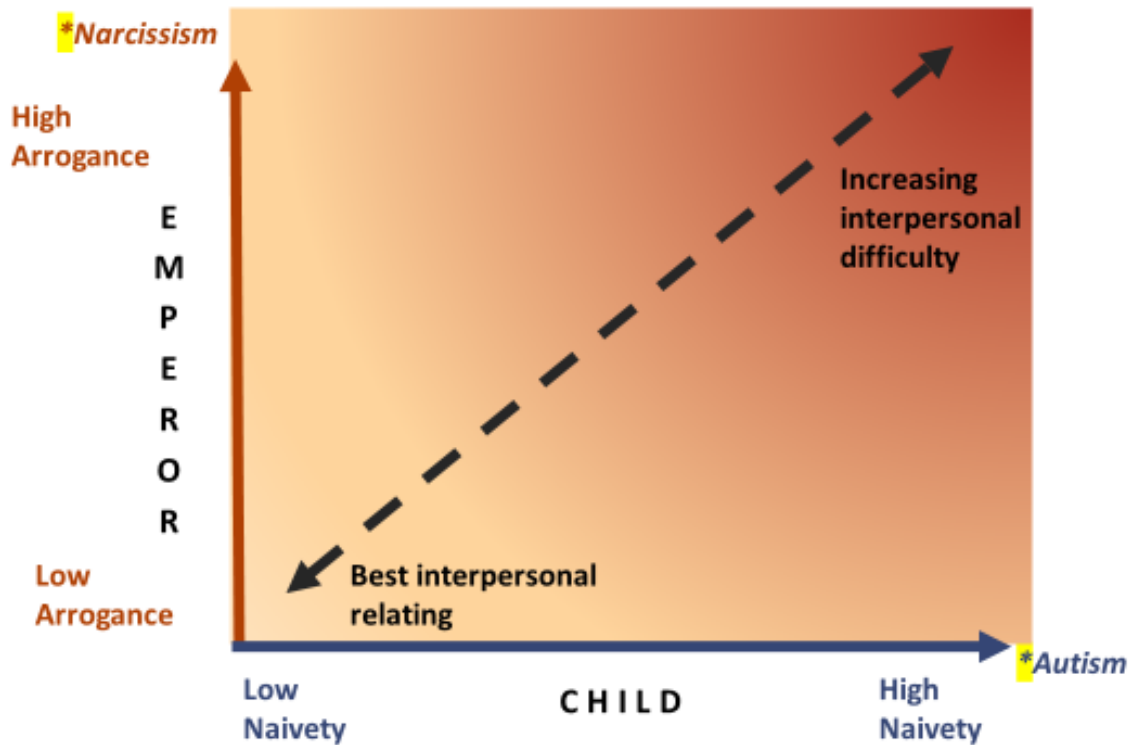
Going back over my research data, I marked up instances of interpersonal difficulty as to whether they matched "Child" or "Emperor" (Appendix F). Based on this and also on my textual analysis and experience from professional practice, I created Table 14 to chart the kinds of interpersonal relating differences between the Child and the Emperor.

Table 14: Distinguishing Child versus Emperor characteristics of interpersonal relating

CHILD	EMPEROR
Naïve, curious	Arrogant, entitled
Asking a lot of naïve questions	Making a lot of knowing criticisms
Making factual ‘discovery-type’ observations	Making disparaging ‘already-informed’ evaluations
Not following established social rules because of having no awareness or understanding of what these are	Not following established social rules because of deriding these and thinking you’re above them
Being immune to embarrassment/deference	Being very sensitive to issues of ego/status
A guileless blurting out driven by the inability to hold back the urgency of wanting to say something	An impatient interrupting of others driven by viewing their contribution as worthless
Being tactless out of innocence, not being able to perceive or predict how another will be affected	Being tactless out of frustration/irritation/anger, not caring how another will be affected
Attitude of having no personal expectations	Attitude of expecting you are owed certain attentions and privileges
Experiences – and stirs in others – bewildered awkwardness/discomfort	Experiences – and stirs in others – defensive/attacking indignation

With further thought I considered that there was a range in acuteness of these manifestations of interpersonal relating characteristics, from the occasional to the more entrenched and through to clinically diagnosable problems. Unexpectedly, I experienced many people (research participants and people with whom I discussed and to whom I presented my work) raising the question about how giftedness related to Asperger’s syndrome (although this term is now outdated, which I will explain below, it is still widely used). I saw the features that giftedness and Asperger’s (part of the autistic spectrum) have in common as belonging with the ‘Naïve Child’ category, and so I suggest a continuum in severity of naïve interpersonal behaviour that ranges from Child through to the clinical condition of autism. Similarly, I encountered the question of how giftedness relates to narcissism, and as I saw the features that giftedness and narcissism have in common as belonging with the ‘Arrogant Emperor’ category, I suggest a continuum in the severity of arrogant interpersonal behaviour that ranges from Emperor through to the clinical condition of narcissism. This is depicted in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Child and Emperor



***Please note:** The use here of the terms 'narcissism' and 'autism' should not be misinterpreted as suggesting that gifted individuals often have, or are susceptible to developing, these clinical conditions. The conceptualisation in this diagram is intended to elucidate how aspects of gifted behaviour can, in extreme, look similar to, and therefore be at risk of being misdiagnosed as, these clinical conditions. See the text below for full details.

In the Child and Emperor framework, the way a person expresses themselves in interactions with others – i.e. the nature of their expressiveness of self – has been analysed in two dimensions: naivety and arrogance. Each of these has been given a line representing a continuum from low to high, with naivety (Child) on the horizontal axis and arrogance (Emperor) on the vertical axis. This depicts how narcissism represents an extreme of arrogance, and autism an extreme of naivety. This is not to suggest that giftedness itself leads to autism or to narcissism; instead, what is being conceptualised here is that naivety and arrogance are aspects of interpersonal relating that my research has identified some gifted individuals as experiencing, and that extreme naivety in interpersonal relating can look similar to the symptoms of autism, just as extreme arrogance in interpersonal relating can look similar to the symptoms of narcissism. For precisely this reason there is documented misdiagnosis between giftedness and autism, and giftedness and narcissism (see Webb et al

2005). I address this more fully in Chapter 8 (section 8.2 “Giftedness, autism, narcissism”). See also section 8.4 for a critique of this conceptualisation. In Figure 6 above, the diagonal dotted line shows how communication and interaction that is comprised of a minimum of both naivety and arrogance makes for the best interpersonal relating. As this dotted line moves up towards the top right it enters the area of greatest interpersonal difficulty (shaded darker red) which is comprised of high levels of arrogance or naivety or both.

It is important to note that these continuums are for conceptual purposes only: I am not suggesting that for example if someone is more and more naïve they become autistic, but I am saying that when the level of interpersonal naivety in a person is extreme it can look the same as the level of naivety that is apparent in autism. All of this is further explicated in the next sections.

6.1.2 The naïve Child through to autism

Through my research interviews it became apparent that there was an order of interpersonal difficulty that arose from the interviewee behaving spontaneously in a very innocent, guileless way, and then being surprised to discover that others had taken offence. This demonstrated an essential naivety with regard to what others might expect, how they might be feeling, and how they might be predicted to experience and react to something.

I’d like to think that I’m generally a nice guy, but I can, involuntarily, hurt people by saying something or doing something or reacting in a certain way that is just not appropriate given their current state of mind. And that is something that happens to me time and time again. (No.189, p.35)

I say stuff which makes people’s hair go up on end...(No.36, p.6)

...when it comes to politics, knowing what to say to whom and the implications of it, I was saying to a friend, I said, “I’m intelligent and therefore I feel I should be good at politics, but it’s not an instinct”. My friend, she said, “It’s an instinct, politics, you don’t necessarily have to be intelligent for it, you just know what to say, what not to say, when to hold your tongue, when to speak, and there are people who are very good at making alliances and networking”. I’m bad at it, I’m just bad.... I think I’m bad at it because, I can’t put my finger on it.... I think I lack a certain understanding of what it is... (No.36, p.14)

Naivety can derive from simply not having learned necessary information, such as a child who by his or her youthfulness has not yet been exposed to certain social situations and has not had the opportunity to learn from these and learn about how these work and can best be navigated. Or naivety can derive from such learning not having taken place because of a

cognitive incapability of registering, processing, retaining and applying the necessary information that there has already been sufficient exposure to in relevant situations. Learning about and gaining interpersonal fluency usually accrues to a person in the ordinary course of development. However, I had several interviewees describe that they felt this had not occurred for them in the way they noticed it seemed to have done for others.

For my particular case it's quite strange. I see people developing social skills naturally. For me they never came naturally... (No.74, p.6)

...it's always in my head that I'm very aware I'm not good with people and I'd rather not be in that position but I just have to be in that position so I need to learn how to deal with that.

Interviewer: But what makes you say you're not good with people?

I don't know, because something inside me, people see me differently.... I'm not a big social person and I don't know how to, I'm friendly with people, people like me as a friend, but I'm not as close as how I see others can be really friends. Girls' chats, I don't have that ability. (No.68, p.34)

Deficits or persistent difficulties in social imagination, communication, interpretation, and interaction (The National Autistic Society, n.d.), or what Wing (1988) termed the "triad of impairments" in socialization, communication, and imagination, are the key features of functioning that would qualify a person for a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder as listed in the American Psychological Association's current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders or DSM-5 (2013). Autism is classed as a developmental disorder (Ibid.), suggesting that something that is expected to have taken place in the ordinary course of development has not taken place. For example, prior to the age of four (Doherty 2009) a child's cognitive development has not yet matured enough for them to have achieved 'theory of mind', which is the ability to perceive others' perspectives, intentions and beliefs (Baron-Cohen et al 1985). For an autistic person, this ability never develops naturally (Baron-Cohen 1995). And if a person hasn't 'grown up' in this expected way, they might manifest behaviour and functioning that is associated with being more childlike, such as the naivety introduced above. How does giftedness relate to autistic spectrum phenomena? One main difference is that in autism there can be abnormally low IQ (in 75% of cases, according to Markram & Markram 2010), whereas giftedness always involves abnormally high IQ. Another clear difference is that in autism, IQ test results can show a marked discrepancy between (high) non-verbal performance and (low) verbal performance, whereas in giftedness there is a profile of more uniformly high performance across the different dimensions (Remington

2017). This ties in with the study mentioned in section 2.5.1 by Guenole et al (2015) which showed that gifted children with a less even profile of this kind exhibited more behavioural and emotional difficulty. However, the idea of a spectrum asserts a range in levels of functioning and of IQ in autism.

Some of my interviewees made reference to Asperger's syndrome. They did so in the course of spontaneously pairing giftedness with interpersonal difficulty and mentioning high IQ people they had encountered whom they saw as being socially odd. They then said that they thought such people might have Asperger's syndrome. For example:

He's very bright but very odd, I'm sure he's on the Asperger's scale, like a lot of Mensa members are. I don't know if you've noticed that but a lot of Mensa members are borderline autistic I think. I go away with them every year on a weekend in [location] and about 100 Mensa members go and there's always a good five to ten you can pick out that are odd, which is quite interesting. (No.2, p.7)

The term originates from a 1944 article by Austrian paediatrician Hans Asperger (cited in Rhode & Klauber 2004). It followed one year after the first delineation of a syndrome termed autism by Leo Kanner (Ibid). Asperger's work only gained prominence nearly forty years later when Lorna Wing (1981) published a similar description for the English-speaking world, stimulating much research and debate on what constituted a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome and how this was similar to or different from autism (Webb et al 2005; Rhode & Klauber 2004). The first time that Asperger's Disorder was listed as a diagnostic entity was in the fourth edition of the DSM (American Psychological Association 1994). Nineteen years later, in the fifth edition, it has been removed as a diagnostic entity distinct from Autistic Spectrum Disorder (American Psychological Association 2013).

The research and debate that goes into the designating of diagnostic categories is extensive (eg. see Paris & Phillips 2013), involves a lot of subjective decision-making about where to place boundaries that is not an exact science, and disagreement continues amongst expert clinicians (Webb et al 2005; Rhode & Klauber 2004) as to how to view or define the different categories. This issue is true not only of the Asperger's/Autism example, but also of other diagnostic entities, such as how Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder, and Pathological Demand Avoidance, relate to Autistic Spectrum Disorder. And how do these relate to giftedness? Webb et al (2005, 2016) deal very helpfully and comprehensively with the differentiation of diagnosis between giftedness and disorders such as ADHD, Bipolar,

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and Schizoid Personality Disorder. As that subject fills a whole book of its own it is well beyond the scope of this dissertation to address this in detail, but in section 8.2 I discuss the issue of differentiating giftedness from autism.

6.1.3 The arrogant Emperor through to narcissism

How does a gifted individual come to behave like an Arrogant Emperor? Freud (1914:90) maintained that we all begin life in a state of “primary narcissism”, where our existence is centered on gaining satisfaction of our own needs and we are not aware of others’ needs and do not make a contribution towards reciprocating to them the care they give us and the sacrifices they make for us. But we are meant to outgrow this selfish phase. If, however, a child is always treated as special and admired and indulged, they can fail to outgrow this self-centeredness because they are continually being treated as royalty. They therefore continue as His Majesty the Baby. Behaving that way in contexts outside of the immediate family, at an age where others will expect such behaviour to have long ceased, will be sure to cause interpersonal difficulty.

A gifted child might well be treated as special and admired and indulged. However, even without such treatment, such a child will usually come to be aware of their particular competence in relation to others (see the effort/speed differentials discussed in section 5.2.1 above). With this can come a confidence in their own abilities – even to the extent that they believe they are always right (see the example of interviewee No.1, in section 5.2.2) – and a frustration or impatience with what is experienced as others’ slowness and/or incompetence. This looks arrogant.

I can see that I can get there but he couldn't. I couldn't explain why he couldn't get there very quickly and I think this is my problem as well, I probably arrived at an answer very quickly even with normal maths problems, but I'm very bad at explaining to people how I got there, I just got there, I don't need all these steps and I can't explain how these steps go. (No.68, p.15)

[Speaking of her mother.] She would describe herself as a mad scientist and her style of thinking is very A, B, Z. She doesn't have to go through C, D, E, F, G, which is something I seem to have inherited, so's my sister. But that causes problems with colleagues who don't understand how you're getting the result or reaching the conclusion that you've reached quite logically to you, but it causes friction in a workplace. (No.55, p.1)

At worst, regularly experiencing such frustration can develop in the gifted person a derogatory attitude towards others:

...people are idiots and they can't see what's in front of them. You have to spell it out for them. (No.69, p.11)

Well, it's very difficult to respect authority if authority really clearly has no idea what it's doing. I have very low tolerance for ineptitude... I've learnt to temper it in most situations, but I really do sometimes lose my rag completely when I see someone just blindly doing something, because that's what they've been told to do, even if it makes no sense at all. (No.55, p.16)

I know I'm a bit easy to draw judgement on people sometimes and that's a bias I have, so I think whenever I hear someone is talking about something that I would label as stupid things, then I just think oh god this person must be, I don't know, someone I couldn't stand, and I think if they can enjoy this outside of work they just can't be clever enough to be able to do any positive contribution to whatever we do here. (No.17, p.37)

I initially tried to help her, but I became impatient and the feedback, my friend overheard the conversation, and said to me, "You know, what you do, you make people feel stupid." Yeah, and I think he was right. Yeah. I was impatient with her and I didn't help matters the way I approached it. I made her feel just bad. (No.189, p.40)

[Speaking of her CEO]...he is clearly someone who can't see what's going on...and maybe he just needs to be told, you know like, if he can't see what's going on, I mean he's probably a bit, you know stupid... (No.30, p.44)

Interviewees showing others their frustration (Nos. 2, 43, 189, 30), impatience (Nos. 2, 68, 189), criticism (Nos. 74, 55, 1, 17), and obstinacy in wanting things done their way out of a strong belief in being right (Nos. 55, 1), formed a clear source of interpersonal difficulty. In addition, when a gifted individual repeatedly gets the message that they are seen as "brilliant" (eg. No.68, p.9), this can lead them to develop expectations about what they should be entitled to, for example in terms of occupation or remuneration, and they can become correspondingly dissatisfied if things are not working out for them in that way (eg. No.1, No.6). A person who behaves like this can be viewed as being narcissistic. There are, however, clear differences between giftedness and symptoms that would qualify for a clinical diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). As with autism, the point for NPD is that it is only to be diagnosed when severe and persisting. This is further discussed in section 8.2.

In this section I have shown how, out of my research data, I have come to conceptualise the two main orders of interpersonal difficulties that arise in gifted adults as (naïve) Child and (arrogant) Emperor. I have depicted this graphically in Figure 5 above. In Table 14 above I listed the sorts of attitudes and interactions that comprise each of the Child and the Emperor conceptualisations, also showing thereby how they are distinguished from each other. In the next section I look at how interpersonal difficulty becomes perpetuated.

6.2 How is interpersonal difficulty perpetuated?

In Webb et al's (2005:176) chapter on "Relationships Issues for Gifted Children and Adults", they write that "Many gifted children and adults would agree that embracing their giftedness often comes with some type of social price tag". They go on to say that "Fortunately, being bright brings with it an ability to find solutions to many problems, including interpersonal ones" (Ibid.). However, what I noticed in my research was that interviewees were experiencing interpersonal difficulty of a kind that didn't fit into the quite cognitive-sounding formula of "problems" for which they could "find solutions" – instead there was a more unconscious, pervasive relational pattern that they participated in, and had become habituated to, as just part of how life was for them. Even if they were aware of it, they seemed to experience it as something beyond their control that was impermeable, as though they were hapless victims of it. What might constitute it, or what might underlie it, was not necessarily accessible to them in a way that could be formulated into a problem for which a solution could be found. For example, see this excerpt, where the interviewee is talking about her work colleagues:

...the team that I'm in now, I don't get on with my peers at all. Well it's not that I don't get on with them, but they just don't... I'm like a complete outsider

.....**So you feel they don't accept you?**

No not at all. They don't like me.

Okay. And do you have a sense of why that is?

Well I've gone over it and over it really with my partner and I don't know. (No.2, p.25)

I started wondering about what part interviewees might be playing – without consciously wanting to play that part or even realising that they were playing that part – in the perpetuating of interpersonal difficulty in their lives. The next section explores some unconscious processes, showing how the Psychodynamic concepts of transference and repetition compulsion, and the Systemic concept of valency, can help to make sense of some

of the interpersonal difficulties gifted adults find themselves experiencing when they do not understand why that is their experience (and why that might keep on being their experience).

6.2.1 From past to present: transference, valency, and repetition compulsion

There were occasions during my research interviews when interviewees mentioned a way in which they behaved interpersonally, and then themselves spontaneously made an explicit link with their past, stating that it was because of what they had experienced in the past that they were behaving in that way now. For example No.6, who was bullied at school, is talking about avoiding participating socially at work:

Probably the most difficult would be I worry about the office gossip... There will be one person in particular that might be rubbing someone up the wrong way at a certain time. That sort of thing I find difficult. I worry that might become me at some point when there becomes a bit of an atmosphere, someone might walk out the room and people start to talk and then they walk back in and everyone...it's very playground tactics really isn't it, so that I think, "Oh no, I don't want to go through all that again, I've had that at school already", so one of the reasons I keep my distance I think. (p.18-19).

Below is another example of an interviewee interpreting a present situation in terms of what had been experienced in the past:

And I think, you know, maybe like my previous experiences and having been bullied, I assumed that people were reacting in a negative way towards me... (No.30, p.66)

No.2 described not a specific incident but instead a general sense of her position in relation to others that she saw as having been set up in the past and recurring in the present:

...it ended up meaning that I was really apart from my peers because my teachers deliberately said, "well there's no point you doing that work because that will be too easy, so we'll set you some other work".... I can see the parallels between being at school and being at work and being apart. (p.2-3)

Although the interviewees in the above examples were conscious of the way these past experiences were being transferred into the present and affecting their present behaviour and experience, being conscious of it did not change it: in spite of seeing parallels with the past, their experience of current situations continued to mimic that of the past. And sometimes interviewees were not conscious of the parallels that I noticed – some of which I only noticed during the data analysis stage. For example, there were instances of language from the past being unconsciously repeated in the present, as with No.1 (my emphases added):

On p.5 of his transcript, he says that at school he was known “as a smart alec”. Later, on p.32, he says “I have never, ever put Mensa on an application form as one of the clubs I’m in or one of my interests, never ever put that on there, because you always look like a smart alec and they won’t like you.”

Here he is not making the explicit, conscious link that he is behaving in a certain way because of past experience, that he is expecting that the present is going to turn out just like the past did, but he is demonstrating by his repetition of the exact same language from one situation to the other that this is his expectation. This was also evidenced with No.2 (my emphases added):

On p.2 of her transcript, speaking of her childhood, she says: “My teacher was trying to get my parents involved but because my parents were so working class, they really worried that I was going to get ahead of myself.”

Later, on p.24, talking about her current workplace, she says: “But I get on well with my superiors in the sense that so long as I don’t get ahead of myself I guess...”

In this example again an experience from the past is being transferred to the present, but not in the form of an explicit link being made consciously. It is being transferred in unconscious assumptions about what the ‘rules’ of acceptable conduct are, as revealed in an off-the-cuff remark.

In some cases it became apparent that a formative experience from the past acted as a sort of attentional filter so that what was most noticed about present experience was that which matched with the past, and what happened in the present was being constantly interpreted in accordance with what had happened in the past. For example, in No.2’s interview she makes regular reference to the interpersonal difficulty she experiences at her workplace (my speech as interviewer is shown in bold):

p.24 The team that I’m in now, I don’t get on with my peers at all. Well it’s not that I don’t get on with them, but they just don’t... I’m like a complete outsider

p.25 **So you feel they don’t accept you?**

No not at all. They don’t like me.

Okay. And do you have a sense of why that is?

Well I’ve gone over it and over it really with my partner and I don’t know.

p.31 I don’t feel like I do anything wrong. I feel like I’m always trying and I’m trying not to be too much and I’m friendly, I’m nice, I try to engage people, maybe I try too hard, maybe that’s what it is, but I feel like I try with them and I don’t know what else I can do really

p.32 [*Speaking of an experience during a meeting*]: ...and I can tell they’re just sitting there thinking, “just shut up”.”

p.33 **So why do you think they don’t want to listen to you?**

I don't know...They either don't think that I know what I'm talking about, or that it's just spite. I don't know whether they just think, "oh she thinks she knows everything".

Why would they want to be spiteful towards you?

I don't know if they are threatened by me or... there's definite bad feeling and I don't really know what it's from, I really don't. I've thought about it a lot.

p.33 So to the best of your ability you are really trying to go down well with the team as much as you can, but there's something that's a bit of a mystery about quite why it's not happening?

Yeah, and I can only think that it's because they think that I'm clever clogs, a know-it-all or something.

This is an interviewee who experienced herself as being very different from her family of origin – perhaps “like a complete outsider”. For example, she described that “my parents aren't the sort of people to sit down with a book and read to their child” (p.39), whereas “I always had my nose in a book” (p.41), and “nothing's changed” (ibid). With the differences came troubles:

[Talking about her sister]: That was a difficult relationship growing up. Can you imagine being three years older and your little kid sister's a lot cleverer than you? There was a lot of jealousy on her part from when we were growing up, definitely. I can't blame her really, I probably didn't do anything to help the situation... That must have been really difficult for her. (p.6)

She was IQ tested at school and based on the results was offered a place at a prestigious grammar school, but her parents would not let her go there (p.2). This made her very resentful towards them (p.14).

I moved out of my dad's house when I was 17 and started living on my own. I'd just turned 17. I'd had a big row with him and left home. (p.13)

Suffice to say I don't have a brilliant relationship with my parents now. They really didn't want me to excel in that way. (p.19)

In speaking about her current work situation, she said “My peers I would think, see maybe it's all just in my head, but my peers I would think they would say I'm overbearing...” (p.36). Here she is starting to suggest that perhaps there could be a different way of interpreting her current experience – “maybe it's all just in my head”. I wondered how much her perception of her workplace group might be clouded by her experiences in her family group, feeling that she is different from them and that they are hostile towards her?

As long as I just stood by the photocopier and did... she really didn't like the fact that I'd been almost promoted from under her nose, and that I wasn't under her command anymore, and I got the intense feeling... she was very nice to me when I left, which surprised me, she was a bit odd like that, but it was clear that she didn't

like that, it was like she felt that I was a bit big for my boots if you know what I mean...(p.22)

Did this person actually feel that way about her? The interviewee was surprised when “she was very nice to me when I left”. She said that the reason she thought this colleague disliked her, was because “I was a bit big for my boots”: this is a clear legacy from her childhood, where she was given the message that she was not to “get ahead of myself” (p.2). The phrase ‘don’t get ahead of yourself’ is intriguing, because it appears that it could well mean that it is *others*, rather than yourself, that you are being warned not to get ahead of, or others’ ideas of where you are or should be, of what your correct place is. The saying ‘getting ahead of yourself’ is similar to that of ‘being out of order’ or ‘out of line’, and perhaps birth order imposes a kind of hierarchy that there is an implicit rule to respect: interviewee No.2 being three years younger than her sister but “a lot cleverer” (p.6) and shooting ahead of her, was ‘out of line’, out of place in relation to the naturally expected order of things. Just like it was ‘out of order’ to be promoted from “under [the] nose” (p.22) of this co-worker. Interviewee No.2 is seeing that dynamic everywhere, interpreting others’ reactions in terms of this formative experience, perhaps out of her sense of guilt at doing better than others/her sister, when perhaps in current situations others might not mind her excelling in the way that her family minded when she was growing up. Of course she could also be right that these office workers are resentful of her progress, and maybe this co-worker was being nice to her on the occasion of her leaving precisely because of being pleased she was going. Interviewee No. 2.2 used the phrase “out of line” (p.29) in describing his behaviour that elicited his father’s violent attempts to stop his precocious questioning (see section 5.1.3), and interviewee No. 69 talked about a traditional hierarchically organised profession where you had to “join at the back of the queue” and could not “jump out of the queue” (p.22) – you could not be promoted over someone who was chronologically older than you were. In these situations respect for the existing order is being demanded, rather than a person’s ability and contribution being welcomed or assessed on their own merits, regardless of whether they are a child, a younger sibling, or a more junior employee.

In the situation that interviewee No.2 describes above with her work colleagues, as with all situations, what is pertinent is not only what interpretations the interviewee is making concerning others, but also what the interviewee is actually doing in relation to others. And

just like she said above of her older sister “I probably didn’t do anything to help the situation”, perhaps at work she is also – in ways that she is not aware of – not doing anything to help the situation. As giftedness is such an important part of a person’s identity (see section 5.1.2), and a person has an inbuilt drive to seek recognition, validation, and acceptance (see section 5.1.1), it appears that the gifted person continues to try to seek recognition even if the way they go about this provokes others, because getting a reaction of some kind is preferable to being ignored. When a person has become habituated to a negative reaction, they could continue to unconsciously play their part in eliciting a negative reaction because that is better than no reaction, it is at least a way of having this important aspect of their identity in some way interpersonally engaged with, even if the acknowledgment that is being received is in the form of hostility. Berne (1961, 1964) describes our need for acknowledgement from others – what he terms “strokes” – whether this is positive or negative (i.e. a negative stroke is preferable to no stroke).

With other interviewees the predominance of interpreting situations in a way that was coloured by past formative experiences was also apparent. For example, in Appendix D2, “Interpersonal Difficulty”, it is apparent that for No.156 his predominant interpersonal preoccupation was a fear of evoking envy in others (it is visible at a glance how many yellow highlights, denoting the “threat” theme, are present in the data from his interview in comparison with other interviews). Here is an example:

...when I was given a lot of projects there was some form of envy from my colleagues, “Hey this guy, he joined after us but he’s getting a lot of projects”.

And what was that like for you?

It was disturbing, so I wouldn’t update them on how well my projects are doing just so that they didn’t know, and therefore I was expecting a reduced level of envy. But envy is very disturbing cause it can build walls and no, I don’t like that, I feel very disturbed. (p.23)

And why was it quite so disturbing for him? Compare with No.69:

If I became aware that somebody was envious of me it would make me feel very, very happy. But I’m not sure I’ve come across that at all.

It would make you very happy?

Of course it would.

Why would that make you happy do you think?

Because I’ve got something that the other person wishes that he had. That would make me feel nicer wouldn’t it? (p.15)

A clear difference between these two interviewees is that No.156 had a traumatic formative experience of being regularly beaten up by an envious father who was threatened by his young son's intelligence (see section 5.1.3). He could be talking of his father when he says of his current boss:

...my boss sometimes is very strange in a way that he's very encouraging as long as you don't appear as smart as him, as long as you don't talk back. But if you produce something that is way better than him, he's very good in what he's doing, the quality of work that he produces is very, very good, but if you come out with some insights that he feels threatened with, oh he comes down very hard. (p.30)

These legacies from childhood are extraordinarily lasting. For example, when No.6 spoke about how afraid she was of 'showing herself' at work, I thought about how this related to her growing-up experiences. She had described having had no friends at primary school, wandering around the playground painfully alone (p.19 of her interview transcript). She had been at a comprehensive school where she had "a very rocky up and down time" (p.5), was teased for achieving well, and felt she needed to "dumb myself down to fit in more" (p.7). However, this was only one part of her early schooling experience. Later she went to a grammar school where it was "a lot easier, I felt much happier there, it did make a difference" (p.7). But even though there had been other experience since, that original unhappy experience was so formative that it continues to colour her current adult life, making her still very sensitive to expecting she will be reacted to negatively if she freely manifests her abilities: "That's something that I think that's almost stuck with me through later life actually" (p.7). And there are various associated ramifications: she says (p.20) that the worst thing about her at work is never saying no and then getting stressed because of having too much to do. She had said earlier that being able to help and satisfy a person's request makes her feel good about herself and gets a good reaction from others (p.16): I wondered, is never saying no another throwback from the previous bullying? She so much wants to avoid the feared negative reaction, and is so pleased to be able to participate in an experience where it will go well with others, that she cannot decline that opportunity, even if it ends up making her overworked and stressed. It is as though she is unconsciously afraid that if she said no it could create a repeat of the earlier damaging negative interpersonal experiences.

Another interviewee who clearly manifested the impact of his past experiences in the present, was No.1. He described how he did not fit in at school (full description in section 5.2.1), and at school "messed around" (p.6 of his interview transcript) and "misbehaved". He

said that in his current life (just as was the case at school), his intelligence is “totally under-used” (p.12). He expressed bitterness that something was not made of him, provided for him, at a young age, that he was not nurtured more when he was younger (p.14), that he was not in a more testing environment where he could have achieved more. He told how his parents did not show pride in his abilities (p.15), and he had no career guidance at school. After school he went to work in a factory, and used to live at home and go out with friends, “just generally waste time and waste life I think” (p.16). It appeared he was trying to keep out of the house, as he said when he was home his dad was quite authoritarian, and “If I’m not in the way, I’m not a problem” (p.23). At one point he said that he had a general feeling that “things have conspired against me” (p.18). These distressing lacks he has experienced appear to sensitise him to distress elsewhere: he describes feeling the problems of the world acutely, and says “you realise how much really is wrong with the world, and when you read a newspaper about a child dying from neglect or abuse it really, really hurts now” (p.34). It is as though he sees in this, himself as the neglected child. “It’s the one thing”, he said, “that brings me close to tears” (Ibid.).

Even so, it seems there is almost a compulsion to repeat the earlier experiences – the “repetition compulsion” coined by Freud (1920). Just as interviewee No.1 felt his parents didn’t do enough for him while growing up, it could be said that he is not doing enough for himself now. He has the fantasy of being recognized and something being done for him, as opposed to him feeling it is up to him to make a break from past disappointments and persevere in seeking opportunities and working to achieve something he would find more fulfilling. He talked a lot about how “I don’t do good job interviews” (p.33). His view of this is that he has lost job opportunities because interviewers consider him a threat (p.19). I wondered, however, whether interviewing badly might be part of the ‘behaving badly’ valency from school? “Valency” is a word that comes from chemistry, referring to how the properties of a molecule give it the power to combine with certain other molecules in specific ways that form particular compounds. In Systemic thinking this word has been adopted (eg. see Garland 2010) to signify the propensity a person has for getting into particular dynamics with other people – a kind of readiness to (unconsciously) take up a certain position in relation to others that triggers matching responses from others, which causes a familiar compound of previous situations to keep recurring albeit in new contexts and with different people. So in interviewee No.1’s situation, it is as though the disappointing experiences he

had growing up left him without respect for authority and conventional institutional structures, which he rebelled against at school, and as an adult he is in some way still rebelling by not complying with the kind of conduct that would serve him better in interview situations with representatives of workplace structures. This accordingly triggers prospective employers to reject him.

Interviewee No.1 said he felt different from others growing up (p.7), and now, even at Mensa, he said he is different, he is not like other Mensa members, and “they would smile at me, they would talk to me, but they wouldn’t like me” (p.10). He tells me about something that a trainer on a course once spoke about, which clearly resonated with him and which he said was the main thing he always remembers from that course: it was the trainer saying that some people will just take against you and dislike you for no reason at all (p.21). Here interviewee No.1 has remembered something because it accords with an experience he already feels is familiar for him, which validates and further reinforces that experience – the experience that he does not fit in and is disliked. It could be that once you have become so familiar with always experiencing yourself as different and not fitting in, it becomes uncomfortable to think you could belong with or be like others. The experience of being different can become such an important part of your identity that you then actually seek (unconsciously) to preserve it, selectively inattending to the ways in which you might be similar to others (because there are lots of basic ways in which all of us are similar to each other if it is similarity that is being sought).

Similarly, although interviewee No.2 speaks of having had a tough background and not receiving the support or help she needed, she now in some ways perpetuates this situation. During the interview I asked whether she thought it would be useful if there was more understanding around the issues that intellectually gifted people face.

Do you think...it would be in some way useful to somebody like you if in society there was a way of thinking about that [giftedness] differently, or people understanding it differently?

I think in some sense possibly. However it is a gift and it is an advantage, I suppose, depending on your point of view, and so to try to help bring people in to give them more of an advantage seems a bit wrong if you like. To try and get them a level playing field, I suppose, because you would hope that people who are gifted would rise to the top in whatever field naturally, organically, so do you need that additional understanding? (p.48)

It is clear that she has not herself “rise[n] to the top...naturally”, she has worked very hard and struggled significantly for many years - “It sounds like [my life’s] this big tragic story in many ways of lack of love and all of that” (p.44 of her interview transcript) - yet she says it “seems a bit wrong” to consider changing things. It is as if she is seeking to preserve the situation that involves herself and others like her not being understood. She does not seem to want to change her familiar view of giftedness as something that you do not get support for, you have to tough it out and find your own way to something better, against various people’s hostility and resentment, alone.

This section has shown how the unconscious transferring of past experiences onto present situations can lead a person to interpret the present in the light of the expectations they have inherited from the past. It has also shown how there is a tendency to repeat familiar experiences and interpretations of experiences – termed repetition compulsion – because even if this known pattern is distressing, it is less anxiety-provoking than having to forge a new, unknown, way which might prove demanding and perhaps (it is feared) ultimately disappointing. (Another interpretation of repetition compulsion is that it might be an attempt at mastery of a difficult past experience that prompts repetition of it.) Valency has been explained as one of the mechanisms by which old familiar patterns come to be repeated in the present. The next section explores further unconscious processes, including games, intersubjective complementarities, and mindset. Each of these terms will be explained below at the point at which it is first introduced.

6.2.2 Interview intersubjectivity: the barrister’s case

One of the ways to research how intellectually gifted adults relate with others is to examine how, during interview, they have related with the researcher as interviewer. Using this method, I as researcher have used myself as an instrument of information-gathering by tuning in to carefully noticing the impact the interview conversation is having on me and how the presence and behaviour of the interviewee might be shaping my own thoughts, feelings and behaviour – both during and after the interview. What I find myself experiencing whilst conversing with any interviewee is in some part elicited by what that interviewee brings, and

examining this can give an indication of how that interviewee relates with others as well as what others may find themselves experiencing when they converse with him or her. In the practise of Psychodynamic psychotherapy this is termed “countertransference”. This term started out with a quite narrow technical definition but a more contemporary understanding of it – e.g. Dalenberg (2000) and Bollas (1983) – is that countertransference refers to the total of the thoughts and feelings that the therapist finds him- or herself experiencing in direct reaction to the patient/client. Although in the research interviews I undertook I was not positioned as a therapist, my training and experience as a therapist was being drawn on in that it involves attending in a very fine-tuned way to what another person is expressing and to how the nuances of a conversation between myself and the other person unfold. To demonstrate this, I will go through the transcript of just one of the interviews from beginning to end and present sections of it in detail, showing the interplay between interviewer and interviewee, or the ‘dyadic dance’ as sequences of interpersonal relating are sometimes referred to. This is also referred to as intersubjectivity, a complex concept on which full books have been written (eg. Crossley 1996). In essence it refers to the field of impact and influence between people, how each affects the other. The interview with which I will demonstrate this was a one-and-a-half hour interview with a Mensa member who is a barrister. As previously, my speech as interviewer appears in bold to differentiate it from the interviewee’s speech.

At the beginning of the interview, I say “Well if I can start by just getting a few details about your background of where you grew up, your education, qualifications and so on” (p.1 of the transcript). At this point I did not know anything about the interviewee. He could have replied by describing where he grew up, and saying that he had studied law, and was now qualified as a barrister. He does begin by stating where he grew up. Then he says:

I’ve got a bachelor’s degree in political science and economics, I’ve got another bachelor’s degree in law, I’ve got a master’s degree in business law and one more master’s degree in international law... And I’m currently working towards a PhD. In between I’ve also been trained in international law, public international law, also in Sharia law, Islamic law. That’s about it. (p.1)

I found it striking that in his reply he chose to give that level of detail of his achievements. It might of course be that that is what he thought I was requiring. However, later in the interview (p.29) he says: “I would never go out of my way to tell people that I’ve got so many degrees or I do this or I’m an expert in that, or I can do this very well...” Someone who was

being congruent with the sentiments of such a statement might well have responded to the way I opened the interview with a less fully itemised list of their achievements. Instead, what he chose was to “tell...that I’ve got so many degrees”. That is the first of several contradictions in the interview between what he says about how he perceives himself and his behaviour, and what his actual behaviour is.

Part of what fuels the above contradiction is the tension between a wish to be discovered and recognised by the other in the full detail of who he is and what he has done – the excerpt above continues “I would never go out of my way to tell... But if somebody found out something about me that would give me a huge amount of happiness” – and an imposed prohibition on communicating such details:

Blowing your own horn kind of a thing is not something that’s very nice, and in fact if somebody were to come to me and say, “You know I do this a lot and I’m extremely good at this and I’m extremely good at that”, I would not rate that person very high.
(p.29)

Wanting recognition is a basic human relational need. If, however, a person who has high abilities or achievements seeks recognition, the prohibition is encountered that talking about such things or showing delight or pride involves boasting and is wrong. It is fine for a child to be proud of the painting they have done or the story they have written and show it to others and seek their recognition, or for praise to be sought and given if someone with low ability has achieved something. If, however, a person has high ability, they soon learn that it is not okay for them to be straightforward about feelings of delight or wishes for acknowledgment and they have to handle such situations much more carefully and less straightforwardly.

The interview proceeds with me saying “...the advert that you responded to used the word ‘gifted’ and I wonder how you feel that relates to you?” (p.3). He replies:

I don’t feel that applies at all to me, I don’t, no. It’s just that it feels nice to be a part of a society of... you know which is very exclusive. So I applied to Mensa, I was tested, they said, “Welcome aboard”, so I joined up.

So again, there is the tension between denying something yet seeking recognition for it through admission to an exclusive society whose only entrance criterion is verified high IQ. When analysing the data, I realised that in this interview we get into a repeating dynamic where he says he is not that great, I then say but what about this accomplishment and that

one (accomplishments I can only remind him of because he has already revealed them to me), and then he keeps dismissing them.

p.5: **...you [said that you] don't see yourself as intellectually gifted. You've obviously succeeded very well, lots of high-level degrees, been successful in your career?**

p.7: **So the fact that [I mention an accomplishment within his field that is actually quite unique that he has mentioned he has achieved], how did that come about if it doesn't really mean anything?**

Luck I think, just right place right time...It's like saying I'm the only surgeon in the world who can operate on the brain and the knee at the same time. How much use is there for that? I'm not so sure. So it's just something that you say to flatter yourself.

p.24: Extremely lucky. I call it luck.

Yes I hear that. You don't give yourself any credit for...

Anybody could have done what I've done, I've done nothing special.

He states "I do know that I've succeeded a little more than my peers" (p.6), yet keeps denying that he has any special ability. Such a denial can be seen as a demonstration of an internal conflict with acknowledging to oneself one's ability and how it constitutes a noticeable individual difference between yourself and others (Grobman 2017a). But it could also be a conflict concerning what is considered acceptable to acknowledge to another person. Later in the interview he says: "It's much more satisfying if people discover who you are and come back to you and say, 'My God I didn't know this about you', rather than you're having to tell them, 'I am fantastic, I'm very good at what I do'" (p.29). And it is as though that is what he has been cueing me to do, which I have unconsciously picked up on and co-operated with: by him making statements of denial or modesty, and then having me tell him he really is very accomplished, he receives recognition without feeling he has boasted. In Berne's Transactional Analysis (1961, 1964; Harris 1973) he talks about the games people play in order to affirm themselves in their familiar life position and obtain "strokes" from others – the little interactional validations of a person that feed his or her self-esteem. What is happening between this interviewee and me could be thought of as a game that a high-IQ adult plays: *I can't acknowledge my high ability because that constitutes blowing my own trumpet and that is frowned upon, but I need recognition, so I'm going to deny that I should get credit for something and that will cue you to respond with granting recognition by assuring me that I should be given credit.* Playing a game like this, which is usually an

unconscious coping strategy rather than something a person is consciously choosing to play, is a way of managing this conflict between need for acknowledgment and social prohibition.

But then there is another layer to add to this: what is pertinent is not just what the interviewee is accomplishing, but also what his judgement is of what the other is accomplishing. He says of his accomplishments:

Those are just labels. For a doctor to say I work from Harley Street, for a lawyer to say I work from Chancery Lane, it's just a label. It doesn't reflect on how well you're doing or how good you are at what you do, it's just a label isn't it? (p.7)

Of course what he is saying makes sense. However, another layer can be seen in this when it is considered that the interview is taking place in my Harley Street consulting room, and here he is suggesting that someone working from Harley Street might not be good at what they do. This could be read as a subtle undermining of me. Because giftedness or high ability is always measured relative to others, a person who has become identified with their abilities or achievements can become obliged to keep checking that they are maintaining their status by comparing themselves against others. Another game a high-IQ adult might play is to reassure themselves of their position by undermining the other person's position, judging others unfavourably in comparison with themselves. This relates to Dweck's (2000) work on self-theories, popularized in her book "Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential" (2006). If you feel that something about you is important, and is a fixed entity, you seek to protect its integrity by reaffirming its existence and reassuring yourself that it is not under threat of denigration or dissipation. During the interview the barrister makes it clear quite how important this is for him. I ask:

...on a scale of one to ten, how important a part of your personal identity do you feel this is, this kind of ability to...

Ten.

Okay.

Absolutely.

Okay.

This is what defines me. If I, I have two big fears in life, as far as I am concerned, personally about myself. One is I lose my eyesight, and the second is I lose my logical way of thinking. For me both are as good as dying. If I couldn't see any more I wouldn't know what to do with myself. If I didn't have my thinking, if I could not think things through or try to understand what's going on around me, there would be no point in living anymore would there? So a ten. (p.17-18)

And how do I respond to unconsciously picking up on the suggestion he has made that someone working from Harley Street, as I do, might not be good at what they do? There is a point at which he says “I’m not making any sense am I?” (p.9). And I respond:

No you are, yeah.

Well not to myself, I’m not making any sense to myself.

Okay. Yeah, no that does make sense.

The more you know the less you know. It’s as simple as that.

Sure.

I am saying that I understand his paradoxes, yes it makes sense to me even though he says it doesn’t make sense to himself. Maybe I am trying to show him that I am after all good at what I do, that I’m competent at being a psychotherapist, I am managing to follow him, and I ‘get’ him.

Later he is even more explicit about how he judges others negatively:

...there would have been a time when I realised that something I was taking for granted was not so commonplace.

Okay, and how did you notice that?

Because people are idiots and they can’t see what’s in front of them. You have to spell it out for them. (p.10)

By the very nature of the interview situation, with my questions I am causing him to have to spell things out for me. What he is saying here could therefore leave me feeling rather uneasy, susceptible to being judged by him as an idiot.

I am fond of just calling people idiots, not to their face but I do feel like that. And it’s amazing. They are superbly confident, they stand up and they consider that they’re entitled to everything that they are getting and they’re not really because they are idiots. (p.10)

He is saying explicitly that even though he might not call people idiots “to their face”, “I do feel like that”. Others will be able to unconsciously pick up on this attitude of his, and this is likely to set up in them a fear that they will be humiliated by him. In Benjamin’s (2009) work on enactments – enactments being the way people can get caught up in acting out a repetition between them of a particular (often historic) dynamic – a situation like this sets up what is called a “complementarity”: if one person is the judge and the other the idiot, then the dynamic remains present of those two roles being occupied between those two people, but always with the possibility that the roles could be reversed. So, for as long as this

interviewee calls others idiots, he will carry the same fear that others might expose him as being an idiot:

I am quite aware that most of what I do is absolutely fraud.

Fraud?

Yes, absolutely. There is, I was reading something about this, there's a phenomenon isn't there, where a person keeps questioning himself and saying have I deserved this or am I just faking it?

Imposter syndrome?

Precisely. So I have a massive dose of that.

Okay. Right. Yes I can hear that because you're talking about not really seeing yourself as in any way...

And I will not admit that to any person who I thought I would be coming into contact with again ever.

Okay, you mean that you have imposter syndrome?

Yeah exactly. Why would I expose myself to anybody else? (p.7-8)

As no-one wants to be judged to be an idiot, if a person picks up on the other having this attitude it can stir the person to compete with the other to try to prove that they are not the idiot that the other is expecting they might be. Or, the person might just wish to rather avoid being with that other because it is uncomfortable and hard work to try to maintain their self-esteem by constantly having to compete in that person's presence. In other words, this is a game in which you can get caught up in the complementarity of domination and submission by submitting (*you're the smart one, I'm the idiot*). Or you can vie to be the dominant (i.e. smart) one. Or you might well prefer to avoid the whole hard work and even unpleasantness of it by staying away from social interaction. At the beginning of the interview he had said:

p.3-4: I'm not very happy meeting people, I'm what you would call an introvert... In fact I'm happier talking to people over the telephone or over the internet than I am in person.

Well I'm surprised you came here then. You had the option of Skype. It's very nice that you came.

No there's a very, very good answer for that and that is as far as I'm concerned, this is our only meeting. Even if you judge me it doesn't matter. You are a stranger, I'm probably never going to run into you again, so it doesn't matter.

So if there was a possibility of meeting again, you'd have preferred doing it by internet?

I would have thought very long and hard about whether I would do it in the first place or not.

Oh I see, okay.

Because most of the time we do put on an act don't we, everybody does?

Sure. [*Which is not entirely what I think, so it is interesting that I concur with him here.*]

So it's too much of an effort.

I see. So I'm going to get the act for an hour and a half?

Not really, no.

[...] p.5: **And so what made you decide to answer this advert?**

Well too much spare time I think. I was getting bored and this came along and I thought, "Well why not?"

Okay, well I'm glad you did.

Here I seem to pick up on the vulnerability involved for him of putting himself in a position of relating with someone else, i.e. of relating with me, as I am responding by reassuring him. In the first excerpt above I say "It's very nice that you came", and in the second excerpt I say "I'm glad" that he did answer the advert. I am letting him know that I want him to be there with me, that I am interested in him, I accept him. I am also betraying however that I wonder how authentic his relating with me will be – "So I'm going to get the act for an hour and a half?"

In analysing the interview it became apparent to me how the Dweck (2006) fixed mindset can pervade interpersonal relating: if you need to prove and protect your identity as a gifted/high-IQ individual, you could be inclined to privilege a presenting of information about yourself that augments this identity. Through the interview he made a sustained portrayal of himself as someone who achieves brilliant results effortlessly:

p.17: I've never been a very, very hardworking person.

p.16: I don't do a lot of things but I'm extremely good at what I do. I can't be bothered to work very hard. ...I'll give you a very simple example. If somebody were to tell me that you've got three days to do this, I would probably not start working till maybe 10 minutes before the deadline, and I would do a marvellous job in those last 10 minutes. I'll give you an example again. I was invited to an international conference where they had something like 500 scientists coming from all over the world to *[location]*...and I was the only lawyer who was invited and I was going to be a keynote speaker... I knew about two months in advance that I'm going, so I had two months to prepare a presentation and a paper. I didn't do that. I go *[there]* and there was another friend with me.... He was not a speaker, he just had to put up a poster or something trivial, but he was good company, and he asked me when I landed...whether I had my presentation. I said, "I'll get round to it". I finally got round to starting to work on my presentation and my paper at about 1.30 at night and I had to do it all on stage in the morning at about 10.00. So I started working at 1.30 at night, by about 3.00 I was finished, my friend was panicking. I knew I could do it. I knew there wasn't really a big problem and I stood up before 500 scientists, amazingly wonderful people from all over the world, did my presentation and most of the people were extremely delighted with it... I thought it was extremely successful.

He might well have a capacity to prepare important contributions with ease and rapidity. It has been documented that gifted individuals can create a work style of leaving things to the last minute as a way of unconsciously creating the adrenalin needed to motivate their performance, as the task at hand is often too easy for them unless they have added to it the challenge of a time constraint. But in his communicating of the above he further secures this identity of brilliance by contrasting himself with someone else: what his friend had to do was “trivial” compared with what he had to do, and his friend was “panicking” whereas he was calm. It is almost certainly not his intention to undermine his friend, but his own (unconscious) need to secure his own position, to ensure his psychic survival, can have that side-effect – a side-effect that he is probably not even considering, and which he might well wish to handle differently if he became aware of it.

The interpersonal impact of these unintentional manoeuvres snowballs. For example, I want to ask him about his experiences at school, but having heard his account of the conference, what has been set up in me is an expectation that of course school too must have been very easy for him. The way I then ask about his experience of school is not an open question, but somewhat loaded instead (p.18):

...during school were you bored? Did you find school boring or did you find it alright?

He is maybe not so much replying to my question as complying with my expectation when he responds:

Yes, absolutely boring.

In this way what he has told me about his effortless achievement produces an expectation in me that he should find certain things easy, and he might then respond to the pressure of the other’s expectation (in this case my expectation) by asserting more effortless achievement, rather than feeling free to respond authentically. In this way a self-perpetuating cycle of falseness can be created in conversation. This can be formulated as another game high-IQ adults play: *I want to confirm I am capable, but by confirming I am capable that causes you to have expectations of my capability, and I then feel pressured not to disappoint your expectation, so I am trapped into continuing to assert my capability.*

It is as though I am unconsciously afraid that I will look stupid if I ask him an open question about how he experienced school, because that might demonstrate that I have not been

properly taking in what he has been saying and have not already realised that he must obviously have found school easy. And then he does not want to look stupid by telling me anything except that school was indeed very easy for him. Here we are both right into the “Emperor’s clothes” territory of colluding to avoid being judged unintelligent. Conversation has vitality and is enjoyable and satisfying to the extent that the participants are free to ask open questions, give candid answers, adventure into unexplored territory, and can feel assured that what might be discovered can be greeted with acceptance. We all fear rejection. Without that kind of authenticity, conversation can be reduced to a stultifying and meaningless display, and something that a person might well act to keep away from.

The fact that I asked the above leading question about the barrister’s school experiences does not, however, rule out that his answer could have been authentic. He elaborates by recounting the following:

From the perspective of the curriculum there were subjects that I enjoyed, there were subjects that I hated. The subjects that I enjoyed I would read the entire textbook within the first couple of weeks. The subjects that I didn’t like at all I would probably never read any of it ever, but that really meant that in class I would be with my friends pulling pranks or creating some kind of disturbance in class. (p.18)

(His “pulling pranks” is another example of what was discussed in section 5.2.1 regarding how very bright children find ways of coping with the boredom they experience in understimulating classrooms.) Giving an authentic answer might however be experienced as a difficult or risky endeavor, given what this interviewee said above about his decision to participate in the interview at all, in which he said relating with others was “too much of an effort”. He had referred to “putting on an act” with others, and it might be that what this act constitutes is an attempt to deliver a performance that he thinks the other is expecting of him (partly of course because that is what he has led them to expect): keeping up the act constitutes a pressure, but deviating from it might feel anxiety-provoking.

p.27: Is there something that you find difficult, the thing you find most difficult with other people at work?

Smiling.

It’s difficult for you to keep smiling do you mean?

Yes. I enjoy being by myself, and it’s not just at work, it’s in any given situation, because there’s that mask that you have to wear.

[...] **p.28 What do you think would happen if you didn’t put on such a mask?**

I wouldn’t be happy, it’s not about them, it’s about me.

Okay.

They might discover who I am.

And do you think that would be terrible?

I don't know. I don't want to know.

It sounds like you fear that?

Possibly.

Like any of us, he wants the good things about himself to be discovered – the “huge amount of happiness” that could bring him as mentioned above – but he fears that what might get discovered might be something bad. In contrast with the discomfort of this risk of discovery, he describes a situation that feels much more safe and which he is very comfortable with:

I used to teach police officers about white-collar crime and all of that, so I enjoy talking in public because it's very impersonal. When you're addressing a class you're not addressing a single person, you're putting on an act really, so I enjoy that. So going before a judge and having your wig and your gown on it's absolutely fantastic. (p.21)

In such a situation he can control what others see of him. This seems to be a way he has found of being able to ensure feeling accepted, of living with feeling different from others:

p.32 ... I hate being an outsider, but I can't help it, I'm always an outsider... Absolutely everywhere I'm an outsider. “He's an outsider, he's not like us...”

And he has tried to make the best of that:

p.11-12: ...I do have a reputation of being very awkward or very odd, and I enjoy that.

Okay, so do you feel you've tried to be that, live up to that reputation?

I don't try at all. I think I try to be extremely nice, it's just the way things happen and I've started enjoying it.

Can you give an example of what somebody, what it might be that happens that somebody would find difficult or odd?

I don't know. If I knew why people found me odd I would probably try to cover that up as well. I have no idea, but that's generally the impression everybody has.

The contradiction is evident here between him saying that he enjoys being odd, and him saying that if he knew what people were seeing as odd about him he would try to cover it up.

[...] p.13: ...on one hand it sounds like you don't much care what people think, you can do without them, although you've also said if you knew what it was you'd probably cover it up, so that's interesting.

I would cover it up, not because I need those friends or because I want company, but it's always nice to have people thinking nice things about you. It's nice to be part of a group yes, but it's.... It's nice to have friends but it's not so critical after all... But it's nice to belong to a larger fraternity or a community or a group. It's a nice warm feeling because once you are a part of a group...then you don't have to try so hard to fit in because you're already part of it, so it's more convenient. So it's convenience

rather than anything else. It's nice to be part of a group but it's not critical, it's not essential.

Earlier he has said "when I have had a massive conflict with somebody I find it quite easy to just drop that person from my life completely" (p.12). He is portraying himself as self-sufficient, not really needing anyone, even enjoying being odd and different, but the other message is that he "hates being an outsider" and would like to join a society, belong to a group, be part of a community (though he dismisses that as having no more importance to him than being a matter of convenience). This seems to be a quandary that he battles with internally: in the quotation above he mentions no less than six times that being part of a group is/would be "nice", and denies three times that this has any importance.

Right near the end of the interview I ask him, if he were to be offered coaching at work, what would he wish it to target for him, "What would you see as being useful?" (p.34). He replies:

I wouldn't be happy in the first place with it. I wouldn't be very happy with that for the simple reason it would be just evidence of the fact that I'm incompetent in the first place, that somebody feels that I'm so incompetent that I need help.... The only way I would be comfortable with that would be if a person was smart enough to say, "This is what needs to be done, this is what you need to learn, these are the tools, these are the resources, get on with it". I wouldn't want somebody holding my hand or looking over my shoulder. Just tell me what needs to be done.

What he says here demonstrates his psychic investment (Hollway et al 2005) in seeing himself as competent. To have it suggested that he might be able to improve on something is experienced by him as a narcissistic injury. And if there is anything that "needs to be done" to improve then he wants to work on that alone, in privacy – "I wouldn't want somebody holding my hand or looking over my shoulder" – presumably so that when he is in company again he can revert to presenting himself as being already competent. Again this shows the Dweck (2006) fixed mindset. A growth mindset, in contrast, would entail having no investment in seeing or portraying oneself as already being competent. A growth mindset therefore allows much more openness to learning new things as one would be comfortable with making the mistakes that are inevitable at first when trying something new. Instead of being focused on having to look or feel already competent, the focus can instead be on the process of learning and discovery and the enjoyment of that process. That process, within a growth mindset, is not seen as shameful, so there would be no need to hide the process from others and restrict any learning to taking place only in privacy. The barrister makes it clear

that he would prefer not to improve on something rather than accept help from someone in order to improve, such as in a coaching setting.

Something else he expresses that stands in the way of him learning from or with others, is the low opinion he has of others' capacity to offer him something worthwhile: "If a person *was smart enough* to say 'This is what needs to be done'..." (my emphasis). Here he shows that he does not expect someone else to manage to have anything to offer him that he hasn't already thought of himself. This could be seen as a great arrogance, but for an intellectually gifted person in a mixed environment it has often been a reality for them that they have had a more advanced performance than, and known more than, those around them (like the experiences mentioned in Chapter 5 of interviewee No.189, who had to try to hide that he knew more than the teacher did, and of No.43 who became an "oracle" at work who everyone would go to for help). A repeated experience of that leads naturally to losing faith that others around you could have something worthwhile to offer, and to more and more reliance on self-sufficiency (as was expressed by interviewee No.1, mentioned in Chapter 5, who became very sure that his way was the best way).

This is how the interview ends:

p.35: So in terms of dealing with people, the clients you deal with, the people you interview, the people you're defending, you don't feel that there would be any skills or developing of what it's like dealing with people in that sort of way that would be useful for you?

There may or may not be, I don't really know, but all I know is that I don't really want to be in a situation where somebody's talking to me longer than is necessary.

Well on that note I would say we could finish.

Thank you.

I wouldn't want to keep you longer here than is necessary.

Thank you, I enjoyed that, thank you very much.

Did you?

I did.

I'm pleased if you did.

It's very rare you learn something more about yourself. It's a profitable thing and I have profited from this, thank you.

Here I pick up sensitively on the implication for our current conversation of what he is saying about not wanting to "be in a situation where somebody's talking to me longer than is necessary", and I instantly act to release him from the situation, saying "we could finish".

When he spontaneously offers “I enjoyed that”, I am clearly surprised – “Did you?” However, when he continues by saying “it’s very rare you learn something more about yourself”, it is apparent again what a low opinion he has of someone else’s capacity to facilitate with him the discovery of something new, something he hasn’t already mastered by himself.

But he does also say “I have profited from this”, and expresses gratitude. Earlier in the interview, after having said that he had decided to participate in the interview because “I was getting bored”, he later admitted:

I think talking like this helps you understand yourself a little better, so that’s the real motivation. When I say too much spare time that’s not possibly the honest answer. The honest answer is probably trying to discover a little bit more about myself. (p.5)

So in spite of all his hiding behind a mask, saying he prefers to avoid conversation, and maintaining that he does not need people, still there is somewhere an impulse to reach out, to try again, to see whether a new situation, or a new person, can bring about a conversation that might be authentic, meaningful, “profitable.” And in spite of all he said at the beginning about how he would only speak as freely as he had to me because he knew he would never be seeing me again, he became one of only two interviewees out of the twenty who took me up on my offer of a debrief and actually came and met with me face-to-face again.

The barrister’s case was not the only case of a gifted interviewee finding it difficult to talk about the experience of being gifted. Several interviewees spoke about how this was a topic one never usually speaks about, and manifested that they were encountering internal resistances against allowing themselves to try to put it into words. For example, No.2 made several references to being self-conscious about what she was saying about herself, expressing that she thought it sounded bad: “it sounds so big-headed” (p.17); “it sounds so conceited” (p.26-27); “that sounds terrible” (p.54). Or interviewee No.55: “It’s a weird thing to talk about, because you don’t talk about it often” (p.30). And interviewee No.74: “Sorry I feel so arrogant saying I’m intelligent” (p.26). There were also several examples of interviewees applying to themselves derogatory terms for being clever, like no.74 “I’m such a geek” or no.189 calling his love of learning “nerdy” – as though they have learned to preempt others’ judging, mocking, or criticising of them by adopting a self-conscious and self-mocking, self-critical attitude. It is fascinating to me that in our enlightened times that are embracing of diversity and prohibiting of discrimination, there can still be an area of human

experience, an aspect of individual difference, that is so taboo to openly acknowledge and explore even in private conversation. High IQ taboo.

Schopenhauer (1859) had a different – no doubt controversial – take on this:

For what is modesty but hypocritical humility, by means of which, in a world swelling with vile envy, a man seeks to beg pardon for his merits and excellences from those who have none? For whoever attributes no merit to himself because he really has none is not modest, but merely honest.

The opportunity that the research interview afforded the participants to explore this topic without hypocrisy was repeatedly communicated to me as having been valued, with the words that were most often used to describe the interview experience being that it was found “interesting”, “therapeutic”, “thought-provoking”, and “enjoyable” (see Appendix 10).

6.2.3 The defended subject

It is apparent from the previous section (6.2.2, “...The barrister’s case”), and from the section before that (section 6.2.1, “From past to present...”), that gifted adults can experience interpersonal difficulty in their lives which they are implicated in perpetuating in a way that they might not be aware of. For example, with interviewee No.2, she had tried and tried to work out why her colleagues were seeming to dislike her but could not work it out, and in the barrister’s case, he said that people find him odd but he does not know why. Both of these interviewees are participating in dynamics that they do not understand. It is in such cases that the concept of unconscious processes can be very helpful in elucidating what might be going on. The unconscious processes involved that have been demonstrated in these previous two sections are transferences from past to present, valency, repetition compulsion, games, intersubjective complementarities, and mindset. The barrister might not at all wish to have his conversations turn into a game that is played, or have someone with whom he is in conversation feel judged or undermined by him, but this is what is happening without him being aware of it. And why, even when someone becomes aware of this, or is offered a way out, might they resist change?

According to Psychodynamic theory, it is defending ourselves against anxiety, and pain, that causes resistance. One source of anxiety is the unknown, the unfamiliar. Once a person has established a view of themselves and others and of how relations between them can generally be expected to play out, this becomes the known, the familiar. If this view of oneself, and corresponding map of what to expect of others and how to therefore relate with them, is negative, limiting, and even causes distress, that familiar distress can be clung to in preference over a change that involves entering into the unknown. The unknown is feared to be potentially worse than the distress that is at least familiar and has already been adapted to.

Furthermore, the envisaging of a change that could be perceived to be a change for the better can in itself bring pain – what Casement calls “the pain of contrast” (1990:106). This is the painfulness of realizing just how difficult things have been, as occasioned by apprehending the contrast between the familiar situation and the possibilities of a better situation that are beginning to be understood. This pain can be defended against by aborting the process of discovering something that is potentially better, and rejecting any change. By sticking with a view that the difficulty of things is, or has been, inevitable, what is avoided is an experiencing of the acute pain of regret or resentment that could come with accepting that things could have been better, that easier is possible. This can also fuel a resistance to making things easier for others, thereby avoiding the pain of envying others who might be afforded the advantage of an easier time than you have had. This appears relevant to interviewee No.2 when she resisted the suggestion of promoting better understanding and support for giftedness.

Giftedness has, as Yermish (2010) puts it, a pervasive influence on the self. Gifted attributes, intertwined with how these have been interpersonally responded to, become a strong part of a person’s identity (see section 5.1.2). And just as much as any person might derive a sense of security from relying on a fixed sense of identity of some kind, and engage in defending it against perceived threats of denigration or disintegration, so also will gifted persons protect the foundations of their particular identity. If some of the foundations of this identity have been built by experiencing effortless achievement which others have drawn attention to and been impressed by, then gifted individuals seek to preserve this by describing their

experiences in ways that emphasise effortless achievement. Life can be lived in a way that selectively inattends to material that could contradict this identity and make them look more ordinary to themselves and others. (This can include declining to participate in things they are not sure they can excel at.) If their identity has been built by being set apart from others, however uncomfortable being set apart might have been for them, it becomes the familiar position that they then seek to protect. They have to keep endorsing themselves as being different from others (as interviewee No.1 did) because without having something that sets them apart, they have no sense of what their distinctness could be on which they could base their self-esteem. They could therefore be involved in perpetuating that identity regardless of its social drawbacks.

Being assigned the identity of a person who is good at things, or best at things, can bring gifted individuals to feel (perhaps unconsciously) that their acceptability in a group, therefore their security, depends on continuing to be good at things. Seeking to protect this position for themselves can make them want to stop others from looking good – they have to ensure they remain the one who occupies the achiever-space, because not occupying that space can leave them feeling that they have no place. In this way the identity/image as ‘top dog’ can become important to them. In this situation gifted people might defend themselves against noticing excellence in others, for fear that the other will take up the place they depend on occupying themselves as the one who is best. With this they can also tend to defend themselves against experiencing envy: if they are the best, they never need to envy anyone else for being very good. So envy becomes projected onto others: it is always others who they perceive as envying them. They can be completely unaware of how they exclude from their attention things that could constitute a trigger for arousing envy in themselves.

This section, 6.2, has engaged with how interpersonal difficulty is perpetuated, often through unconscious processes that have been demonstrated in my research data such as transference, valency, and repetition compulsion. The notion of games that high IQ adults play has also been posited, with intersubjective complementarities described and also the impact of mindset. The next section draws together all that has been presented so far, and focuses on the question of how interpersonal difficulty can be overcome.

6.3 How can interpersonal difficulty be overcome?

Data related to the overcoming of interpersonal difficulty were presented in section 5.2.3, “Change”. That section detailed the three main kinds of change that interviewees made in order to overcome interpersonal difficulty, as well as the process of change that was involved. The kinds of change presented were as follows: a change to the self (such as hiding oneself); a change to the environment (such as moving to a different location); or a change in the interface or overlap between self and environment (such as an improving of interpersonal understanding and skill which elicited an improved environmental response). And the process of change – a process that can vary as to how accessible it is to conscious awareness – was identified as involving firstly a catalysing or motivating perception, followed by the making of a choice or decision to change something, then an actual implementing of that decision.

Making a change to the self that involves hiding the self is the opposite of freedom and actualisation. Changing environments (for example a move to a different educational or workplace institution, or a different location) might not always be possible, and can be a costly procedure in all sorts of ways, including financially and emotionally, with uncertain success: if you keep doing exactly what you always have done you could be lucky enough to find that it happens to work better in a changed environment, but it might well be that without improving your own understanding and skill, the same problems will repeat themselves again at some stage in the new environment. It could be argued therefore that the most constructive and cost-efficient form of change is the making of change to the interface or overlap between self and environment, which entails improving interpersonal understanding and skill. I will now look at the overcoming of interpersonal difficulty more conceptually, drawing together the whole project, and beginning with a recapitulation of what has been established so far.

The research question asks how interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome. Returning to the review that was presented in Chapter 2 of the nature of the interpersonal difficulties involved, the experiences of interpersonal difficulty mainly comprised:

- A. **Hostility from others** (being disliked, debased, excluded, and obstructed).

- B. **The gifted person's own challenging behaviour** (being impatient, critical, challenging, and uncooperative, obstinately pursuing his or her own way).
- C. **Being relationally out of sync with others** (being involved in misunderstandings, confusions, friction, and unintended offences).

Assessing this in relation to my Child and Emperor conceptualisation, (B) relates to Emperor, i.e. behaviour that appears arrogant, and (C) relates to Child, i.e. behaviour that derives from interpersonal naivety. (A) involves the reaction of others to either (B) or (C).

It is a person who demonstrates the sort of social awkwardness of my Child category who has typically been called a 'nerd' or a 'geek', which are terms that several of my interviewees made reference to. The Oxford English Dictionary (Soanes et al 2006) definitions of these and other similar words are as follows:

Nerd: a foolish or contemptible person who lacks social skills or is boringly studious; a single-minded expert in a particular technical field.

Geek: an unfashionable or socially inept person; engage in or discuss computer-related tasks obsessively or with great attention to technical detail.

Dork: a contemptible, socially inept person.

Dweeb: a boring, studious, or socially inept person.

The features common to these definitions are that such a person is a bore, studious, lacking in social skills, possibly has an area of technical expertise, and is – and this is the most extreme and concerning part – contemptible. Why would someone who is studious, and possibly expert in a technical area, attract *contempt*? The definition, in turn, of 'contempt', is "the feeling that a person or a thing is worthless or beneath consideration; disregard for something that should be considered" (Ibid.). The example of usage that the Oxford English Dictionary gives for the word 'contempt' is this: "this action displays an arrogant contempt for the wishes of the majority." Which brings in my arrogant Emperor theme. It appears that the sheer fact of being different, not the same as the majority, can be viewed as an act of arrogance or contempt for others and for how they feel or what they want, as though being different is received as an insult, and this in turn elicits contempt for such a person. At bottom this returns to my theme of belonging within a group, and apprehending which individuals are adversaries or allies (section 5.1.1 above): those who share recognisable characteristics

and behaviours are more easily recognised as allies; those who deviate are more readily perceived as adversaries. And groups exert strong controls to keep their members cohering: the word ‘contempt’ is also what is used to denote lack of compliance with the rules of law, as in the serious legal offence of contempt of court.

Assessing the above list of interpersonal difficulties in relation to the Overview Model of Giftedness, and bringing that together with the review that was presented in Chapter 2 of the reasons for these interpersonal difficulties, I see the main reasons for (A) as relating to insecurity (i.e. others being hostile towards gifted individuals because of being caused to feel insecure in relation to their manifest differences which can be perceived as a threat). I see the reasons for (B) and (C) as deriving largely from the gifted person’s difficulty in managing the ways in which they are different from others (such as their qualities as presented in section 5.1.2 “Person”, as well as the differentials in effort and speed between the gifted individual and his or her environment as presented above in section 5.2.1, “Recognition”), and their – and others’ – difficulty in building a constructive bridge between their way of functioning and another’s way of functioning. Looked at this way, it could be said that the problem with (B) (Emperor-related phenomena, arrogance), and (C) (Child-related phenomena, naivety) is that both of them trigger (A), hostility, as the Emperor can make others feel insecure through feeling threatened, and the Child can make others feel insecure through feeling embarrassed, disconcerted, uncomfortable. To overcome interpersonal difficulty, both arrogance and naivety should best be tempered or avoided (see Figure 5 in section 6.1.1).

I see all of the ‘threat’-related aspects of interpersonal difficulty as relating to what was described in section 5.1.1 above, “Goals”, regarding competition versus collaboration: if a gifted person is perceived as an adversary for the securing of needed resources, then the gifted person is treated as a particularly formidable threat and is related to with covert or overt hostility. If the gifted person can be perceived as an ally, then their driven, quick and capable qualities become an asset to the securing of protection and resources, and hostility or obstructiveness is not provoked. And I see the consequences of interpersonal difficulty, as presented in section 2.5.2 (i.e. the compounding deterioration in the gifted individual when interpersonal relating goes badly), as being because of the increasing failure to achieve

belonging and collaboration. The attempt to solve this by giving up on gifts is to try to belong at the expense of honing abilities that could otherwise be used for engaging in productive collaboration and non-annihilating competition.

I conclude therefore that overcoming interpersonal difficulty might be a matter of developing the interpersonal skill to prime in the other an 'ally' rather than 'adversary' interpretation of relational status. To achieve this, gifted individuals have to firstly become knowledgeable about and aware of the kinds of differences that exist between themselves and the majority of others within mixed rather than selective environments. What is needed then is to use empathy and mentalisation (Fonagy et al 2004, see section 5.2.3) to gain understanding of the other and build a relational bridge between themselves and the other that can deactivate the attachment systems of both themselves and the other, soothing the fear of rejection and of annihilating competition, and making belonging and collaboration more possible. Becoming knowledgeable and aware, includes becoming knowledgeable about unconscious intersubjective processes and aware of how patterns of these that were established in the past can be transferred to and repeated in the present. It also means becoming aware of what valency any particular gifted individual might have for taking up a specific position in relation to others (such as the "oracle" – interviewee No.43), and how gifted individuals in general might have a valency for being assigned certain social roles or functions, such as those Persson (2009) identified as "the nerd", "the hero", and "the martyr". Becoming knowledgeable about and aware of these unconscious processes, both individually and collectively, can prompt a gifted individual to avoid getting drawn into "the games that high IQ adults play" (section 6.2.2), or intersubjective complementarities (Benjamin 2009), and instead take up a 'third' position which allows for reflection and free choice rather than repeating automatically imposed roles. Overcoming interpersonal difficulty involves playing a different kind of a game: not the intersubjective complementarities kind where you are taking up a role in a doer/done-to binary, but the kaala teeka kind (see section 1.4), where you are knowingly participating in a ritual that has a social currency for achieving the quelling of difficult feelings of envy and fear (or, in Attachment Theory terminology, the deactivating of the attachment system). The kaala teeka, or black spot put on a newborn baby's face, provides a token of imperfection for potentially envious others, to soothe their difficult feelings, and provides a token of protection for the loving parents, helping to take the edge

off their fear of potential harm. Everyone involved knows the black spot is not 'real', but 'playing the game' provides a helpful social structure. This is the kind of game that interviewee No.2.2 talked about feeling she had learned to play following her four years in prison. Following truanting from school because it was such an inadequate institution and she was so bored there, and getting increasingly involved in crime, she was eventually incarcerated and has been left with the life-long liability of a criminal record and its associated modern-lifestyle limitations such as higher mortgage rates and insurance premiums. She is now flourishing within a workplace where she can still see the inadequacies and absurdities of the existing systems but has accepted the social function of these (although her criminal record places restrictions on what positions of professional responsibility and seniority she is eligible for). She now chooses to go along with these systems so as to reap the benefits of collaboration and belonging and the supporting framework that these provide for the facilitating of ongoing self-actualising possibilities. She has experienced that it is difficult to actualise one's potential in prison – i.e. "dropping out" can exact a high personal cost.

* * *

This chapter has presented the answers I have found to my research question, addressing in some detail how interpersonal difficulty arises in gifted adults, how it is perpetuated, and how overcome. In the next chapter, the main aspects of interpersonal relating that have been explored so far, as derived from the interview data and textual analysis, are conceptualised into a model titled "Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating".

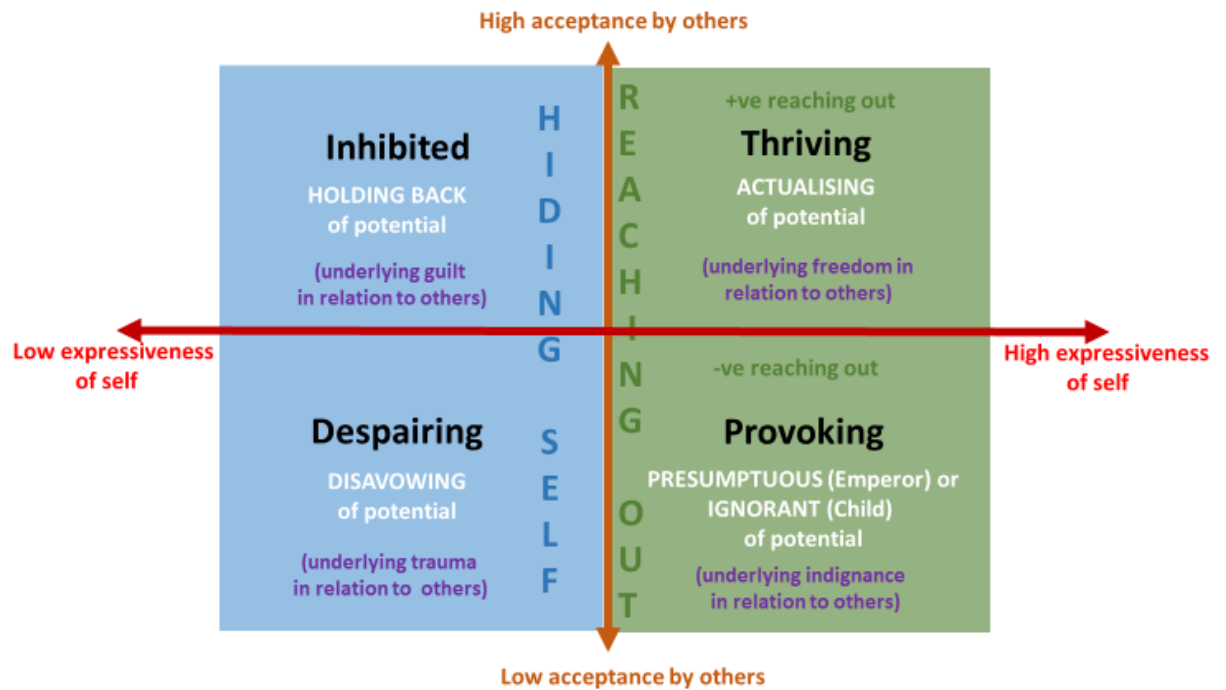
Chapter 7 – Theoretical conceptualisation of the data: Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating

In order to draw together conceptually the central styles of interpersonal relating that I discerned in the research I have undertaken, and to show how I see these as relating to each other, I have created a four-quadrant model titled “Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating”. The first sections of this chapter explain each of the quadrants of the model one by one, and the final section (section 7.3) discusses the model as a whole. References are included to some examples from the interview data and the textual analysis that the model is grounded in. Further evidence of how each quadrant of the model is supported by data from the interviews is provided in a table in Appendix 15, and a table in section 7.3 provides further supporting evidence from the textual analysis.

This model does not categorise types of people, but types of interpersonal relating. Different people might fall predominantly into one or other of these types of relating, but the same person could at different times (for example different periods of their life) or in different contexts, relate in predominantly one or other of these ways. It can also be viewed as different parts within a person’s own interpersonal repertoire or potential repertoire, so they can move between quadrants in different situations, or for example show growth from one quadrant to another or regression back from one to another.

From out of all of the data, this model distils two main dimensions of interpersonal relating: expressiveness of self, and acceptance by others. The “expressiveness of self” dimension links with the “Person” element of the Overview Model of Giftedness (section 5.1.2), in that a gifted person has certain distinctive attributes and has different options available to him- or herself for whether or how to express these, from low expressiveness through to high expressiveness. The “acceptance by others” dimension links with the “Environment” element of the Overview Model (section 5.1.3), as it relates to the environmental response. How much acceptance the gifted person’s expressiveness of his or her self meets with within his or her environment, from low acceptance through to high acceptance, can differ in different kinds of environment, as shown in section 5.1.3. Figure 7 below represents the model graphically, which is followed by a written explication.

Figure 7: Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating



If two lines are drawn – one horizontal, one vertical – that intersect in the middle, each line representing the continuum of one of these dimensions (expressiveness of self, acceptance by others) from low to high, this creates four quadrants. For each quadrant I have proposed a dominant way of being interpersonally (in black lettering), a dominant way of relating to one’s abilities or potential (in white lettering), and in purple lettering a dominant underlying issue that fuels the way of being interpersonally but is often outside of the person’s conscious awareness. The model associates interpersonal relating (the designations in black lettering) with the actualising of gifted potential (the designations in white lettering). This conceptualisation is grounded in the textual analysis of the literature that is reviewed in section 2.4, the last paragraph of which sums up this association between interpersonal relating and the actualising of potential.

The two quadrants shaded blue on the left depict lower levels of expressiveness of self, which I have labelled “Hiding self”, whilst the two quadrants shaded green on the right depict higher levels of expressiveness, which I have labelled “Reaching out”. Reaching out can be undertaken in a way that is positive (top right quadrant) or negative (bottom right quadrant).

7.1 Hiding self

7.1.1 Top left quadrant: Inhibited

If someone has on the whole experienced acceptance from others, yet still chooses to hide themselves, i.e. to limit their expressiveness of their giftedness, what is going on? Based on my research interviews and textual analysis, I hypothesise that such a person is holding themselves back out of concern that in fully expressing themselves, they might harm others. This is the inhibition that by expressing yourself freely, what is good about you could cause others to feel bad about themselves. It is an inhibition about being 'too big', 'too much' (interviewee No.2.1), and that by taking up positions yourself you are preventing others from holding those positions and therefore could cause disappointment or distress to others or retribution. Also included here is feeling sorry for others when it is noticed that others might try really hard but not manage to achieve something you have been able to achieve (and may have achieved without having had to try very hard, as was expressed by interviewees No.68, and No.43). It is an uncomfortable feeling that – and this is an inevitability in any competitive situation – your success is built on others' failure: you have become the winner only by someone else having become the loser (as interviewee No.2 alluded to when she spoke of her team being slimmed down at work, and how it was expected that she would be kept on whilst others would lose their jobs). This kind of experience can leave gifted individuals feeling guilty about their abilities, with a wish to hold themselves back: they hide themselves so as to protect the well-being of others and to protect themselves from negative reactions. For example interviewee No.6:

I have felt like it must be difficult for other people, and that is another thing that makes me hold back on it because I don't want to make people feel even worse if they are feeling bad about it. (p.15)

Also with interviewee No.2.1, there was a strong family message that he and his siblings were each to keep away from participating seriously in any activity that one of the others had already shown an interest in. This rooted out competitiveness, preventing it from being seen as something that could be healthy and even enjoyable and engaged in with robustness. This left No.2.1, as the youngest of four siblings, with an imperative not to displace anyone else by himself succeeding. He has ever since applied his considerable abilities in various directions but then always just stopped short of reaching the top, deferring to someone else (representing the older sibling) in relation to whom he rather takes up second position. The

top left quadrant represents this situation: a person has not been hindered by lack of acceptance from others, but holds themselves back out of an underlying guilt in relation to others that they may or may not be consciously aware of. They are concerned that by fully expressing and actualising their own potential they could cause harm to others, and they want to prevent this from happening.

From the textual analysis, the thinking in this quadrant is particularly supported by Grobman's work (2006, 2009). He describes working with gifted clients who – even though as children they were generally admired and popular and rarely subjected to malicious envy – evinced an irrational belief that succeeding in using their powerful intellect would humiliate others. He found that they felt ashamed, embarrassed, and guilty about their abilities, and quietly tried to figure out ways to equalise the differences that had become apparent between themselves and their peers. For these individuals, it was their unconscious ways of trying to hide their potential that caused problems rather than a poor environmental fit. Freeman (2010:29) also writes about gifted individuals hiding themselves, and the phenomenon of internal barriers being set up by gifted people themselves (Ibid:191) rather than them being obstructed by others.

7.1.2 Bottom left quadrant: Despairing

If someone has had such low acceptance from others that it qualifies as neglect or abuse, and the person has been traumatised by this, they could completely shut down on expressing themselves, disavowing their potential out of a despair that there is no point. Appendix D2, "Interpersonal difficulty", includes interview excerpts that relate to traumatic experience, such as interviewees No.156 and No.2.1 being regularly beaten by their fathers for being strong-willed and questioning (see section 5.1.3). This was evident in interviewee No.1's narrative of himself as a somewhat neglected child who as an adult had given up on trying to find ways to employ his high intelligence, and who suffered from depression. Interviewee No.2 also expressed a period of her life during which she was "in a self-imposed exile", "very closed off" (p.42 of her transcript). Interviewee No.55 talked of being "badly depressed and feeling on the verge of suicidal tendencies" (p.6 of her transcript). This was also evident in a gifted client of mine who aborted her pregnancy out of despair that there could be a good place in the world for this foetus with whom she said she felt she had already fallen in love: she wanted to rescue it from a life as difficult as she had found her own to be. This situation

– depicted in the bottom left quadrant – is where a gifted person gives up, drops out. Another example is interviewee No.2.2, who experienced school as being so pointless that she truanted extensively then dropped out, turning to crime, which resulted in her spending four years in prison. In this quadrant the dominant way of being interpersonally is despairing. In these cases the underlying issue is trauma in relation to others. Such trauma can be caused by violence or abuse, but also by experiences of such disappointment or neglect that there is a loss of faith in others as interested, reliable, respect-worthy, or relevant. This can bring about a losing of hope in trying to express the deeper or more unique aspects of themselves, because, based on what they have experienced so far, they have no reason to expect that expressing themselves could be effectively responded to. They could also harbour a fear that expressing themselves could make things worse by triggering rejection, violence, abandonment.

Cross et al (1993) document the coping strategies that gifted adolescents use of hiding their abilities in order to avoid the stigmatisation they experience their giftedness as attracting. This also relates to Fiedler’s (2015) depiction of “the invisible ones” – i.e. gifted individuals who have not actualised their potential. Yermish (2010:42) describes the ordinary, non-specialised schooling that gifted individuals are often subjected to, as delivering a series of “microaggressions” that can amount to the gifted individual becoming traumatised. Favier-Townsend (2014) described this situation as involving “intellectual neglect”, leading to low self-esteem, underachievement, and lifelong regret. The bullying that gifted individuals frequently experience in school, as mentioned by several of my interviewees and documented in the literature (Peterson & Ray 2006a, 2006b), is something that can have extremely negative longterm effects into adulthood: a study by Lereya et al (2015) shows that bullying by peers can produce more longterm anxiety, depression and self-harm than maltreatment of children by adults, including their parents.

7.2 Reaching out

7.2.1 Bottom right quadrant: Provoking

Where a person has expressed themselves and experienced low acceptance but of a kind that has not been severe enough to be traumatic, they might engage in increasingly exaggerating their expressing of themselves as a way of trying to gain more acceptance. This is depicted in the bottom right quadrant. This behaviour can be true of the Emperor, and of the Child – albeit for different reasons – because both of these involve the lack of receiving a satisfying response from others. The Emperor is presumptuous of his potential, expecting that he is entitled to certain attendant rewards or privileges, and is disappointed, angry, aggrieved, and accusing of others that he is not receiving the acknowledgment he feels he deserves. With the Child, she is ignorant of her potential, but is annoyed, hurt, distressed, and disturbed that others are not understanding her, that she is causing inexplicable negative reactions in them. In such interaction, the person is reaching out to others, but they can be doing so in a negative way because the low acceptance they have received can create in them a dominant underlying indignance in relation to others, and so the way they express themselves can be provoking of others and therefore unlikely to gain higher levels of acceptance. As a person becomes more and more driven by their own sense of indignation at not receiving the response they hope for, they can become less and less in touch with what is driving the reactions of others. This sort of interpersonal experience is shown in section 6.1.1. The following interview extract gives an example of this sort of interaction, in which the gifted individual might not be aware of the indignance that underlies her way of relating to someone, and how that is causing a negative response in the other (“getting his back up”). In talking about it, this interviewee started becoming more aware of how she was provoking the other (interviewer’s speech is in bold):

...you said [giftedness] is a hindering factor...

Now, I think it is.

... because of people finding you more difficult to work with?

Even my [music] teacher. We butt heads regularly, because he’s used to people who will take his word as gospel.

Okay.

And every time I come into the studio, if I don’t understand, if I don’t agree, I’m going to say so. Well I’m there to learn. I’m not going to learn unless I ask the questions, but he finds that really difficult at times. The last lesson of this year was a total disaster, because he was getting his back up and I was being perfectly pleasant and just asking questions.

Or so you thought?

Or so I thought, yes. Exactly. Oh dear. I was being stubborn. (No.55, p.28-29)

In this situation, the interviewee starts out portraying herself as “just asking questions”, but rather than her questions indeed being “perfectly pleasant”, or even neutral, it is as though they are fuelled by an indignance accumulated over her many years (particularly during her formative school years, as she described in her interview) of experiencing her questions not being well-received or answered, so that the way she asks questions is already loaded with almost an accusation of the other’s anticipated inadequacy at responding satisfactorily.

An extreme example of relating that falls into this quadrant is a gifted client of mine who explained that she quite deliberately developed anorexia to provoke those around her. This was a kind of angry protest against others plus a desperate attempt to get some kind of attention from them that she was lacking. The more ‘out of sync’ with others such reaching out to others is, the less acceptance is elicited, and the more indignant this can fuel the person to become. In such a situation, the benign hostility (or even less than benign) that they receive from others becomes a familiar reaction and in the absence of something more rewarding, that familiar level of hostility itself becomes addictive as a kind of negative affirmation of themselves and they will seek that kind of relating rather than no relating. The underlying issue fuelling the way that individuals in this state relate with others therefore is their indignance in relation to others for not giving them the positive affirmation they are seeking, and which they continue to seek but with ill-judged or misguided efforts.

Freeman (2010:28) writes about the “ongoing anger” that gifted individuals can be left with when they have continually experienced environments that do not cater to their special needs. Corten et al (2006) state that gifted individuals can become so used to not fitting in, that “By sometimes stating their opinions too categorically, they provoke their own exclusion”. This describes a situation where the person is not feeling inhibited and holding back out of guilt, nor disavowing their abilities in despair because of being traumatised. Rather, they are expressing themselves fully but in a way that provokes lack of acceptance, even rejection.

7.2.2 Top right quadrant: Thriving

The top right quadrant depicts interpersonal relating that is characterised by a person's high expressiveness of self together with experiencing high acceptance by others. An example of someone living in this state, is interviewee No.2.3. He has a satisfying and valued 22-year long relationship with his partner, and prides himself on having maintained contact with all the friends he has made throughout his life except one. Professionally, he is applying a sophistication of interpersonal skill to the effective navigating of a wide range of roles, at a very senior level, with a balance between expressing himself incisively but doing so in a way that is always monitoring others' needs and feelings. He is very patient about choosing the best timing for expressing himself. This kind of careful judgment brings about in return an experiencing of positive feedback and high levels of professional, personal, and material success. In his dealings with others, there is noticeably a distinct lack of either naivety or arrogance. There is also a full engagement with both competition and collaboration, but from the "safe" position of having established a secure base. This combination brings about a dominant way of being interpersonally that comprises thriving. In this state, a gifted person is able to actualise their potential as they are fully expressing themselves, but doing so in a way that is 'in sync' with others and which therefore generates high acceptance by others. Such a person is reaching out to others in a positive rather than a negative way. Based on their openness to feedback from others, and to continually working to improve their interpersonal understanding and skill, they can make appropriate adaptations to their way of expressing themselves so as to increase its effectiveness – rather than provoking others or resorting to hiding themselves. In this situation the underlying issue fuelling their interpersonal relating is a freedom in relation to others: there is nothing restricting their relating with others, skewing it in a particular direction. This is not to say that such a person meets with acceptance by others in every situation all of the time, but the overall interpersonal picture is as described.

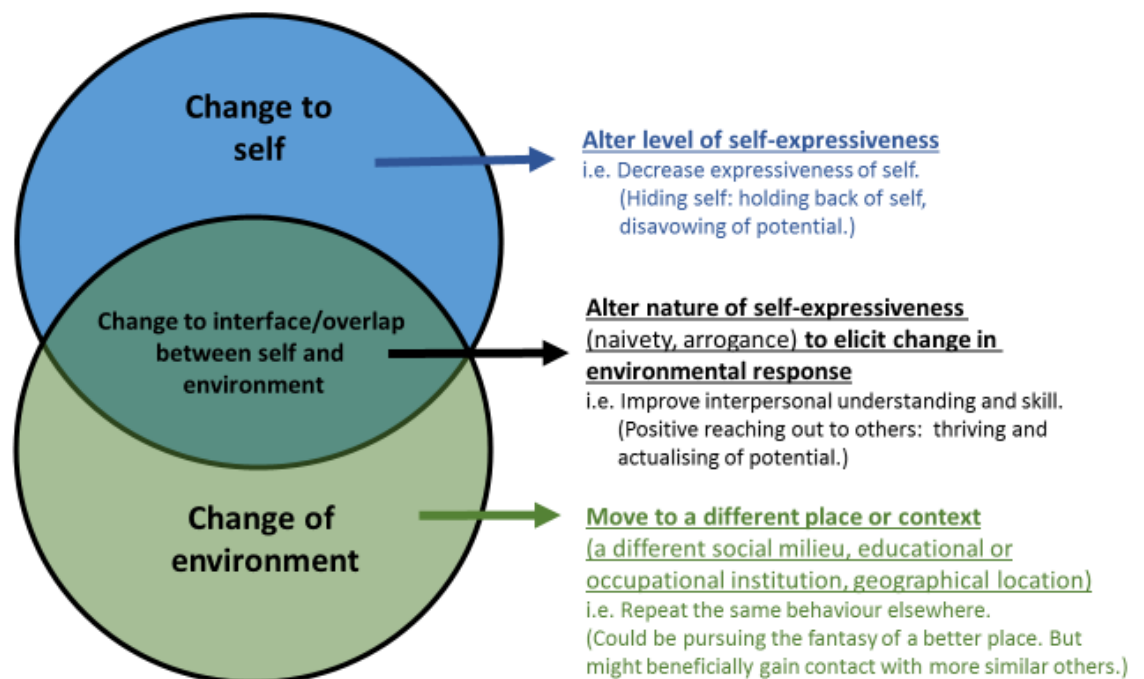
7.3 Moving between quadrants

In the Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model, the optimum quadrant of relating is the top-right "Thriving" quadrant. Ideal movement, therefore, would involve moving from any of the other three quadrants towards Thriving. In other words, a movement from "Hiding Self" and negative "Reaching Out", to positive Reaching Out. Also, a movement from "Holding Back", "Disavowing", or being "Presumptuous" or "Ignorant" of gifted potential, towards

“Actualising” potential. How movement can take place from any of the other quadrants, towards Thriving, is what is detailed in section 5.2.3, “Change”, and in section 6.3, “How can interpersonal difficulty be overcome?”

In section 5.2.3, the options for change were depicted in Figure 5, “Change”. In the light of the theorising that has been presented in the chapters since then, the diagram can now be elaborated to show how the change process – or the process of movement towards the Thriving quadrant – relates to the Child and Emperor features of naivety and arrogance respectively, and to the dimensions of level of expressiveness and level of acceptance that underpin the Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model. This is depicted in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Change towards overcoming interpersonal difficulty and thriving



It is worth reiterating here what was presented in section 5.2.3 regarding the fact that difficulty in interpersonal relating is overcome by reparative interpersonal engagement. This can be experienced in a one-to-one situation, or a group situation, and within professional relationships (such as therapy) or personal relationships (such as romantic relationships). For movement to take place towards the ‘Thriving’ quadrant from any of the other three quadrants, the issues underlying those quadrants need to be addressed (i.e. guilt, trauma, or

indignance), whether this is named and done at a conscious level, or whether the reparative interpersonal experience attends to the issue without it ever being specifically named. So, for example, interviewee No.2 experienced a romantic relationship that gradually won her trust and gave her the experience of a level of acceptance that healed previous interpersonal trauma that had left her “closed off”, and facilitated her to begin to flourish. I have heard many gifted adults describe how much more able they were to be tolerant and accepting of others, quelling their indignance, once they experience themselves as being understood and accepted. Sometimes it was just having their giftedness identified, whether formally or informally, that made all the difference, making sense of the difficult differences they had experienced between themselves and others, and suddenly being able to relate to that experience differently and more positively. This process is also described by Streznewski (1999) and Jacobsen (1999b). Grobman (2009) has detailed how psychotherapy enabled unconscious guilt to be identified and worked through, setting gifted individuals free to actualise their potential rather than holding themselves back, hiding themselves, or sabotaging their development.

Returning to the work of the five authors presented in section 2.4, I have created a table (Table 15 below) to show at a glance how those five authors’ categories of different gifted life strategies/trajectories relate to each other’s categories, and to the different quadrants of my Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model.

Table 15: Gifted strategies/trajectories: Relating other authors’ categories to the four quadrants of my Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model

Author	Excelling, outstandingly successful	Doing well, works hard, pleases others, adapting	Original, but difficult to deal with, not collaborating	Not demonstrating, or being appreciated for, the value they can offer	Drop-out
Towers 1987	Committed strategy		Marginal strategy		Drop-outs
Streznewski 1999	Superstars	Strivers	Independents		Drop-outs
Jacobsen 1999b	Balanced	Balanced	Exaggerated		Collapsed

Nauta & Corten 2002	Social	Accepted	Confrontational	Inconspicuous	Isolation
Persson 2009	Hero		Martyr	Nerd	
Falck 2017, current project	Thriving, Actualising		Provoking, either Presumptuous or Ignorant	Inhibited, Holding back	Despairing, Disavowing

Of these five authors, only Nauta & Corten (2002) use five categories, with the others using three or four. The categories seem to map quite well onto my model's four quadrants, although my "Thriving" quadrant accounts for two of the categories of each of Streznewski (1999) and Nauta & Corten (2002) – i.e. the first two columns of Table 15. Jacobsen's (1999b) "Balanced" category fits both of the first two columns.

* * *

In this chapter the processing of the research data has been raised to a new level of abstraction by conceptualising it in the Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model, and this has also been related to other authors' work and experiences from my psychotherapy practice. The next part of the dissertation steps back from engaging with the separate components of collecting, analysing, and theorising the research data in order to discuss and critique key aspects of the project as a whole.

PART FOUR: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPACT

Chapter 8 – Discussion

This chapter examines how my research data and thinking in the Overview Model of Giftedness (Chapter 5), ‘Child’ and ‘Emperor’ conceptualisations (Chapter 6), and Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model (Chapter 7), relate to other works on giftedness and to mainstream psychological theories.

8.1 Linking with other works and theory

The Overview Model of Giftedness emphasises the kind of recognition and interaction that takes place – or fails to take place – between the gifted person and his or her environment. Psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin (1995) argues that recognition is as important to psychological survival as food is to physical survival (cited in Hollway 2013:94). What does recognition mean?

Winnicott’s (1965, 1975) developmental theory explains how an infant acquires his first sense of self through experiencing how another reacts to him. Winnicott named this process “mirroring”: infants cry or smile, for example, and perceive from the reaction in their caregiver’s eyes, facial expressions, posture, gestures, and volume, pitch and tone of voice, whether the caregiver is concerned or delighted, comfortable or uncomfortable, approving or disapproving. When a caregiver’s reaction to an infant accurately mirrors back to the infant what his own experience is – for example smiling appreciatively at the infant’s enjoyment or showing solicitous concern at his distress – the infant feels acknowledged and validated. In this way the infant’s inner experience becomes ‘joined up’ with the exterior world through a matrix of interpersonal interaction and the infant feels ‘real’ (Winnicott 1971, 1975). That this is how early interpersonal development unfolds has all since been confirmed by neurological research (see Schore 2003). If an infant experiences the benefit of predominantly accurate mirroring, with neither neglect nor impingement from the caregiver, and experiences the caregiver showing in her responses that she is accepting of the infant’s full range of expressiveness, not being unduly alarmed by manifestations of the infant’s various states, and neither collapsing nor retaliating in the face of extreme states in the infant, then the infant develops what Winnicott termed his “True Self” (Winnicott 1960). Infants soon learn which kinds of expressiveness are discouraged or even punished by their

caregivers, and begin to shut down the expressiveness of emotions, behaviours, and later desires, questions, opinions and thoughts that meet with an unfavourable response. This is because human beings come into the world genetically programmed to seek favourable responses from our caregivers (Stern 1985; Trevarthen 1979, 2001), as our extreme helplessness at birth makes us entirely dependent for our survival on the protection and nurturing of another. This need to find safety and security through making effective close interpersonal bonds or attachment relationships with initially one's primary caregiver and then a few close others, is what has been comprehensively demonstrated by the research that underpins Attachment Theory, introduced in section 5.1.1. It is a need that remains with us throughout our lives (Howe 2011). Our primitive instinct to want to belong, together with a visceral fear of rejection or abandonment, does not disappear, no matter how far we develop away from the state of literal helplessness in which our lives began.

Living from one's True Self entails feeling free to express oneself authentically, and is associated with being able to be playful, creative, and to feel confident of being able to be accepted and loved (Winnicott 1971). This corresponds with the top right 'Thriving' quadrant of my Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model. In Winnicott's theory, a person who has not had the benefit of "good enough" mirroring/mothering (Winnicott 1952, 1975, 1988) will seek to change themselves to try to get a more favourable response from the other, and this can shut down their authentic self-expression more and more to the extent that they lose touch with their own true feelings and develop instead a "False Self" (Winnicott 1960). Living from a False Self entails trying to make oneself into someone that the other might be more likely to approve of, and is associated with feeling unreal, fake, depressed, and experiencing life as meaningless. This relates to the left-hand-side 'Hiding self' quadrants of my Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model. This also relates to Coleman's (2012:378) finding that "invisibility" is the most often used coping strategy of gifted youth. Winnicott explains how a person with a high IQ can be particularly susceptible to False Self development:

A particular danger arises out of the not-infrequent tie-up between the intellectual approach and the False Self. When a False Self becomes organized in an individual who has a high intellectual potential there is a very strong tendency for the mind to become the location of the False Self, and in this case there develops a dissociation between intellectual activity and psycho-somatic existence... When there has taken place this double abnormality, (i) the False Self organized to hide the True Self, and (ii) an attempt on the part of the individual to solve the personal problem by the use of a fine intellect, a clinical picture results which is peculiar in that it very easily

deceives. The world may observe academic success of a high degree, and may find it hard to believe in the very real distress of the individual concerned, who feels 'phoney' the more he or she is successful. When such individuals destroy themselves in one way or another, instead of fulfilling promise, this invariably produces a sense of shock in those who have developed high hopes of the individual (Winnicott 1960:144).

The tendency of gifted individuals to take flight into the intellect from challenging interpersonal demands, such as using abstraction as a regressive defence (Rosen 1958), is also documented in a fairly recent study on Malaysian gifted students' coping mechanism of getting absorbed in academic work (Ishak and Bakar 2010).

All major theories of human development have a version of recognising the deleterious effects for well-being and mental health of living a life where one's True Self is not expressed. In Rogers's Person-Centered approach, this state is termed "incongruence", and the True Self is termed the "organismic self" (Rogers 1959, 1961). With Psychoanalysis, Freud termed the attempt to get rid of the thoughts, wishes and feelings that would draw an unfavourable response, and its resultant distortions to psychic and interpersonal life, "repression" (Freud 1915). In Berne's Transactional Analysis (1961, 1964) the wish for a favourable response is termed the pursuit of "strokes". Alice Miller's (1997) book "The Drama of the Gifted Child", is all about the expression of the true self as being the source of self-esteem, vitality, and meaningful existence. In Attachment Theory, it is secure persons who are confident of being able to express themselves authentically and gain acceptance. Secure attachment corresponds with the top-right 'Thriving' quadrant of my Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model. The insecurely attached person withdraws (avoidant) or exaggerates (anxious/preoccupied) their self-expression in an attempt to gain the most favourable response from the other. Avoidant attachment corresponds with the 'Hiding self' quadrants of my Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model, whereas anxious/preoccupied attachment corresponds with the bottom-right 'Provoking' quadrant. What is evident in all of these major theories, is the central significance of interpersonal relationship experiences, that it is through these that one's self-image and patterns of general regular relationship behaviour get established and perpetuated (termed "internal working model" in Attachment Theory, "internal world" in Object Relations, "life position" in Transactional Analysis, and "core beliefs" in Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy).

The above quotation by Winnicott shows that a gifted person is susceptible to a “particular danger” of developing False Self functioning. My PEP results (see section 1.5) suggested that gifted adults may have a susceptibility to developing insecure, predominantly avoidant, attachment. Something we know about attachment is that the child’s own temperament has an impact on how the caregiver relates to the child. For example, an infant who sleeps well at night and feeds unproblematically might be easier for a caregiver to relate happily and generously to than an infant who fusses a lot and appears not to be readily satisfied by the caregiver’s attentions. Gifted children can be very sensitive, intense, highly active, and strong-willed, which are traits that could make them more difficult to handle or satisfy. How the parent reacts to this will affect the child’s developing character. For example, a more highly strung child who is harder to satisfy can make the mother feel inadequate, and being made to feel negatively about herself by her baby can make her feel negatively towards the baby. This can in turn be experienced by the baby as the mother being less enthusiastic, confident, or satisfied with the baby. The challenges of parenting a high IQ child might in this manner make the child more susceptible to developing insecure attachment. Baker & Baker (1987:3) explain that children can fail to develop the “internal structures” that “regulate self-esteem” if the parent-child interaction is significantly problematic. It can be seen how giftedness could qualify as either of two of the reasons they give for why this can occur, which are that the child has “exquisite needs due to such factors as genetic predispositions, physical handicaps, or learning disabilities”, or there being “an unfortunate mismatch between the temperaments of the parent and the child” (ibid). (The third reason they give involves the parent’s own limitations such as psychopathology and/or externally imposed circumstances such as death, job loss, or illness.) Similarly, Howe (2011) documents that there are higher proportions of insecure attachment in disabled children, and where he identifies how the difficulties that caregivers can experience in caring for a disabled child can impact on that child’s developing attachment style, the factors described could equally be true of caring for a gifted child. Webb et al (2005:61) write that many parents are “frightened, worried, confused, or even intimidated” by their gifted children.

Even if a gifted child has benefited from capable and attuned parenting, once the child reaches adolescence the primary attachment to the parents shifts and becomes centered on peer relationships. West et al (2011) found that children who had secure attachment at 24

and 36 months had better school performance and higher IQs in middle childhood (grades 3 and 4). Such results would lead one to expect a sample of gifted adults to show a higher proportion of secure attachment than is found in general populations. The fact that this was not the case with the gifted adults in my PEP study (Falck 2013), with their low proportion of secure attachment and high proportion of avoidant attachment, could suggest that it is these later peer experiences that are damaging. If the gifted adolescent is unable to make the shift to secure attachments with peers because of an inability to find suitable peers, having instead an experience of not fitting in, this will be a knock to confidence and is a risk factor for developing an insecure attachment style. The higher a child's IQ, the more different they are from the norm, and correspondingly the more difficult it is for them to find peers who they experience themselves as being similar to (Silverman 2013). As Ingram & Morris (2007) explain, it is human nature to look for similarities and to identify with others. They term this "homophily", and place it at the core of socialisation. Self-Psychology pioneer Heinz Kohut wrote about the developmental importance of what he called the "twinship transference" (1971, 1984), which essentially is the experience of likeness that a person feels with another, feeling that they have shared characteristics. The asynchronous development of gifted children – such as developing intellectual capacities that are well in advance of their chronological age – can make them stand out from peers just by the way they speak (with more sophisticated vocabulary that alienates others of their own age, an experience that was particularly stressed by interviewee No.55) and by their interests which they find others of their own age don't share and which can make the gifted child and their peers find each other odd or boring. Kohut sees the failure of adequate mirroring and twinship experiences as leaving a person with a shaky sense of self, or poor self-esteem. Experiencing likeness, or twinship, with others, is also what produces a sense of belonging with those others. It can be seen that the absence of this is what so many gifted individuals are referring to when they describe their feeling of being "an outsider", i.e. not belonging, which several of my interviewees spontaneously described feeling. Silverman (2013:20) confirms how feelings of alienation "seeded" in the early years "can haunt the gifted throughout their lifespan". Mollon (2001) writes that developmental failures of this kind manifest behaviourally as a general sensitivity to disturbances of physical and psychological equilibrium and a tendency to react to these with withdrawal or rage. Withdrawal relates to the 'Hiding self' quadrants

of my Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating Model, and rage relates to the 'Provoking' quadrant with its underlying issue of indignance.

This section has demonstrated how my way of organising and conceptualising my research data finds many points of congruence with mainstream psychological theories and with other writings on giftedness. I have been asked whether my findings and models would be able to be applied to other minority groups. The most ethically and academically responsible answer to this question is that I do not know, and that I cannot know this without – separately from this current doctorate on giftedness – undertaking similar research on other minority groups. The whole point of my methodology is that my model is grounded in the research data that I have gathered through interviews with gifted individuals and textual analysis of literature and research on gifted individuals. If my model was simply conceptually applied to other minority groups, it would not be grounded in data derived from those other groups which has been rigorously analysed, so to apply my model to other groups would involve a leap being made away from the whole research methodology that I have carried out in this doctorate. For future research however, I can see that my "Overview Model of Giftedness" (Chapter 5) could be used as a "blueprint" for treating any other condition in a similar way, i.e. by examining how the existence of that person's condition becomes recognised by his or her environment, how this is noticed by the person, and how the ensuing interactions between the person and their environment shape the person and can lead to changes being implemented, all within the overview of the goals – starting with survival – that we as human beings seek to fulfil through our lifecourse. I can also see that the dimensions in interpersonal relating of expressiveness of self and acceptance by others, which I have identified in my "Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating" model (Chapter 7), could be analysed in terms of how they play out in other minority groups. A member of any minority group, when faced with members of majority groups, will grapple with issues of how much it is safe to express of themselves and whether they will gain acceptance by others or not. However, how I have identified this as playing out in giftedness is uniquely grounded in my research data. For example, the top left quadrant of Figure 7 (see section 7.1.1) represents the very specific experience of a person feeling guilty because they are doing better at certain things than others are, and how they may inhibit their capacity for achievement so as to ameliorate such guilt. The content that populates this quadrant, that is specific to the experience of giftedness, might be different if these dimensions of expressiveness of self and acceptance

by others are studied in other minority groups. Again, however, the basics of the model provide a blueprint that might well be usefully researched in relation to other minority groups.

8.2 Giftedness, autism, narcissism

In section 6.1 I presented my conceptualisations of the two main orders of interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults as Child (naivety) and Emperor (arrogance), and how I see these, respectively, as touching on autism and narcissism. This led me to investigate how giftedness relates to autism and to narcissism.

In my research interviews, and also in audience comments when I presented my work to Mensa members on 18th June 2016 (at the Wellcome Collection, London) and 19th August 2016 (at Trinity College, Cambridge), comparisons were made between giftedness and the previously named Asperger's syndrome, which in the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the DSM5, American Psychiatric Association 2013) is now subsumed under the rubric of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (see section 6.1.2). My experience of this echoes what Webb et al have written about how the label of 'Asperger's' came to be liberally applied colloquially to "anyone who is socially awkward, has difficulties reading interpersonal cues, or simply seems aloof in social situations" (2005:93). They stress that "Asperger's Disorder is a significantly impairing condition for those affected by it, and it is not an appropriate label for those who are simply awkward, eccentric, or uncomfortable in social settings" (Ibid.). Webb et al (2005) present in some detail how giftedness and Asperger's relate to one another. I have designed Table 16 below as a way of diagrammatically representing what I see as helpful significantly differentiating features, although in keeping with the DSM developments I am using the term 'autism' rather than 'Asperger's':

Table 16: Differentiating autism from giftedness

Feature common to both higher functioning autism and giftedness with no clear differentiating characteristics between them
Excellent memory for events and facts
Verbal fluency or precocity
Talks or asks questions incessantly
Hypersensitivity to stimuli
Concerned with fairness and justice

Uneven development		
Feature common to both	Its specificity in autism	Its specificity in giftedness
<u>How perceived by others</u> Perceived by others (eg teachers and peers) as quirky and different.		Looks this way because of asynchronous development, poor educational fit, or because of marked introversion and social discomfort.
<u>Behaviour</u> Absorbed in one or more special interests, seeking vast amounts of related factual knowledge	Lack of transfer of facts into anything meaningful beyond the facts. The interest is very unusual or totally unique to that person, eg. an obsessive interest in deep-fat fryers. Does not seek to show their interest to others. Cannot explain their interest in that particular thing. Talks in pedantic, monotone manner about their special interest.	Usually groups together with others who share the same interest, eg. an interest in collecting Star Wars memorabilia. Seeks to show their interest to others. Can explain their joy in that special interest to others.
Not very sporty.	Motor clumsiness.	Lacks interest in sport.
<u>Way of relating to others</u> Socially inept	Empathy for others totally absent. Socially inept with a wide range of peers.	Empathy for others very much present. Socially inept with peers who do not share their intellectual passion. Enjoy satisfying social interactions (demonstrating empathy, reciprocity, emotionality) with peers who share their interests.

	No insight into how others feel or might perceive them, and is not distressed at being left out (?) Inability to read non-verbal cues of others' lack of interest.	Has good intellectual insight into social situations and will know how others see them. (eg. is aware of, and can be distressed by, their inability to fit in.) When lack of interest is picked up in others, can change topic to have a give-and-take conversation.
<u>Style of processing information</u> Shows auditory-sequential thinking	Only auditory-sequential.	Can be auditory-sequential and/or visual-spatial.

To try to gain more understanding about how giftedness and autism relate to each other, I consulted with Caroline Hearst of Autism Matters, who gives UK-based CPD training to psychotherapists on autism. She asserted that autism has nothing to do with IQ, and that gifted individuals who manifest similar features to those of autistic individuals do so simply because they are also autistic (Hearst 2016). This view does not help to explain why there has developed a social stereotype that associates gifted people specifically – as opposed to some other defined minority group – with autism-like features of social ineptness. It also begs the question of what causes these features of interpersonal difficulty, which are associated mostly with people of below-average IQ but then also appear in people with abnormally high IQ with enough frequency to have created a related social stereotype? I tried to seek more answers by contacting autism expert Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, based at the Autism Research Centre at the Psychiatry Department of Cambridge University. He wrote to me that my work “Sounds fascinating. Sorry I don't have time to meet but do send me a brief summary of your research when it's available” (Baron-Cohen 2016).

The National Autistic Society's position statement on the causes of autism is that these are still being investigated (National Autistic Society, n.d.). Grandin and Panek (2014) assert that this question is extremely complex, and that a genetic variation that is found in one autistic child will be absent in another. Psychoanalytic contributions to trying to understand autism have centered on early parent-child intersubjective experiences (Rhode & Klauber 2004), not (more recently) to say that the quality of these causes autism, but by way of charting how these are different when autism is involved. What is described is that the autistic person does

not gain from these intersubjective experiences an internalised function that contains and regulates the high arousal that comes from external stimulation and internal affect, and the autistic person therefore tries to regulate this by withdrawing, or overdeveloping one area of functioning, or seeking security from predictable material objects rather than from unpredictable other people. All of this thinking describes the need to create a barrier of some form that protects against overwhelming experience: Bick (1968, 1986) termed this a “skin”; Tustin (1981, 1990) a “shell”, or “autistic armour”; Bettelheim (1967) a “fortress”. Meltzer et al (1975) also described autistic children’s need to protect themselves from a “bombardment of sensa”. This accords with work on the perceptual sensitivity and intensity in autism, such as the “Intense World” theory of autism (Markram & Markram 2010). Similarities are obvious here with the work on perceptual sensitivity and intensity in giftedness, such as Dabrowski’s (1964) supersensitivities/overexcitabilities. A work that focuses on such sensitivities and intensities as an issue in itself rather than as an aspect of either autism or giftedness, is Aron’s (1999) “The Highly Sensitive Person”.

Hearst (2016) said that the intervention she knows of with autistic children that seems to be most effective, is the therapist doing the same as the autistic child: if the child is spinning or flapping, the therapist does the same. She says this calms the child, and then they can start to relate. Essentially this is an intervention that involves mirroring, with all its similarities to the work on early intersubjective attunement (eg. Schore 2003) that helps to regulate the child’s emotions and build a sense of security. Hearst (2016) spoke of how autistic people have trouble self-regulating. This could arise because the required intersubjective experiences have not been available (which was the assumption of Leo Kanner whose 1943 work described autistic children’s mothers as overly intellectual and cold emotionally, which led to the term “refrigerator mother” – cited in Rhode & Klauber 2004), or it could arise because the available intersubjective provision has been unable to be made use of in the usual way. Research using EEG and neuroimaging (cited in Mollon 2001:200) has found that “the mother’s right brain regulates the infant’s states of affective arousal through the medium of the infant’s right brain”. If the brain of an infant, or indeed mother, is ‘wired differently’, might it be that this process is not able to unfold in the usual way, leaving the emotional-intelligence-type functions that are associated with the right brain underdeveloped?

Silberman's book "Neurotribes" (2015) highlights neurodiversity: he asks whether autism is a devastating developmental condition, a lifelong disability, or a naturally occurring form of cognitive difference akin to certain forms of genius. It is interesting that he, too, brings in the association with high IQ. People who comprise the ordinarily functioning non-autistic majority (and non-extremely-high-IQ majority) are termed "neurotypicals" or NTs. The question of whether a certain presentation of individual difference becomes classified as a disorder or not brings us back to where I started at the beginning of this dissertation, in the Introduction, with the broaching of 'intellectual disability'. Giftedness is not classified as a disorder. Should it be? Would its implications as a special need only become of mainstream concern if it were so classified? On what basis is it decided whether a particular kind of variation, an individual difference, constitutes a disorder? Homosexuality is an individual difference that was classified as a disorder in the DSM until it was removed in 1973. Hearst (2016) wants to see autism similarly removed from the DSM.

In my view the main point of this is: what is to be done about it? I believe these ways of trying to delineate and understand what is being manifested should primarily be in the service of making choices about how best to manage and support needs, so as to optimally develop the aspects of experience and behaviour that are causing impediment and distress which evidently are not ordinarily understood or catered for within the general day-to-day mainstream social systems within which they are arising. Hearst (2016) does not want diagnosis for autistic individuals, just identification. She says the best 'treatment' is for autistic people to meet others like themselves who they can talk with and relate to about their experiences and feel that they are similar to others. This links back with my theme in Chapter 5 of needing to belong, and the benefits that appear to accrue to members of a minority group who are able to join together to relate with and feel a sense of similarity with one another.

One of the implications for 'treatment', is that what is required for autism is social skills training and what is required for giftedness is educational opportunities (Webb et al 2005). If, however, a person is affected by both autism and giftedness, he or she might need both interventions, and the social skills training should be particularly differentiated for high IQ participants. Valerie Carlin of The Hidden Aspie approached me seeking training for high IQ people with the formerly named Asperger's syndrome who struggle with social skills but who

are too high functioning for the autism social skills training resources that for example the National Autistic Society provides (they deliver a programme called “Social Eyes”, involving interactive training supported by a training manual and DVDs). In thinking about how to pitch such a social skills training, I was interested to notice that one of the most regularly sold-out ‘courses’ run by The School of Life in Central London, is a single-session evening class aimed at neurotypicals entitled “How to Have Better Conversations”. I decided to attend one of those to see how that might relate to or be able to be adapted for the needs of high IQ Aspies. Following attendance there I conducted one taster/trial evening session with a group of high IQ Aspies at Metanoia on 16 September 2014.

On 23 February 2017 I attended a fascinating evening hosted by Mensa, which brought together Dr Anna Remington from the UCL Institute of Education’s Centre for Research in Autism and Education (CRAE), Ray Coyle who is CEO of Auticon, and Bruno Igreja, Investment Manager at Virgin. Auticon is an IT consulting business that only employs as consultants individuals who are on the autistic spectrum. It started in Germany, has since expanded into France and the UK, and has now been invested in by Virgin. The presentations that evening emphasised how similar the interpersonal difficulties are that high-IQ/gifted adults, and autistic adults, encounter. What was of particular interest to me, is that whilst my approach has been to think of helping high-IQ adults to be able to better understand and relate to neurotypical others, Auticon’s approach is to help neurotypical others better understand and adapt to the needs of autistic individuals. Auticon places autistic consultants in the work teams of major corporations after using specially trained job coaches to brief the team and prepare the work environment to be suitable for the autistic consultant. The agreement is that when difficulties arise, the employer does not raise it with the consultant, but contacts the job coach, who hears what has happened and “decodes” the differences that caused a problem, interpreting the autistic person’s functioning to the employer and assisting the employer to better assimilate the differences of autism into their work practices. Dr Remington asserted that the main difference between autism and giftedness is the “spikes” of brain functioning, i.e. that in autism there is a peak in non-verbal intelligence and a trough in verbal intelligence, whereas in giftedness there are peaks in both.

How does giftedness relate to narcissism? Horton (2011) presents empirical evidence for the Psychodynamic and Social Learning Theory explanations of how narcissism develops. The

Psychodynamic explanations are threefold. The first maintains that early care-giving that is excessively neglectful or traumatic can cause the child to retreat into a protective self-focus (Kernberg 1975, cited in Horton 2011) – the child gazes at himself in the mirror, as it were, in the absence of experiencing an effective relational mirror. The second Psychodynamic explanation is that early care-giving that is excessively pampering and overindulgent does not frustrate the child's primitive grandiosity and leaves the child carrying that unrealistic view of himself into adulthood (Kohut 1977, cited in Horton 2011). The third explanation is that narcissism is created by parents who strategically exploit the child to fulfil their own ambitions (Rothstein 1979, cited in Horton 2011). The Social Learning Theory perspective holds that children who are adored, indulged, and given few limitations and boundaries are taught that they are superior and entitled, and that others are inferior, weak, and easily manipulated (Millon 1981, cited in Horton 2011). From these descriptions it is easy to see how the characteristics of gifted children can make them susceptible to any of these developmental trajectories. It has already been described how parents who cannot relate to and engage with their child's intensities can leave the child feeling neglected, or might try to suppress the child, even violently, which causes trauma. Webb et al (2005) write about how parents might stand back in awe of their gifted child rather than providing the guidance and boundaries needed, and might use giftedness to justify the excusing of bad behaviour. An example of this kind of manifestation in adulthood is seen in a paper about boundary violations in psychoanalytic treatment, in which the author – who chose to remain anonymous to protect herself from the consequences of reporting the behaviour of her analyst – writes that she was exhorted to “appreciate Dr. A's positive qualities and to accept his egocentricities as the inevitable shadow of a gifted person” (Anonymous 2005:672). When a child manifests impressive abilities that draw attention and admiration it might be hard for proud parents not to be tempted to appropriate this to boost their own ambitions and self-esteem. This situation can also result in favouritism being practised in a family (Webb et al 2005). A child who is admired for her abilities, which feel natural to her, can disrespect those who treat her as though she is exceptional, and may not be able to resist the temptation to use her abilities to manipulate others (see Maupin 2014). A major part of Miller's (1997) book “The Drama of the Gifted Child” deals with what she calls the “vicious circle of contempt”. A child who experiences others as slow and less capable than herself,

could naturally come to view them as inferior, unless she has her own experience understood and is helped to understand, respect, and appreciate diversity.

However much there are characteristics of giftedness that can predispose to the development of narcissism, this needs to be differentiated from grounds for a diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). The DSMIV said of narcissism: “many highly successful individuals display personality traits that might be considered narcissistic. Only when these traits are inflexible, maladaptive, and persisting, and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress do they constitute NPD”. Webb et al talk about a “healthy narcissism” (2005:78), and Grobman (2009) of a “healthy grandiosity”, where self-belief and self-absorption to a high degree are necessary prerequisites for achieving the application and dedication needed to shift boundaries in disciplines. Webb et al (2005) mention that the superior confidence of surgeons and allied professionals that is necessary for them to bear the great responsibility of their jobs and carry out the required tasks that involve exceptional skill, is often misconstrued as arrogance. I have found it useful to produce, from Webb et al’s (2005) explication of these differences, a summary of the clear points of comparison between giftedness and clinical narcissism in Table 17 below:

Table 17: Differentiating pathological narcissism from giftedness

Feature common to both	Its specificity in Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)	Its specificity in giftedness
<u>How perceived by others</u> Perceived as believing themselves to be superior		Looks this way because they actually are superior in intellect to the majority of others in ordinary mixed environments.
<u>Behaviour</u> Self-absorbed	Is absorbed in ruminating about being successful and the admiration and benefits they expect to receive. Choices are made with no meaning other than that they are calculated	Is absorbed in struggling to develop their potentialities towards achieving a project they are engaged with - eminent people often exhibit a single-minded, all-consuming focus. Choices are made based on personal meaning and

	to achieve maximum prestige in the eyes of others	need, irrespective of whether these meet with approval from others.
<u>Way of relating with others</u> Can be dismissive towards others Is readily angered	Is fighting to hide a sense of inferiority. Has very fragile self-esteem and an underlying sense of deficiency. Obstinate seeking prestige. Seems to have a script for how others should behave: others' needs and aspirations are irrelevant. Generalised – rather than situational – anger at feeling slighted or not being given what they believe they're entitled to. Behaves arrogantly in all settings.	Is fighting to express what they have. Has positive and realistic self-esteem and a genuine confidence in own abilities. Obstinate defending an idiosyncratic preference. Are impelled to follow their own ideas but don't expect others around them to comply. Situational anger when their real abilities are not understood, rejected, or thwarted (which might be often, e.g. if in an incompatible home, educational, or workplace environment). Can be humble. Is intolerant and impatient in the face of others' incompetence

In terms of what can best be done about this, Grobman (2009) writes about how helpful it can be for gifted individuals to find ways of seeing themselves as ordinary, even though they are in some respects exceptional. He found that his patients “began to realise that their larger-than-life successes did not mean that they lived outside the boundaries of human nature or were exempt from its laws” (Grobman 2009:116); and that “The normal parameters of conflict resolution still applied to them”. Interpersonal responses to giftedness optimally require a balance between providing containment but without damaging, humiliating, or ‘clipping the wings’ of the gifted individual. Without such containment, gifted individuals can experience overstimulation, emotional flooding, and a sense of endless

possibilities and feeling of grandiose personal power, feeling bad when people describe them as “scary” or “frighteningly smart” (Grobman 2009). Benjamin (cited by Hollway 2015) says you need someone to come up against you, match you, not let you get away with things. Something that is important for development is having the other give a realistic boundary, that brings about an experience for the child of being gradually frustrated in his or her most selfish demands, but not beyond what the child can developmentally manage, so as not to cause trauma but to develop tolerance and ability to manage the self and be more independent (Mollon 2001) as well as respectful of others. When gifted individuals do not experience a developmentally suitable boundary that they can respect, this can lead to them having problems with authority (Towers 1987) and even to finding themselves within the criminal justice system (interviewee No.2.2; Streznewski 1999; Oleson & Chappell 2012). See also a blog I wrote titled “From the classroom to the courtroom” (Falck 2015).

This brings us back to what I mentioned in section 1.4 regarding the ‘hubris followed by nemesis’ caution that is ubiquitous in myth and literature: do not defy the gods, the gods being the authorities. It is the same conundrum that parents run into with how to manage their strong-willed gifted child, which at worst can become an authoritarian parent trying to subjugate the child, even violently (see section 5.1.3 above). One can see why systems such as the DSM can be criticized as constituting a tool of social control – the diagnosis Pathological Demand Avoidance is about not wanting to do what others want you to do; Oppositional Defiance Disorder is again about not going along with others, opposing them; Narcissism is about having too much self-confidence and recognition of and belief in your own power (and wanting to be acknowledged for that); Autism is about thinking differently from others. None of these fit into a system of social control that is about augmenting the safe boundaries of a group by seeking obedience, co-operation, and adherence to the status quo rather than challenging, or threatening, it.

Features of both autism and narcissism are phenomena that a child is expected to outgrow, such as the lack of ‘theory of mind’ in autism (Baron-Cohen et al 1985, see section 6.2), and the self-centeredness of narcissism. Both are about difficulty in practising empathy, or mentalisation (Fonagy et al 2004, see section 5.2.3), with others, and finding a comfortable place in relation to them, with effective intercommunication. Having ‘theory of mind’, and

not being self-centered, are prosocial developments that aid co-operation, community, and collaboration.

It can be said that both the Child and the Emperor share a basic overlap in how they function, because both involve a deficit in empathy or mentalisation, a failing to “put themselves in another’s shoes”. This omission could arise out of not (or perhaps not yet) having the capacity to do so, like a child who developmentally has not yet acquired theory of mind. Or it could arise from not being alert to the fact that putting yourself in another’s shoes is something you could be doing that would be helpful to do. This could pertain to the Child or the Emperor, through a simple lack of education or information. It could also apply to anyone at any point in time where they happen not to be being thoughtful or considerate, perhaps because of being in a state of high arousal themselves (such as anger or distress) that makes them “selfish”. Goleman (1998) describes this as being “amygdala-highjacked”, unable to use the prefrontal cortex to think, reason, and imaginatively enter into what another’s experience might be like, or not being willing to do the latter out of for example Emperor-like disdain for others (such as Marie Antoinette’s famous “Let them eat cake”). Research has shown that in gifted students, all dimensions of social skills correlate positively with empathy (Ishak et al 2014).

8.3 Effort and its attendant problems

This research project has convinced me that the main dimension that sets gifted individuals apart from others is the ratio of effort to achievement. As Gagne (2013:194) puts it, “ease and speed” in learning and acquiring expertise “are the trademarks of giftedness”. In general, our social systems, such as educational systems, are set up in accordance with certain assumptions and expectations about what amount of effort is required for particular levels of achievement and at what stage such achievement can be reached. Where gifted individuals are involved, such assumptions and expectations are completely inaccurate. Chapter 5 presented my research data on this dimension of effort (and see Appendix C3). It is also this dimension that causes in others the most awe, and resentment, and in the gifted individual, the most bewilderment, frustration, and adjustment difficulty.

It is understandably inconvenient for systems to encounter individuals who do not suit the system. In general, however, educational systems are far readier to make adaptations to

cater for individuals who are lagging behind the expected level of achievement than they are to make adaptations for those who are speeding ahead. Somehow the latter individual difference is regarded as something unimportant. It is assumed that the individual concerned will be fine and should just put up with it and learn to live with it. It is not regarded as something that, if not adequately catered for, can lead to longterm personal and social problems. Favier-Townsend (2014) has documented some of the longterm problems this causes and has argued that giftedness should be officially recognised as a SEN (Special Educational Need), which it currently is not in the UK.

The wish to ignore the reality that some individuals naturally speed ahead, is what underpins the whole Antinat movement presented in Chapter 2. Refusing to acknowledge a person's individual experience, and the problems they encounter in living with that experience, commits a violence to that person. Such violence does not appear to be contemporaneously tolerated in the UK in any dimension of human diversity except that of intellectual giftedness. Our new Prime Minister Theresa May's recently stated plan to increase the number of grammar schools (i.e. state schools that select students according to academic ability) can be seen as a responsiveness to catering for this dimension of individual difference, yet there has been a huge outcry and resistance against it. In the meantime, the private educational sector continues to unabashedly select for and tailor provision specifically to highly able children, privileging those who come from families that can afford the steep tuition fees and perpetuating a riven society.

What is the reason for such resistance to acknowledging, and catering compassionately for, giftedness? It appears at bottom to be insecurity: witnessing someone 'speeding ahead' triggers the visceral threat-detection reaction of fearing 'being left behind'. This is apparent in parents who do not wish to let their child know his or her high IQ score, and in teachers who react negatively to a pupil's precocity rather than positively embracing it and investing in it. Whole cultures can act to deter such 'speeding ahead', for example in Australia where the phenomenon is termed 'cutting down tall poppies'. Australian researcher Feather (2012) has extensively studied this phenomenon. He has demonstrated that the perception of "deservingness" is a key variable in how people react to successes and failures in themselves and others (Feather et al 2011). He found that successes were judged as being undeserved,

and resented, if these were perceived as having been achieved with little effort (Feather & Sherman 2002). When a success was followed by a failure, misfortune, or fall from grace, this was greeted with more *Schadenfreude* (pleasure) in direct proportion to how undeserving the initial success was judged to have been (ibid.). By virtue of the fact that gifted individuals require far less effort in relation to achievement than does the average person, gifted individuals are particularly vulnerable to having others rejoice in their misfortune, which is the opposite of compassion and empathy. It is no wonder that gifted individuals can become adept at hiding their abilities and achievements to protect themselves from this form of hostility from others that they are uniquely vulnerable to. Feather (1989) found that people who favoured the fall of tall poppies, and reported more *Schadenfreude*, tended to be lower in self-esteem, power, and achievement, to set a higher value on equality, and to be more left wing. It is clear from this that for gifted individuals to feel able to freely express themselves, and to be acknowledged and given encouragement and support, they need to be in an environment with others who understand their unique predicament around effort and achievement, or who are themselves similar and/or who are themselves robust in self-esteem, power and achievement.

When gifted individuals are in an environment where very little effort is needed from them to stay abreast of the level of achievement that is being demonstrated by their peers and that is expected of them, they do not acquire the habit of disciplined, persistent effort that is necessary to accomplish anything of real importance (Grobman 2006; Corten et al 2006; Towers 1987; Hollingworth 1942). Developing lazy habits means that if they later find themselves up against challenges that they are unable to meet with little effort, they either avoid the challenge, or fail at it. The former establishes a pattern of underachievement, while the latter can be experienced as devastating because the praise they have received for their prior effortless achievement builds an identity as an achiever that they can become dependent on for their self-esteem and which is then threatened.

In terms of self-concept, confidence is built by experiencing effort leading to achievement (Colangelo et al 1993), so if achievement is attained without effort it is not valued and does not build a sense of internal control and confidence. If others insist on lauding such achievement, those others are perceived as ignorant, out of touch, because they are not understanding how meaningless the event has been for the gifted person. Grobman

(2006:207) reports a gifted patient of his as saying their accomplishments had been “as easy as breathing”, and “should I feel proud of breathing?” That is also why the gifted person can feel a fake or fraud, termed “imposter syndrome” (Clance & Imes 1978), because they experience that they are being praised for something that for them has not constituted what they would regard as an achievement, and which they have not internalised as an achievement, because it did not involve effort for them. Also, not experiencing competition from others denies gifted individuals the opportunity to build confidence by engaging in challenging competition with those who are a good match for them (Khan 2005).

Gifted individuals can find themselves in a no-win situation. If they allow the extent of their effortless achievement to be apparent to others, they court resentment. However, if others interpret their achievement as surely having required a lot of effort, the gifted individual can be perceived as someone who has “just kept studying all the time and had no social life” (as interviewee No.17 said people had falsely assumed of him, see Appendix C3), or who has specifically tried to “leave others behind” (rather than, “I was just born that way, it’s not my fault”, interviewee No.68, see section 5.2.2). As interviewee No.68 described, she felt better about herself if she knew she had not specifically put effort in to excel beyond others, to “leave others behind”, but noticed that others seemed to feel better about her if her achievement appeared to them to be the result of significant effort on her part, rather than that it came easily to her. Either way, it is difficult for gifted individuals to find in others an understanding of, and empathy with, the reality of their experience.

8.4 Critique of the project

As I come to the end of this project I believe it would be fair to make the critique that the project has managed to carry out the task set by its Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology, which was to construct theory that is grounded in research data. Charmaz (2014:228) cites the definition of theory as that which “states relationships between abstract concepts and may aim for either explanation or understanding”. In my creation of the Overview Model of Giftedness, the Child and Emperor conceptualisations, and the Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model, I have demonstrated (see especially section 4.3) how they are grounded in the research data I collected. I have certainly stated relationships between abstract concepts and used these to try to explain how interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome. Charmaz also asserts that in developing theory,

we “try to locate participants’ meaning and actions in larger social structures and discourses of which they may be unaware” (ibid:241). By engaging in a Psychosocial interpretation of my interview data I have linked my research participants’ behaviour and experiences with Psychodynamic and Systemic discourses.

My concepts of Child and Emperor qualify for Charmaz’s (2014:248) definition of theoretical concepts, in that they “subsume lesser categories with ease and by comparison hold more significance, account for more data, and often make crucial processes more evident”. It is apparent from Appendix F quite how much of the data concerning interpersonal difficulty is accounted for by those two concepts. However, by using the Child and Emperor designations, I open myself to the same problems as any entering of labelling or diagnostic territory encounters, which is – who fits which division exactly, and what about cases where features of both seem to be present? So it is important to stress that the way I am using these ideas is as a metaphor, a shortcut to refer to or understand something that might involve a cluster of recognisable features, not a setting up of rigid categories. The same person could display elements of Child or elements of Emperor at different times. For example, interviewee No.74 described being arrogant (Emperor), but also described how others seemed to understand socialising in a way that he didn’t, and he had to set about deliberately learning what to them clearly came naturally. This is more like Child, the lack/absence of something that for others accrues to them systematically simply in the ordinary course of development. In my research it appeared that in different individuals one or the other tended to be dominant (eg. No.69 Emperor, No.36 Child). However, it could be that No.69’s Emperor behaviour had been formed as a defence against the helplessness, confusion, and distress he felt as a Child: he had said that people thought of him as odd (interview transcript p.12), and that he hated being an outsider but couldn’t help it, that the view others had of him was “He’s an outsider, he’s not like us...”(p.32). Also, one could lead to another. For example, the genuinely innocent question of the Child could cause a bad reaction in another person who becomes obstructive or hostile and then the Child gets frustrated, angry, and treats the other person as though they’re stupid, at which point the Child is behaving like an Emperor.

Did I make the best theory possible for this research topic? As I was totally new to this methodology, I wondered whether I made the best use of theoretical sampling. The process

involves having to seek out further interviewees based on a hunch (Charmaz 2014), existing in a state of “negative capability” (Keats 1817), yet at the same time trying to reach out for fact and reason that will elucidate your hunch. You could spend a lifetime continuing in that process, but for a project like this you necessarily determine a cut-off point for when you will end (or at least for the time-being pause) the process and write it up. I cannot guarantee that saturation was achieved: Charmaz (2014:214-215) refers to the work of several researchers regarding the concept of saturation, pointing out that some researchers proclaim saturation rather than proving that they have achieved it. Realistically, in my research a number of interviewees was determined and agreed by the PAP prior to me knowing whether this would in the midst of the data collection and analysis stage prove to be a sufficient number for achieving saturation. Time and money ran out, as Wiener (2007, cited in Charmaz 2014) acknowledges might be what delimits a research project rather than saturation being what delimits it. I do however feel that the theory I have created does render the data (Charmaz 2014), and has so many demonstrable links with not only my interview data but also the textual analysis from many other writings and research studies on giftedness, so for now I feel I have reached a satisfactory conclusion.

My greatest concern about this project is that its aim of increasing empathy for gifted individuals, and the frustration and alienation they can experience in environments that ignore their special needs, could be misconstrued as a call for segregation. I come from South Africa, a country infamous for segregation (on the basis of race, although the Apartheid regime did correlate race with ability). In my RPPL (Falck 2012) I wrote about a kind of segregation I experienced within my family of origin through being identified (and favoured) as a “special child”, and the difficulty of that. (The word “gifted” looks very similar to the word in the South African language of Afrikaans for something that is poisonous – “giftig”.) Simply trying to ignore individual differences is not humane, but deciding how best to respond is complex. My challenge is to make my work benefit rather than disadvantage my gifted research participants and clients and those around them. My challenge now is to find a balance across this tightrope. Or, as Prof Chris Evans put it in a PK Seminar I attended, how will I “sell my evidence”?

* * *

In this chapter I have shown how my work links with other writings on giftedness and with mainstream psychological theory. I have also discussed the issue of differentiating between giftedness, autism, and narcissism; emphasised the central importance of the dimension of effort in the experience of and reactions to giftedness; and provided critical commentary on the project as a whole. The next chapter concludes the reporting of the work that has been carried out in this project.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

When someone manifests ability beyond what has ordinarily been encountered or expected within their age group or field of endeavour it attracts attention to that person. When such attention comes, whether it comes with positive or negative intent or even as neutrally as possible, it has an impact, and an impact that might be different from what was intended. What is it like for a person to experience – based on others' reactions to them but also based on their own perceptions – that they stand out from others? What is it like for them to have attention drawn to themselves because of how they happen – relative to others around them – to excel? How does such attention affect them? And how might the different options open to them for how they might try to cope with this, influence or even alter their development intrapersonally, interpersonally, and in terms of their achievement or potential for achievement? How might this best be dealt with? These are the questions that this project has examined.

9.1 Consolidating summary: The Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes

The question of whether innate exceptional intelligence exists as something marvellous that we can admire, or whether it is a fabrication that only exists in certain people's imaginations – like the traditional interpretation of the fabulous clothes in the story of the Emperor's new clothes – has long been a contentious question. Chapter 2 reviewed authors who argue for each side of the debate. Whether innate difference in ability exists is a question that has pervasive social and political implications. Documented reactions are, at one extreme, denial that there is individual difference between people, and at the other extreme, infamous eugenics programmes that have aimed to take control of human reproduction so as to promote characteristics of individual difference judged desirable and eliminate the rest.

The phrase 'the emperor's new clothes' has come to denote something that does not exist but is – perhaps collectively – pretended. To this I would add that it is also possible for there to develop a collective collusion to ignore or deny something that does exist. Another variation is that only a small minority of individuals can see something that a majority of others, even others in high positions, cannot see: what if the thread that the tailors wove and that the emperor wore did exist, but the tailors – outsiders – were the only ones who were

able to see it? As Schopenhauer (1859) wrote, “Talent hits a target no one else can hit; genius hits a target no one else can see”. Innovation requires someone to see something that others are not managing to see. However, accepting that there are things outside of our own knowledge and perception is usually at first resisted in the fending off of the unknown that tends to be reacted to as threatening rather than potentially enriching. As Oscar Wilde said, “The public is wonderfully tolerant. It forgives everything except genius” (cited in Silverman 2013:51).

Playing with the idea of giftedness as fabulous clothes that might be invisible, they could be invisible to the other, or to the self. If a gifted person’s individual differences are not acknowledged and engaged with by others, this can leave the person with insecurity and low self-esteem. If on the other hand, their abilities, which in a sense are invisible to themselves because they simply feel natural to them and therefore not extraordinary and may well fall short of their own objectives, cause others to keep admiring and drawing attention to them, this can develop other problems. As Miller (1997) stresses, it can feel that it is what the gifted child is in this manner clothed in – the ability and achievement – that is valued, rather than the child him- or herself. Such a child can also become the object of favouritism with its initially alluring gratifications but longer-term drawbacks and even dangers, as happened to another character with fabulous clothes – the biblical story of Joseph and his coat of many colours (Genesis 37), who was favoured by his father and attracted murderous jealousy from his siblings. Gifted individuals have to work out how to comport themselves in relation to others: what do others see in them and want of them, and how does that relate to how they see themselves? Do they have to deny their own experience and pretend to be the same as others to be accepted by the group and belong? Are they to go on a triumphant public procession like the fairy-tale emperor, or cower away and hide their nakedness? Triumphant public procession is the stuff of narcissism, and cowering to hide one’s nakedness is the stuff of insecurity and low self-esteem. Being gifted can construct for a person the psychic predicament of swinging precariously from one of these positions to the other. Given all of this, it is a significant challenge for such a person to find for themselves an acceptable place in society that does not compromise their authenticity nor ‘bury their talents’.

This project has looked at how gifted individuals adapt, consciously and unconsciously, to the interactions they experience with their environments, and what options might be available to them for constructing for themselves a better person-environment status quo. The next section provides a summary of the project's conclusions.

9.2 Research conclusions and indications for further research

In the literature and research on giftedness – which overwhelmingly concentrates on children rather than adults – there are ubiquitous references to interpersonal problems. This project investigated this by bringing the various scattered references together and analysing them (textual analysis), and by interviewing 20 gifted adults about their experiences of interpersonal relating. The conclusions of the project are as follows:

1. Atypical neural functioning, leading to unusually efficient cognitive processing and sensitivity and intensity of perceptions and reactions, and minority status with stigmatized identity, make gifted individuals vulnerable to interpersonal difficulty which can also compromise mental health.
2. A main manifestation of difference between gifted individuals and neurotypical others concerns the ratio of effort to achievement. This creates misunderstanding and can arouse in others feelings of threat, envy, and *Schadenfreude*, and in the gifted person, feelings of bewilderment, frustration, disdain, and guilt.
3. The views that are held regarding issues of effort and achievement impact on interpersonal relating. For example, if it is believed that everyone can be a genius given the right nurturing, there is denial of gifted individuals' experience, and responsibility (and blame) put on all parents and children to produce levels of achievement that might be unrealistic to expect.
4. Person-environment interaction is of central importance, with attendant goals of belonging, competition, and collaboration, all of which rely on interpersonal relating. How giftedness unfolds and leaves the individual feeling about self and others is highly dependent on whether the environment is benign, supportive, nurturing, encouraging, exploitative, neglectful, rejecting, traumatising.

5. What is learned in one context (such as habits of effort, self-perceptions, expectations of others) then perpetuates and is (often unconsciously) transferred to other contexts for which it might not be appropriate.
6. If there is a difficulty finding 'others like me' (few similar others in the environment), problems can ensue with building relationships and self-esteem. Such developmental vulnerabilities extend beyond the typically emphasised parent-child vertical relationship to lateral, peer relationships, which become of primary importance from adolescence onwards.
7. Interpersonal relating can be analysed in terms of nature of self-expressiveness, level of self-expressiveness, and level of acceptance by others.
8. Interpersonal difficulty arises predominantly through relating that can be categorized as naïve ('Child', including autism) or arrogant ('Emperor', including narcissism).
9. Interpersonal difficulty is perpetuated by unconscious processes such as transferences, valencies, and intersubjective complementarities, underpinned by a need for security and a defence against pain (including the pain of not belonging, and the pain of contrast).
10. Interpersonal difficulty is overcome by changing environments (gaining contact with more similar others); changing the level of self-expressiveness ('hiding self'); or changing the nature of self-expressiveness (such as tempering naivety and arrogance through improving interpersonal understanding and skill).
11. Changing the nature of self-expressiveness includes having the individual differences that are involved in giftedness and their interpersonal impact recognized and understood, and learning how to take this into account when communicating with others so as to interrupt past patterns and assumptions (that are often being unconsciously perpetuated).

12. Optimal interpersonal relating involves a movement away from being interpersonally despairing (addressing unconscious trauma), inhibited (addressing unconscious guilt), or provoking (addressing unconscious indignance), towards freedom of (aware, skilled) self-expressiveness in relation to others, and thriving.
13. Gifted individuals increasing their interpersonal skill might be a matter of priming an ally rather than adversary interpretation of relational status. This involves using mentalisation and empathy to soothe any activation of the attachment system of the other and/or the self. When perceived as an ally, the gifted person's driven, quick, and capable qualities become an asset rather than a threat, and hostility, envy and obstructiveness in others is less likely to be provoked.
14. Effective interpersonal relating is associated with the actualising of gifted potential.

Directions for further research that these conclusions suggest are:

- Investigating how best to make provision for gifted individuals to group together with similar others.
- Investigating how best to promote empathy and mentalisation between gifted individuals and others so as to achieve better mutual communication and understanding.
- Investigating how best to promote constructive collaboration between neurodiverse individuals. The company Auticon (as presented in section 8.2) has established a successful and very promising model for this involving autistic individuals, and it is worth considering what can be learned from this towards better supporting gifted individuals in contexts such as education and employment.

At the end of this project I am still left very much wondering how it is, on a scientific level, that the atypical functioning of gifted individuals should be associated with kinds of difference in social functioning that have similarities with autistic spectrum phenomena. One idea for this fascinating and potentially important area for research, would be to investigate the intricacies of how mother-infant right-brain-to-right-brain attunement might play out differently, or might be affected by, the mother or the infant being non-neurotypical, such as being gifted or being on the autistic spectrum (it being easier, of course, to measure the

mother's status in this regard than the infant's). This would be very complex and ambitious research, however, that would require collaboration with neuropsychologists. It is related to the sort of research that Allan Schore and Simon Baron-Cohen have been involved in. The importance of this would be towards understanding whether interventions can assist development to take place that can avert difficulty with the reading and interpreting of, and responding to, interpersonal cues. Future research could also examine how the models I have created could be applicable to the interpersonal relating experiences of members of other minority groups. Another indication for further research would be to study a gifted sample's performance on the kind of reflective functioning measures that Peter Fonagy has used in research with general-population samples, as this would provide a more nuanced identification of whether – or in what way – gifted adults differ from a general population in their use (or lack thereof) of mentalisation. It would also be of interest to devise a questionnaire based on my Child and Emperor conceptualisation, and Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model, that could be sent out to a large sample of gifted adults to ascertain whether the findings from this project are generalizable to much larger numbers of gifted individuals. This latter research suggestion is the one that would seem most readily feasible for me to seriously consider as a next, post-doctoral research project.

I am interested in the prospects of re-branding giftedness to a term that is not so loaded with connotations of elitism and privilege, but which more neutrally and straightforwardly refers to the phenomenon that is involved – perhaps, within the SEN (Special Educational Needs) rubric of “learning difference”, and in contrast to “learning difficulty”, a term like “learning agility”.

This links in with much wider issues regarding education, and I have received the following invitation to participate in thinking about that:

Sonja

I have now had a very good discussion with Anthony Speaight QC who is a past chairman of the political committee of the Carlton club and who is also the current chairman of research in the Society of Conservative Lawyers. He is very sympathetic to the idea of a paper being produced on grammar schools or indeed on education generally. I would like to discuss

various points with you. Is there any opportunity for us to meet if only for coffee? (Moran 2017)

Further information about how this project feeds into my professional work is presented in the next chapter.

9.4 Final personal reflections

This doctorate constitutes the most demanding, and the most rewarding and rapidly progressing, few years of professional development I have ever been through. I started the process with the aim of taking psychotherapy skills and insights out of my consulting room into other contexts. In these five-and-a-half years I have gained a teaching qualification, and an executive coaching qualification (see Appendices 28 and 29), both of which have equipped me to better access and engage with the client population that I have focused on developing expertise with through my ongoing professional work and this doctoral project. I have undertaken coaching assignments including organisational 360 evaluations, accumulated three years of running monthly Reflective Practice groups for a few different teams of management and staff, and accumulated five years of experience designing and leading workshops and courses. Last year I secured a Senior Lecturer post in a large School of Psychology. How my professional growth has mushroomed into all these new directions has been richer than I could ever have imagined at the outset.

It was a revelation to me how the doctorate's first required task, the writing of the RPPL, put me in touch with an aspect of my personal history that became the focus of my research. The controversial nature of the topic is something I fielded reactions to throughout. For example, a family member posted the following on a family (international) WhatsApp group, upon hearing that I had given a talk at Mensa on my doctoral topic:

I think interpersonal dynamics would improve greatly if the concept of high IQ/low IQ was scrapped. It immediately separates people, makes some feel superior and others inferior (for no good reason) and discounts various forms of intelligence which many "high IQ" people just don't have.

I was taken aback by the prejudice and hostility apparent in this.

Another kind of reaction was evident in this cautionary email I received from a friend:

I believe you are onto an interesting and worthwhile subject, which is furthermore a minefield. The explosions that it can let off cannot be ignored and are inevitably in themselves part of your subject. It follows, I think, that you cannot neglect any of

them; were you to do so you would leave yourself open to injury. More importantly, how convincing you manage to be may depend on your ability to dance in the minefield without blowing yourself up...

He went on to say “You may well argue that children with exceptional intelligence will be able to give more to humanity if they go to special schools rather than become problem pupils in normal ones,” then warned that “a neofascist” was something I would need to avoid being labelled. It was disconcerting to me to see how dangerous someone could view this topic as being. (Interestingly, after reading through my final dissertation, he wrote to me “You have managed a ballerina act across a minefield”.)

As I moved along with my project, I realised more and more how much it was connected with my father, who died a year before I commenced the doctorate. He was a gifted person who didn’t really amount to what he might have, and created significant interpersonal problems around him. As I wrote in my RPPL:

Somehow my father and I had a particularly special bond... He was a fascinating man, a deep thinker, self-educated, always reading (probably ‘gifted’: at his school they’d let him skip a grade). He had travelled the world as a cockpit radio navigator for South African Airways. He was talented at painting with oils. He taught me linear perspective, how to create the illusion of depth in a drawing, and I remember that wondrous sense of a whole new exciting dimension opening up to me. He taught me languages – Afrikaans, and Hebrew, and morse code: he bought me and him (just me and him) each a beautiful shiny silver and red mouth organ and we’d take up different positions across the house where we couldn’t see each other and blow morse code signals to each other. He was a real romantic. He taught me poetry, painstakingly going through the lines and words and marking out the meter and rhyme. He could be tender, full of humour. Yet there were many problems with him... and I had had to turn my back on him in order to fit in more with the rest of the more ordinary world around me... I think psychology became more compelling to me than everything else because it seemed it might offer me a way to understand sanity and madness, and too-strong connectedness and exclusion, and genius and ordinariness, and maybe find a bridge between these things, a way of integrating, a way to find balance. (Falck 2012:5)

My whole doctoral project has been about trying to understand interpersonal dynamics involving gifted individuals, and how interpersonal difficulties might be overcome. I feel I have been attending to how this has been – and will be – transmitted through our family’s generations: my father’s story; the ‘cross-roads’ in my own schooling and my mother’s decision about that as recounted in Chapter 1; and the decisions I have had to make about my eldest son – aged 11 when I started the doctorate – who had been identified as gifted at

his school. It has been a privilege to see how the decisions we as a family have made – together with his high motivation, commitment, and dedicated hard work – have been enabling his gifts to be fully nurtured and developed, no holding back, with substantial local, national, and international engagement, achievement, and awards in a few different domains. This, together with his interpersonal thriving, feels like enlightenment and remediation of an intergenerational theme.

During the Final Project write-up I constantly had Dr Marie Adams's words in my mind, quoting William Faulkner's exhortation "You have to kill your darlings". Constantly having to make choices about what could be included within the word count and what had to be edited out. And in the bits of normal life I participated in whilst writing up, I saw everything in terms of the huge task I was applying myself to, one word at a time. Like going blackberry picking, and picking one berry at a time, to accumulate enough to bake a crumble. Or my mother's knitting, one stitch at a time. During a rare weekend off we climbed Mt Snowdon: one step at a time. Doing a jigsaw puzzle with my youngest child: one piece at a time. It is the biggest writing project I have ever tackled, and I found it daunting, particularly having to do it at the same time as running a family and holding down a full-time job plus a private practice.

During the first PK seminar I attended, on 30th March 2012, Dr Jeannie Wright led an exercise where we were to write a letter to ourselves in the future, at the point where we would have finished the doctorate. In my letter to that future self – which is amazing to look back at now, five years later – I wrote:

Has it been worth it? Are you exhausted? Really proud of yourself? Does your working life look vastly different now from how it looked when you started out?

I can answer a resounding "yes" to every one of those questions. And now I eagerly await the opportunity to wear the related fabulous clothes – the hat and robes of the graduation ceremony!

Chapter 10 – Impact of the project

10.1 Professional products of the project

The professional products of the project constitute the means by which the aims of the project are achieved. The aims of the project, paraphrased from what was presented in my Learning Agreement (Falck 2014), are stated in Table 18 below.

Table 18: Aims of the project

1. To contribute a more in-depth and psychologically sophisticated engagement with the topic of interpersonal issues experienced by gifted adults, bringing to the topic an original theory that incorporates psychotherapy knowledge and insights, for example on unconscious processes.
2. To raise awareness of gifted issues, engaging with the surrounding fear, ignorance, prejudice, envy.
3. To try to cultivate more security around this topic.
4. To help gifted adults understand themselves better, understanding their differences and how these affect them and their relations with others. Through this, gifted adults could come to feel better about themselves and others and be more equipped to avoid interpersonal difficulty. Having better self-understanding and self-esteem, and correspondingly better interpersonal relations, can lead to being better able to utilise their abilities, which improves their well-being and mental health, and might enable the making of a positive contribution to their community.

In order to begin meeting these four aims, four professional products were designed and launched which are detailed respectively below.

10.1.1 Book proposal

Once I had commenced the Doctorate and got well underway with the literature review and my PEP research, I started envisaging writing a book on the issues I was encountering. What I had noticed was that, scattered throughout the giftedness literature and in the research data I was gathering, there were mentions of gifted individuals experiencing interpersonal difficulty, or otherwise denials that gifted individuals experienced interpersonal difficulty. Although this constituted a clearly present theme of gifted individuals' interpersonal experiences, there was no book that brought all these mentions of this issue together in one place and properly examined the nature and status of this issue, including the contradiction evident between disclosures of versus denials of this population being susceptible to

interpersonal difficulties. There was also a dearth of engagement with this issue at a depth psychology level. I therefore was inspired to write a book that would address this gap in the literature. My aim was to contribute to the existing literature on giftedness a full review of the topic of interpersonal issues experienced by gifted individuals (with an emphasis on adults, but looking at their developmental experiences would inevitably bring in the child/childhood also). Also, to bring to that topic a more in-depth and psychologically sophisticated engagement with it than I had so far seen, and to contribute an original theory of interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults that would incorporate the specialist knowledge and insights I could offer as a psychotherapist, for example on unconscious processes. I hoped by the end of the Doctorate to have created a full outline of the book with a couple of sample chapters written and hopefully a contract for its publication.

In writing a book proposal, one of the questions to answer is what the target audience is. In grappling with this, I thought the book could have as its primary target audience, one of the following three:

- Psychotherapists – a publisher like Karnac.
- The gifted community – a publisher like Great Potential Press.
- The general public (which can include psychotherapists and the gifted, but is not specialised for either of them, and in being more general, might lose more specialised audiences through seeming to them to not be specialised enough) – a publisher like Icon Books.

After much deliberation, the one that I decided I was probably most interested in, was “for the general public”. The reason is that this is a much wider audience than the first two. I felt that if I could make this topic relevant to a wider audience I would be achieving the objective of bringing psychotherapy knowledge to more people, and also making a broader public aware of giftedness issues (including having the prospect of reaching a greater number of those who are actually gifted but have never self-identified as such). I also felt however that this choice would be the most challenging, as it would be more of a challenge to make my material accessible and relevant to people in general, rather than just those who have a more limited sub-culture identity.

In thinking about targeting this topic to a general audience, I feared losing the more specialist content of it. I thought a lot about how I would have to change the language, the content,

and the title so as to make it more relevant to a wide general audience. In my Learning Agreement I proposed for the book the following title: “The Social Pitfalls of Extreme Intelligence: the Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes”. I engaged in further intense deliberation on this, trying to make the title attention-grabbing and curiosity-whetting for the prospective reader, yet at the same time accurate in reflecting its subject matter. I considered “The Social Development and Predicaments of the Highly Intelligent: the Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes”. Then I considered the more simplified “Why Very Bright People Have Bad Relationships”. In books for the gifted community the word “gifted” often appears in the title, but in books for general audiences I thought synonyms like “highly intelligent”, “bright” or “smart” might be more accessible.

In looking at prospective publishers, I found that some would accept a book proposal in the form of an outline, table of contents, and sample chapter (e.g. Karnac, Icon Books), whilst others would only accept the submission of a full, already completed manuscript and/or would not deal with a prospective author directly but only with literary agents (e.g. Bloomsbury, Penguin, Arrow Books, HarperCollins). For those who would accept a book proposal rather than full manuscript and deal directly with the author, I found that each one had different requirements for what had to be included with the proposal, which would involve a huge amount of work to prepare. For example, Jessica Kingsley Publishers required the titles of all other currently published books that are similar to your proposed book, complete with number of pages, retail price, and a written summary book by book of how that book was similar to or different from your proposed book. You also had to suggest what price your own book should retail at. These requirements demanded a knowledge of the publishing market that a first-time author such as myself would be very unlikely to have.

For publishers like Routledge, you had a few narrow options for describing what sort of book your own was. Was my prospective book a research monograph? A self-help book? Some required you to find one of their commissioning editors and communicate directly with him or her to see if you could whet their appetite for your book. This involved reading through numerous commissioning editors’ lists of interests and trying to work out which set of interests might best support a book on the interpersonal difficulties of gifted adults. It was

hard work and very time-consuming to go through all of these options and requirements and learn about the publishing world.

I know that most people who get a book published go through several rounds of rejections before finding a publisher who offers them a contract. From the outset I took the approach that I would send out a few proposals, see what feedback I got, and be prepared to keep on learning more about publishing and keep re-working my material to make it suitable for the right publisher. I decided for my first round, I would prepare a proposal to submit to Karnac, to Great Potential Press, and to Icon Books. This involved trialling one of each of the prospective target markets. I realised that it was difficult to think on different tracks simultaneously, i.e. preparing work to send to a more psychotherapy-specialised publisher, as well as a gifted community publisher, as well as a general audience publisher. It was hard to know though which of these would be the best route, and perhaps in trying one of each I did not tailor the material specifically enough to any one of them.

To prepare a sample chapter, I realised the material would be a lot more readable if I replaced the anonymised numbers by which I referred to my research participants with pseudonyms. Just doing this took a surprisingly long time: for each of the twenty interviewees I wanted a pseudonym that would be in keeping with the person's gender, nationality, ethnicity, and class, but generic enough to ensure complete anonymity by not drawing too much specific attention to any of these potentially identifying details. I spent quite some time Googling names that were common to particular cultures and geographical regions – applying the care of someone who was having to name twenty new babies!

In reading through my material and trying to see it from the perspective of a general reader, I realised how much I might have to 'unpack' ideas that were referred to in extreme shorthand within my text, to make it fully comprehensible to readers who were not educated in psychotherapy or research or any of the other bodies of knowledge my work touched on. Appendix 16 contains excerpts of the book proposal sent to Karnac. I am still learning about how to go about this though, and have discussed with a published friend whether I might have a conversation with his literary agent to learn more about the best way forward. Once I have got the submission of the doctorate out of the way, I am willing to complete a full

manuscript and then have the option of sending that to publishers who require full manuscripts.

10.1.2 Workshop

Another stated aim of my project was to raise awareness of giftedness issues, “engaging with the fear/ignorance/prejudice – and envy” (Falck 2014:16). Towards this end I designed a workshop that would impart knowledge about giftedness and provide experiential exercises and guided discussion and self-reflection that would enable participants to learn about giftedness and explore their own feelings in relation to it, thereby aiming to tackle ignorance, prejudice, and emotional reactions. I was imagining that the participants in such a workshop would be members of the general public who, by attending the workshop, could come into contact with this topic and leave more enlightened about it, enabling them in turn to communicate what they had learnt to others. I planned to have participants complete a questionnaire before and after their attendance at the workshop so as to evaluate its impact.

At the time I was employed as a tutor at The City Literary Institute, or City Lit as it is known, which is the largest provider in London of adult education classes to the general public. They have a website and a visible advertising campaign, for example posters at London Underground stations. City Lit have a strong culture and ethos around embracing difference and diversity, which is focused, as many difference and diversity programmes are, on the ‘underprivileged’, i.e. people who have visual, hearing, mobility, or learning impediments or belong to ethnic, racial, or sexual minority populations. As they champion people who might be or feel marginalised in society, I wondered how they would receive the idea of hosting a workshop on giftedness, which I was presenting as involving a minority population that was marginalised, although giftedness is often perceived as comprising ‘overprivilege’. I designed a course outline for my proposed workshop (Appendix 17), entitling it “High IQ, Hidden Taboo”, and pitched it to City Lit. I was delighted when they responded by immediately taking it up and advertising it on their website as a workshop that would run on 3rd April 2014 and 2nd April 2015.

However, leading up to the first delivery date, City Lit told me that not enough people had signed up for the workshop to make it viable for them to run it, so both dates were cancelled.

They said they were happy for me to re-think the workshop and try again with a different version. This was obviously disappointing, and also thought-provoking. I had designed other courses and workshops for City Lit which they had advertised and each one had always gone ahead, so this was my first experience of one that didn't attract enough interest. Why might that have been, I wondered? Did this constitute confirmation that high IQ was indeed a taboo topic, so that members of the general public would shy away from rather than be drawn to a workshop about it? However, I had a colleague who was booked to run a course on child development that City Lit similarly advertised, and leading up to it she too was told that not enough people had signed up for it and so it didn't go ahead. Child development is not a taboo topic. Obviously undersubscription was simply something that could and did happen with courses/workshops at times, and to determine exact reasons – if one ever could – would involve examining numerous factors such as motivation for attending a course (what competing events were available on the same day, what topics were 'fashionable' or presently in demand and what issues were current in the media, what would the perceived benefit of attending be), affordability, and how effectively the course was marketed.

The High IQ, Hidden Taboo course was advertised within City Lit's "Personal Development" section. Looking at what sorts of courses and workshops are offered within this section, they tend to describe a very general issue that anyone might experience, and to offer a specific related benefit that the event would confer. For example, for a workshop titled "Anger without aggression", this is the description: "Explore practical tools that will help you to express yourself powerfully without violating others". A workshop titled "Declutter your life" promises "Get lots of tips and emotional support to make the changes you want." For a workshop entitled "Overcoming procrastination", the description is: "Explore why you procrastinate and discover techniques to help you make decisions and keep them". By contrast, for the High IQ, Hidden Taboo workshop, the description was: "Our society increasingly emphasizes diversity, yet largely ignores "gifted" people and their special needs: why? This course looks at what being "gifted" means, and what this means for the lives of people affected." It is easy to see that the latter workshop does not describe an obvious 'take-home' benefit for any average person who signs up to it. The workshop engages with an issue within our society, not a personal issue for the participant, and offers to explain and explore a condition that relates to a minority of people. This might therefore not be seen by

members of the general public who are browsing the City Lit website as being something that they would be motivated to pay to spend a day engaging with.

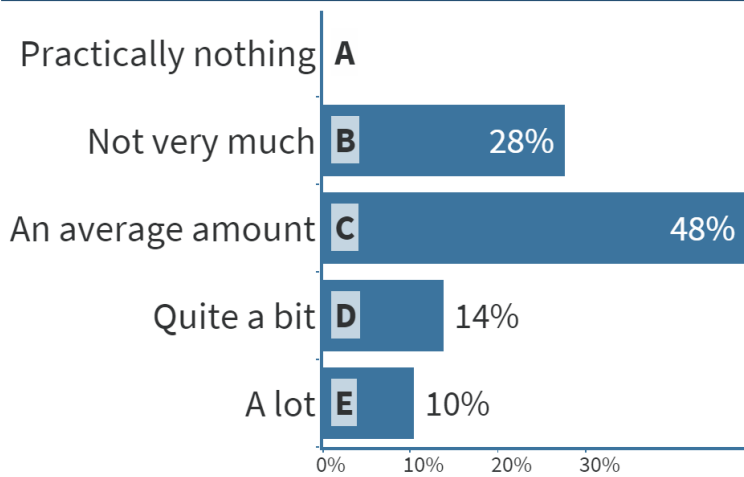
In addition, at around the time that the High IQ, Hidden Taboo course was advertised on the City Lit website, the website went through a big restructuring. The Personal Development section used to be part of City Lit's department named "Psychology, Counselling and Personal Development" and visible on the home page of City Lit's website. It could be straightforwardly clicked on to display the various courses within those sections. The restructure meant that this department no longer appears on the home page at all. Courses to do with Psychology, Counselling or Personal Development are now grouped under "Health & Lifestyle", and you would have to click on the "Health & Lifestyle" tab on the home page in order to access such courses. Furthermore, once you click on that tab, there is no longer a "Personal Development" category. The closest replacement category is entitled "Life skills" (the others are "Psychology & counselling", "Fitness & relaxation", "Health", "Food and drink", "Massage", and "Games"). Once you click on "Life Skills", three further categories are shown, one of which is "Personal development". This makes it clear that City Lit have changed their structure presumably to better suit the demographic they are catering for who are perhaps searching more for pragmatic, practically useful input rather than for example learning about the history, definition, and needs of a marginalised segment of our society for general enrichment and enlightenment. Under this new structure there is even a course entitled "Consciousness and crochet", offering "A fun way to increase your self-knowledge through crochet".

Through this, I reconsidered whether City Lit was the right sort of organisation to host the sort of workshop I had been envisaging. One aim of my overall project was to raise awareness of giftedness issues within the general public, and that is what I had imagined I could achieve by running a workshop at a place like City Lit. Another aim however was to raise awareness of giftedness issues within the population of people who could be classified as gifted. It is the latter aim I then decided to concentrate on as I felt I would need to think more carefully about where to go next with the "general public" idea.

I contacted the CEO of British Mensa, John Stevenage, to discuss my work and see whether Mensa would like to, through me, offer to their membership workshops and services to promote awareness of giftedness issues, spread information and enhance well-being. We had a meeting in which he said that their board had precisely been discussing how to make more such facilities available to their membership. He said that my discussion with him was “very timely”. He asked that we start by me writing an article that could be published in the Mensa magazine, and then follow that up with an event where I could give a presentation about my work. In the January 2016 edition of the Mensa magazine my article was published, entitled “Make the Most of Your Mind”. The follow-up event was then booked for 18th June 2016 at the Wellcome Collection, Euston Road, London. It was named an “Arts & Science” day, and another speaker was booked also, so that I would present in the morning and she would present in the afternoon. This second speaker was scientist and broadcaster Dr Kat Arney, author of a new book on understanding how our genes work (Arney 2016). 100 Mensa members booked to attend, filling the capacity of the venue. See Appendix 18 for the day’s programme. In order to be able to publicise the website which I had created that offered services designed especially for gifted adults (see section 10.1.4 below) I designed and then worked with a graphic designer to refine and print four flyers (Appendix 19) that could be distributed at the event.

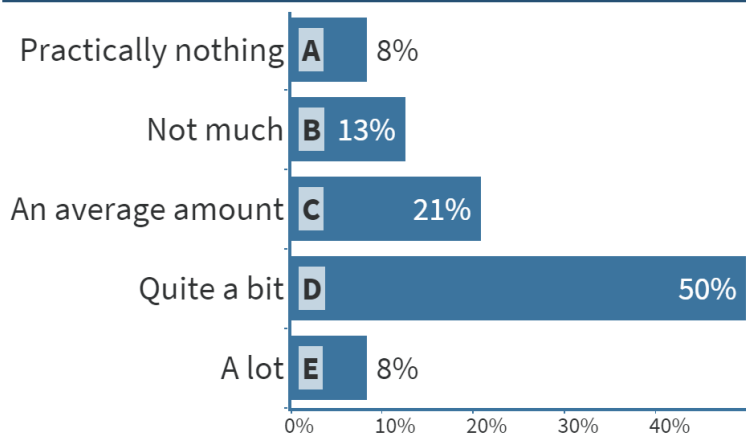
On the day, at the beginning of my talk, I invited the audience to participate in live interactive polling (using Poll Everywhere technology) to assess their starting level of knowledge around interpersonal issues for gifted adults. This was the result:

How much do you feel you know about what having a high IQ means for your interpersonal relationships and well-being?



At the end of the event I invited them to vote again, and this was the result:

After attending this morning's session, how much do you now feel you know about what having a high IQ means for your interpersonal relationships and well-being?



It is apparent from these results what the impact of the event was. Prior to the event the mode was that "an average amount" was known about what having a high IQ means for interpersonal relationships and well-being. After the event the mode was that "quite a bit" was known about this, with the selection of this option having increased from 14% to 50%.

A documented characteristic of high IQ individuals is a strong sense of humour. There was a lot of laughter about the fact that at the start of the talk nobody selected the option of knowing “practically nothing” about the topic – which also is congruent with this kind of audience having a characteristic of being curious and seeking information – whereas at the end “practically nothing” was selected, which would indicate that the talk had *removed* knowledge that had been present at the start! This was patently done for humorous effect during this very convivial live event, as the poll results go up instantly, live on the screen, for everyone to see. It was an enjoyable event with very responsive participants. I also had people approach me afterwards for consultation, who have since attended therapy sessions with me, some ongoing.

I was also then booked to present at the Mensa conference at Trinity College, Cambridge, on 19 August 2016, where the title I was given for my presentation was “Gifted Relationships”. That too was a lively event with lots of audience participation by Mensa members from the UK and internationally. I have been invited to give another talk to Mensa members, at which all the members of the board of British Mensa will also be present, on 6 May 2017 at the Strand Palace Hotel in Central London. It has been discussed that following this talk, my services might be advertised on the Mensa website home page. The advert for this talk, which I titled “The three vital communication skills for high-IQ adults”, at which I will be the only speaker, went out on Tuesday 21 March. On 23 March I received an email from Mensa saying that all 120 tickets had sold out (in less than two days) and that they were operating a waiting list (see Appendix 20). In this email they also invited me to speak again, on 3 June 2017, at an event where the other speakers would be Johnny Ball (TV personality), Tony Buzan (inventor of Mind Mapping), John Cridland CBE (ex CBI president), Danielle Brown MBE (double Paralympic gold medallist), Julie Taplin from Potential Plus, and Mensa’s gifted child consultant Lynn Kendal.

One of the many Mensa members who contacted me after reading my January 2016 article, met with me and then nominated me to the RSA (Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) as a fellow. Their mission, as stated on their website (www.thersa.org) is as follows:

By sharing powerful ideas and carrying out cutting-edge research, we build networks and opportunities for people to collaborate - creating fulfilling lives and a flourishing society.

I was accepted as a fellow, and they have invited me to write a blog for them on giftedness, which I have not done yet as I've been too busy, but it is high on my list and I look forward to getting more involved with them as this will be another opportunity to raise awareness of giftedness to a wider audience.

10.1.3 Book chapter

One of the themes that came out of my PEP research was that of "The Effects of Security/Insecurity" (Falck, 2014:6). Several interviewees spontaneously mentioned that they felt individuals who behaved hostilely or obstructively towards them were themselves "insecure", and that individuals who themselves felt "secure" were welcoming of manifestations of high ability in others. This was a colloquial usage of the words "secure" and "insecure", rather than a usage of these words as terms from Attachment Theory. However, there is some overlap in meaning between common usage of words and Attachment Theory terminology.

In Section 5.1.1 I outlined Attachment Theory, which I then employed in the rest of the dissertation in making sense of the difficult reactions that gifted individuals encounter interpersonally. If someone feels that another person has attributes that will be likely to make them threatening as a rival for the attentions and affections of valued others and for resources they themselves need and value, their attachment system will be activated and they may behave in a threatened manner. However, if they instead perceive the other as a potential ally in securing resources, they will not feel threatened and not behave in those hostile ways. This is a reaction that often gets triggered in relation to gifted individuals who can be perceived as being a threat. If a person is feeling secure, their behaviour will be calmer, and they will be more receptive to constructive interpersonal relating. I therefore saw the cultivating of secure attachment behaviour as being a strategy for soothing interpersonal difficulty.

I was given the opportunity to publish my ideas about cultivating greater security, and although this was in the context of creating interventions for supporting families where children manifest disorganized attachment, the principles are transferrable to other contexts

in which behaviour that results from insecurity is being displayed. My idea was to tackle the behaviour of insecurity with its detrimental social consequences by mimicking the behaviour of security, even if the internal feeling is of insecurity, to help set up a different pattern of interaction. This book chapter which I co-authored as lead author with Professor David Shemmings, entitled “Fake it ‘til you make it: Can deliberately adopting secure attachment behaviour lead to secure attachment organisation?”, was published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers in April 2014 (Falck & Shemmings 2014) – see Appendix 21.

10.1.4 Website

To achieve the fourth aim of my project – i.e. to help gifted adults understand themselves better, understanding their differences and how these affect them and their relations with others – I envisaged developing a website that would act as a portal for disseminating information about giftedness and also provide access to relevant services such as workshops, coaching, and therapy. When I had a paper based on my PEP research accepted for presentation at the July 2015 SENG conference in Denver, I decided I wanted to have the website up and running before I left for America so that when I presented there and met people there I would be able to show the website and have its details on the business card I would hand out. I worked hard to write all the copy for the website, source images etc, and my son compiled it into a live website. Together we worked to fit everything together with suitable graphics, fonts, spacings, colours, and sizes of text. I wanted to create a cohesive brand image for the services I was offering, and created a logo which played on the emotional-intelligence-promoting aspect of the services. As emotional intelligence is often shortened to EQ, I named my services Equipped, with the logo emphasising the initial EQ, ie. EQuipped. I wanted to create a user-friendly website that would appeal to individuals who identified themselves as gifted and were seeking services specialised enough to be specifically relevant to themselves, but which would also appeal to individuals who had not ever identified themselves as gifted but for whom those specialist services were relevant. The website went live on 22 July 2015. Its address is: www.equippedconsulting.co.uk (see Appendix 27 for a screenshot image of its home page).

The attached brochures, Appendix 19, use the same images and graphics from the website and similar copy to publicise the four services that are offered, which are coaching and organisational consultation, development groups, therapy, and workshops. I also designed

invoices which I have used for billing the clients who have been using the services. See Appendix 25 for statistics on traffic to the website.

Work that I have done through Equipped Consulting to date has included:

- Coaching: consulting with 11 corporate staff and senior leadership team members.
- Workshops: running communication training for 50 corporate staff.
- Therapy clients: high-IQ clients have contacted me through word of mouth, talks I have given, the Mensa magazine article I published, my website, and through referrals by other high-IQ practitioners in the USA and the Netherlands.

The Personal Development Groups have not taken off yet. I have been too busy to put any particular efforts into marketing them. I am however considering re-branding these as “How to have better conversations” groups. I have had a lot of positive feedback on the website and brochures and am excited to continue working through Equipped Consulting and developing it.

10.2 Further outputs

- Publication of PEP results in the February 2014 edition of Mensa’s international Psychology Special Interest Group magazine *Cognito*.
- Publication of my PEP results on the website of the IHBV (the “Gifted Adults Foundation”), Netherlands.
- Presentation at SENG Conference, Denver, Colorado, in July 2015 (Appendix 22).
- I was booked to present at the SENG Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia, in July 2016 (title “Presenting a new model for understanding the four main patterns of different outcomes for gifted adults”), but sadly had to cancel at the last minute as I had taken on a new full-time academic post that could not give me the time off at that point.
- Blogs I have written for, and posted on, the Equipped Consulting website (see www.equippedconsulting.co.uk).
- Article in Mensa magazine January 2016 entitled “Make the Most of Your Mind” (Appendix 23).

10.3 Collaboration

- Robert Ashton, Mensa member, owner of Swarm Apprenticeships, an organisation that creates apprenticeships with businesses nationally for placing high-IQ adolescents who have dropped out of the educational system which does not suit their special needs and provides them an alternative career path. He accepted a

referral from me onto his programme of a high IQ adolescent who saw me for therapy consultations, and nominated me for fellowship to the RSA.

- Noks Nauta, physician, occupational psychologist and author, Netherlands: I helped refine the English translation of her (Dutch original) book “Gifted Workers Hitting the Target” (Nauta & Ronner 2013) and wrote a review of the book which was published in the July 2013 edition of the BACP magazine “Coaching Today”. Noks referred a high IQ client to me, based in São Paulo, Brazil, who had contacted her following reading one of her publications. He consulted with me by Skype. It was Noks who suggested I submit a proposal to SENG. When my paper was accepted she very kindly invited me to be her guest in Denver and booked accommodation for us to share there, and introduced me to many people including Dr James Webb, founder of Great Potential Press publishers of books on giftedness.
- Lisa Erickson, psychotherapist, Seattle USA: made available to me her full slides for training psychotherapists in CPD workshops on giftedness. She referred to me a client based in Scotland who had contacted her, who consulted with me by Skype.
- Paula Prober, counsellor in Oregon, USA. Referred a client to me who is based in England, who consulted with me.

10.4 Professional significance of the work

In writing up my project I have created a scholarly resource of a kind that did not previously exist, that documents how interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome, and that reviews and categorises previous work on this and contributes psychotherapy knowledge in a way that has not been done previously in the giftedness field. I have also published a book chapter that proposes an intervention to promote the kind of interpersonal relating that is associated with secure attachment organisation. I have created and launched a new website that offers therapy, coaching, groups, and workshops designed specifically to be suitable for high-ability adults. There are no other such specialised services currently in the UK. The fact that gifted adults have sought my services via international routes including Brazil, Germany, the USA, and the Netherlands, shows the need for practitioners who are knowledgeable about and skilled in working with this client population.

See Appendix 24 for reports on the professional significance of the work that have been sent to me by Dr Jerald Grobman (USA), Professor Joan Freeman (UK), and Dr Noks Nauta (Netherlands).

10.5 Post-doctoral directions

Table 19 below lists the various ongoing work on my topic that has already been booked, proposed, or discussed, and which is to take place after the submission of this dissertation.

Table 19: Post-doctoral plans: continuing impact

Organisation	Timescale	Content
Mensa	Invited, booked for 6 May 2017	Running a workshop titled "The three vital communication skills for high-IQ adults," with Mensa members and the board of British Mensa.
Mensa	Invited, booked for 3 June 2017	Giving a talk to younger Mensa members and their parents on communication skills.
Royal Society for the Arts	Invited, as soon as I can fit it in	Write a blog for their website on my topic.
Economic and Social Research Council	Proposal sent by me, for 16 June 2017.	To present at a seminar titled "Narcissism and Destructive Leadership".
BACP	Discussed, as soon as I can fit it in.	Publish an article on my topic in "Therapy Today".
Equipped Consulting, or possibly with the BACP	As soon as I can fit it in	Run CPD workshops on psychotherapy with high-IQ/gifted adults.
The Conversation	As soon as I can fit it in	Write a piece for them on my topic.
Intelligence Journal	As soon as I can fit it in.	Submit a paper from my PEP research, on attachment styles in high-IQ adults.
Other journals	After the above-mentioned paper has been completed.	Submit papers on other aspects of my research, such as the workplace experiences of gifted adults, the intersubjective communication of gifted adults, etc.
University of East London	Discussed	Running an option module on neurodiversity for students on their MSc Occupational Psychology and MSc Coaching programmes.

My overall aim post-doctorally is to keep on further developing this subject as my area of expertise and to keep engaging with it professionally and publicly. My personally most ambitious outcome is to achieve the publication of the book that this doctorate has prepared the proposal for, so that is a main piece of work that I would like to attend to as a priority.

END

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Literature searches undertaken

At various points over the five-plus years of working on this topic (part-time), I undertook literature searches using a variety of search-term combinations on Middlesex University's Summon (which searches several databases), the Tavistock's electronic library search, Google Scholar, references from colleagues and field experts, and hand-searches.

In addition, before finalising the literature review chapter, I undertook the following systematic searches, each encompassing the dates January 2012 to December 2016:

Data base	Search terms used
PsycINFO	"gifted relationships" "gifted interpersonal" "gifted psychosocial" "gifted" NOT "children" NOT "education"
PEP-web	"gifted" and "relationship" "gifted" and "relationships" "gifted" and "psychosocial" "gifted adult" "gifted interpersonal" "high ability" "giftedness"
Searched "Intelligence" journal	"gifted"
Science Direct	"giftedness"
Scopus	"gifted"

Appendix 2 – PEP interview schedule with 12 unanalysed questions highlighted

PEP Interview Schedule

When Mensa comes up in interview, ask about:

- why joined
- what person feels they get out of their membership
- what improvements they would like (which added resources?)
- is there something they feel they get out of relating with other high IQ people that is different or not possible with others?

<u>Questions</u>
<p>1. To start, can you say something about your background and current circumstances: where you grew up; your family of origin; your current living circumstances; qualifications; and current job and position? Nationality?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> (Authoritarianism in family of origin?)</p>
<p>2. Brief work history.</p> <p>Get idea about length of time at jobs, change-overs, and reasons.</p>
<p>3. The advert used the word “gifted”. Could you say something about how you feel this relates to you?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Personal history around achievements, assessments etc.</p>
<p>4. Do you feel this is something innate, something you were born with, that in some way differentiates you from others?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Sensitivity? Intensity? Feeling different from others?</p>
<p>5. Can you describe what it is that you think comprises “being gifted” – how would you describe what it is about it that is distinctive?</p>
<p>6. How do you feel about this aspect of yourself?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Gives you security? Confidence? Self-esteem. Pride, pleasure, find it useful, guilt, awkwardness, isolation, burden, self-conscious about abilities.</p>
<p>7. On a scale of 1-10, how important a part of your personal identity do you feel this is?</p>
<p>8. How do you feel this aspect of yourself was reacted to as you were growing up?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> By family and others: noticed? praised, supported/nurtured, message to hide/be humble, valued, exploited, rivalry.</p>

<p>9. Do you feel this aspect of yourself affects the way you relate with others?</p>
<p>10. What kinds of reactions do you get from others to this aspect of yourself?</p> <p>Prompts: Positive/negative. Envy? Admiration, not noticed, treated as ordinary, enjoyed, in awe, grateful, uncomprehending, baffled, irritated, resentful, exploiting, tease, bully.</p>
<p>11. How do you feel about the reactions you get?</p> <p>Prompts: Which do you like/feel most comfortable with? Which dislike/feel uncomfortable with? Feel scornful when too much praised, impatient, bored, frustrated, angry, down. Feel too powerful? Feel guilty? If someone not on your level intellectually do you find it difficult to look past that and value other things in that person? Unmet needs: does having to 'gear down' impede ability to give empathy to others? (ie. difficult to give others what you feel others can't/don't give you)</p>
<p>12. How do you think the reactions of others affect your behaviour?</p> <p>Prompts: amount of free self-expression; dumbing down? Hiding self/false self. Become proud? Afraid of envious attacks? Fear of failure?</p>
<p>13. What do you like most about your job?</p> <p>Prompts: autonomy, self-expression, challenge, sense of being useful, sense of achievement, being valued by others, being part of something with/without others</p>
<p>14. What do you like least about your job?</p> <p>Prompts: boredom, conflict, lack of autonomy, problems with authority, being misunderstood/devalued by others.</p>
<p>15. Do you feel you are using your full potential at work?</p> <p>Prompts: under-achievement? Fear of failure, which would threaten self-concept as gifted? Envy of others who are doing well?</p>
<p>16. If you could describe your absolutely ideal work conditions, what would they be?</p>
<p>17. How do you feel you get on with others at work?</p>
<p>18. Who do you think you feel most comfortable with, out of superiors, peers, subordinates?</p> <p>Prompts: relation to authority and to individual differences in others; traits valued/desired in others</p>
<p>19. What would you say is the best thing about your relations with others at work?</p>

Prompts: trust/distrust
20. What do you find is the most difficult aspect of your relations with others at work?
21. What do you think others would say is best about working with you?
22. What do you think others would say is worst about working with you?
23. If you were to be offered coaching, what specific issues/problems/skills would you wish it to target for you?
24. Have you ever had psychotherapy? If so, what was that like for you?
25. Do you think that being gifted has, so far, been a helpful or hindering factor in you fulfilling your career potential?
26. If you had to re-brand “giftedness”, what do you think would be a better word?

Appendix 3 – Original advert to recruit research participants**Attachment Styles and Experience of Workplace Interpersonal Relations in Gifted Adults.**

Do you know what your attachment style is? How do you think being 'gifted' affects your relations with others at work? Mensa members are invited to participate in a doctoral research pilot study that explores these questions (through Metanoia Institute/Middlesex University). Please contact Sonja Falck (07854 366 871), sonja.falck@btinternet.com in the strictest confidence for an initial, no-obligation enquiry.

Appendix 4 – Information sheet to first 16 interviewees

Information Sheet

Invitation to participate in doctoral research study undertaken through Metanoia Institute and Middlesex University (13 North Common Road, Ealing, London W5 2QB) and in accordance with the British Psychological Society's *Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants (2006)*.

Title of Study: Attachment Styles and Experience of Workplace Interpersonal Relations in Gifted Adults.

Researcher: Sonja Falck, Tel. 07854 366 871, email: sonja.falck@btinternet.com

If I participate in this research study, what is involved?

You are asked to complete and return by email the attached Participant Information Form and Informed Consent Form, following which you will be asked to fill in a multiple-choice questionnaire and a one-item ratings scale which only take a few minutes to fill in, by computer, and email back. If you indicate that you would be willing to attend an interview, you may be invited to attend a private and confidential one-to-one interview of approximately 1.5 hours' duration with the researcher (details above) at the researcher's office in Central London (12 Harley Street, London W1G 9PG) or by Skype. You will have completed your participation in the research once you have returned your filled-in questionnaire and ratings scale, and in the case of those attending an interview, by the end of the interview appointment.

What will be done with the information collected from me?

All information collected will be stored anonymously (ie. not linked with your name or contact details) and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. The information will be analysed by the researcher for the purpose of providing to the researcher, and any others to whom the findings are reported, a better understanding of the topic described in the above title of the study. No identifying details of the participants will be included in the completed research findings. The findings will be made freely available to any participants who indicate that they would like a copy.

What is the reason for this research study?

This study is being undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of what interpersonal issues gifted adults in the UK may encounter in the workplace and why, towards helping individuals, teams and organisations to derive the most benefit from gifted ability.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study on the basis of being a gifted adult as defined by having fulfilled the criterion for attaining membership of Mensa.

What are the potential benefits to me if I participate?

You may find it interesting and thought-provoking to participate in this study. The findings of the research may offer you an opportunity to discover how your experience relates to that of others in similar situations and may offer a helpful structure for thinking about some of your experiences. For those who additionally attend an interview, participating in being interviewed provides an opportunity to safely and confidentially explore a topic of personal relevance. You might find this interesting, enjoyable, and even stress-relieving.

What are the potential disadvantages of participating?

As a result of participating in this research you might encounter unexpected personal feelings or consequences that you might experience as negative. It might be that you do not enjoy participating and do not find it interesting or useful. You might be disappointed in the research findings and feel it did not give you what you hoped for or expected.

What happens if I do experience negative effects during or after participating in the research?

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any question you feel uncomfortable with, or choose to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, simply by notifying the researcher (contact details above) of your decision to withdraw. A free debriefing session is offered to each participant to discuss with the researcher the experience of having participated in the research. Additionally, for those who attend an interview, by arrangement with the researcher (contact details above), up to four free 'coaching' sessions can be provided in order to assist with dealing with any negative effects. Beyond this, if required, other relevant information and/or contact details for other relevant services will be made available to you.

Now that I've read this Information Sheet, what happens next?

If you are happy to participate in the research, please now proceed to filling in the attached Participant Information Form and Consent Form and return these by email (to sonja.falck@btinternet.com). Upon receipt I will email you the research questionnaire and one-item rating scale. If you have indicated that you are willing to be interviewed I might also contact you to invite you to be interviewed.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this Information Sheet.

Appendix 5 – Information sheet to final 4 interviewees

Information Sheet

Invitation to participate in doctoral research study undertaken through Metanoia Institute and Middlesex University (13 North Common Road, Ealing, London W5 2QB) and in accordance with the British Psychological Society's *Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants (2006)*.

Title of Study: Constructing a Theory of Interpersonal Relating in Gifted Adults.

Researcher: Sonja Falck, Tel. 07854 366 871, email: sonja.falck@btinternet.com

If I participate in this research study, what is involved?

You are invited to attend a private and confidential one-to-one interview of approximately 1.5 hours' duration with the researcher (details above) at the researcher's office in Central London (12 Harley Street, London W1G 9PG) or by Skype, or at a venue of your choice. At the end of the interview you will have completed your participation in the research.

What will be done with the information collected from me?

All information collected will be stored anonymously (ie. not linked with your name or contact details) and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. The information will be analysed by the researcher for the purpose of providing to the researcher, and any others to whom the findings are reported, a better understanding of the topic described in the above title of the study. No identifying details of the participants will be included in the completed research findings. The findings will be made freely available to any participants who indicate that they would like a copy.

What is the reason for this research study?

This study is being undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of the interpersonal relating of gifted adults and the part this plays in their life trajectories.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study on the basis of being identified by the researcher as a gifted adult.

What are the potential benefits to me if I participate?

You may find it interesting and thought-provoking to participate in this study. The findings of the research may offer you an opportunity to discover how your experience relates to that of others in similar situations and may offer a helpful structure for thinking about some of your experiences. Participating in being interviewed provides an opportunity to safely

and confidentially explore a topic of personal relevance. You might find this interesting, enjoyable, and even stress-relieving.

What are the potential disadvantages of participating?

As a result of participating in this research you might encounter unexpected personal feelings or consequences that you might experience as negative. It might be that you do not enjoy participating and do not find it interesting or useful. You might be disappointed in the research findings and feel it did not give you what you hoped for or expected.

What happens if I do experience negative effects during or after participating in the research?

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any question you feel uncomfortable with, or choose to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, simply by notifying the researcher (contact details above) of your decision to withdraw. A free debriefing session is offered to each participant to discuss with the researcher the experience of having participated in the research and attend to any negative effects. Beyond this, if required, other relevant information and/or contact details for other relevant services will be made available to you.

Now that I've read this Information Sheet, what happens next?

If you are happy to participate in the research, please now proceed to filling in the attached Participant Information Form and Consent Form and return these by email (to sonja.falck@btinternet.com).

Thank you for taking the time to read through this Information Sheet.

Appendix 6 – Participant information form

Participant Information Form	
Strictly Private and Confidential: It is voluntary to fill in this page. The information will be helpful for compiling research statistics and controlling the research variables. It will only be seen by the researcher, Sonja Falck, and will not be shared with any other party whatsoever.	
Where applicable please insert answers, tick or delete.	
Surname	
Forename/s	Title Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr/Prof
Address (including postcode)	
Telephone contact(s)	Email
Date of birth:	
Have you ever received a learning difficulty, ADHD/ADD, or autistic spectrum diagnosis, or any other psychiatric diagnosis? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, please elaborate:	
Are you currently on psychiatric medication? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, please elaborate:	
Are you currently undergoing psychotherapy? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Appendix 7 – Informed consent form**Informed Consent Declaration**

I,(insert name), hereby give my informed consent to participating in the doctoral research study entitled “Constructing a Theory of Interpersonal Relating in Gifted Adults” being undertaken by Sonja Falck (“the Researcher”) (tel. 07854 366 871, sonja.falck@btinternet.com) through Metanoia Institute/Middlesex University.

By signing this document I am confirming that I have read and understood the “Information Sheet” emailed herewith and that I have been given the opportunity to ask the Researcher questions about this research study and that in particular I agree with each of the following statements:

1. I understand that all data collected from me for the purposes of this study will be stored securely and anonymously in accordance with the Data Protection Act, so that my name and contact details cannot be linked with any of the data collected.
2. I understand that my participation in this research study is voluntary and I may choose to withdraw from participating at any point without giving a reason.
3. I understand that if I am invited to participate further in related research, it is entirely at my own discretion whether I choose to further participate or not.
4. I understand that, in the reporting of the research study results, any identifying information or details associated with me will be withheld so as to preserve my anonymity.
5. I give my consent to the data collected from me being shared verbally or in writing by the Researcher in any context in which none of the data is linked with my personal identity.
6. It has been made clear to me that whilst it is hoped that I will enjoy participating in this research and find it interesting or even personally useful, there is the possibility that through participating in this research I may encounter unexpected personal feelings or consequences that I may experience as negative. I understand that a voluntary debriefing session is offered with the Researcher if desired in order to attend to any such effects.
7. I understand that, following participating in this research study, in the event that I should feel disappointed with the results, and/or I should feel that spending my time participating in the research has not been worthwhile for me, no compensation is able to be made available to me.

Signed:

Date:

If you are returning this form electronically without handwritten signature, please type your name or insert you electronic signature on the signature line and this will count as a legal signature when Sonja Falck receives the emailed form.

**Would you like a copy of the final research report to be sent to you by email? [] YES
[] NO**

Appendix 8 – Sample page from an analysis document

Analysis 2

IQ 157. Parents working class, no university education. Divorced when she was 15. Dad a builder (but did “quite well for himself”, “owns quite a few different businesses now”). Mother “goes from one thing to another”, in pub trade lately. “Very manual, working class jobs...and everybody in my family really, my sister’s a prison officer, my grandparents were housewives” (p.5). Has one older sister who’s “very artistic, she’s very good at art but she’s not remotely academic” (p.6). *Difference between siblings. (No.1 hardly talked about his siblings. No. 167 also said he was better academically than his siblings, outperformed them on SATS, yet they also did well, sister becoming a professor.)*

p.6 With her sister, “That was a difficult relationship growing up. Can you imagine being three years older and your little kid sister’s a lot cleverer than you? There was a lot of jealousy on her part from when we were growing up, definitely. I can’t blame her really, **I probably didn’t do anything to help the situation** but when you’re a kid you can’t...

You can’t be expected to.

That must have been really difficult for her.”

p.1 Took the Mensa test as a child – afraid if she took it now she’d get a lower score. *[Insecurity about being able to maintain a high performance, and with that is the assumption that IQ is not a fixed entity but changeable]*

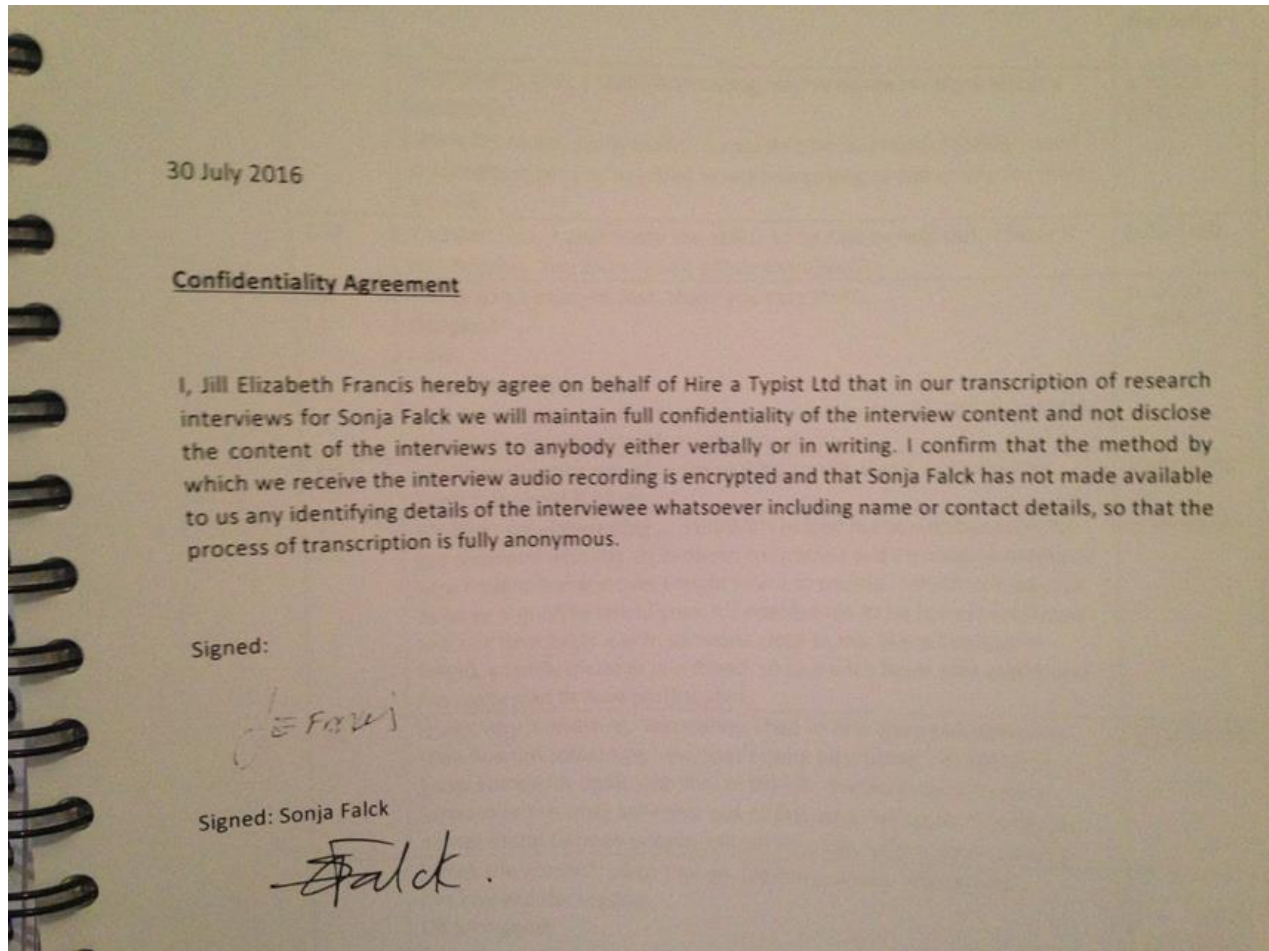
p.2 Very working class parents. Parents “not particularly bright”, but grandad and mother’s brother very bright.

“I was a really, really bright kid. I was way ahead of my peers really and my teacher kept saying, she needs to be tested because she’s gonna be bored and she’s gonna rebel soon. *[not being challenged enough leading to bad behaviour, like in No.1]* My teacher was trying to get my parents involved but because my parents were so working class, they really **worried that I was going to get ahead of myself, [what does that actually even mean???? So interesting]** to the point that on the back of the IQ test and my teacher’s intervention, I was offered a place at a grammar school, a very prestigious grammar school in the area that I grew up, **and my parents wouldn’t let me go because they said, “you’ll think badly of us”.** *[Parents afraid, insecure, trying to hold onto their child, afraid she’ll become foreign, lost to them, but in trying to hold on to her that is itself what actually ruined their relationship with her.]* Suffice to say I don’t have a brilliant relationship with my parents now. They really didn’t want me to excel in that way.”

p.2 Had a teacher who was championing her case.

p.2 Being kept apart from peers: “it ended up meaning that I was really apart from my peers because my teachers deliberately said, “well there’s no point you doing that work Sandra because that will be too easy, so we’ll set you some other work”.

Appendix 9: Confidentiality agreement from typist



Appendix 10: How interviewees felt about their experience of participating in the research interview

Inter-viewee No.	Excerpt from transcript (researcher's speech is in bold italics)	Location in transcript
2	No problem, that's really interesting, you've made me think about a few things.... I think it's really, really useful. I wouldn't be surprised if MENSA want to somehow get you involved in work-shopping or something for their members...	p.55:23- p.56:2
167	It's been fine. I appreciate the ability to be able to help out. I hope it was helpful. You know, it felt a little therapeutic.	p.25:5-10
69	Thank you, I enjoyed that, thank you very much. Did you? I did. I'm pleased if you did. It's very rare you learn something more about yourself. It's a profitable thing and I have profited from this, thank you.	p.35:30- p.36:5
55	You're very welcome. It's a weird thing to talk about, because you don't talk about it often.	p.44:20-30
1	It's been very interesting.... I think it's helped me as well because I've got someone who has an in-depth knowledge and an understanding of how I might feel and how I might relate to people. I think in a way it's been very good to talk to you. It's enabled me to be honest and frank and not have to do it with someone close to me, like a family or a friend, a family member or a friend, so to me it's been very useful and I'm really glad to have participated.	p.36:10-22
41	It was very interesting. Sometimes I had to find quick solutions and then find out something new, that's quite interesting. It's good to know somebody deals with that in the UK. I'm very much looking forward to see what will come out of this, and I'm happy to send you names of the German people, maybe they can help in your research.	p.37:23-35
68	I think the research piece that you're doing is very interesting.... I've enjoyed the session. Oh well good. Sometimes it's good to talk things through and reinforce what I'm thinking now. Also because people probably don't often talk about this sort of thing. Yeah, it's something that I've actually learnt to do actually, it's enjoying the sharing part of it and it's also good to hear about myself again and so I shall come out from a really quiet introvert type, it's actually to start to enjoy people.	p.41:18-21 p.44:21-34
17	Well that brings us to the end so thank you very much, it's been really interesting and thank you so much for your time.	p.41:2-20

	<p>Yeah, it was very interesting to participate as well.... Whenever it's done it will be very interesting to read it and have a think. I don't know, I guess just because you seem to be very well read in the topic</p>	
30	<p><i>Is there anything you want to say about what it's been like talking about all this or anything you'd like to ask me or anything before the end?</i></p> <p>It's been really nice. I quite like talking about myself. It's quite therapeutic. ...I think this kind of thing is just really sort of interesting to me...</p>	p.67:13-25
36	<p>The interview was fantastic, you've been fantastic, you really are lovely to talk to. <i>Well thank you, I'm glad you enjoyed it.</i></p>	p.42:17-20

Appendix 11 - Quality Control 1: Interviews showing a pattern of short interviewer verbalisations followed by much more extensive interviewee responses

Excerpt from Interview No.2.1

Okay. So, to start I'd just like to get a sense of your background. So if you could say something about your family background or your school.

I am the youngest of three children and I was born in a town that my parents didn't have any other association with. They'd moved there for my Dad's promotion. And my two sisters have been born in towns much closer to my Mum's family and upbringing and they left to move what in my Mum's version of this was, you know, unfathomably far north, but for my dad who was a Northerner it was still quite a long way south. But I alone was born and grew up there and there was always a sort of story within the family how they were sort of like displaced when they were there, in [place name]. I can never quite remember. I think I'm four years and six years younger than my two older sisters. It's something like that if not exactly and... I had quite a complicated relationship with my Dad from quite a young age. And I knew I to be unsettled and unsettling. My Mum's mum and dad moved to be close to us, so they left the south as well and you know, moved. With a bit of a sort of idea that as they were getting older my Mum could keep a closer eye on them, but they were actually significant in my upbringing too. And that was the case for all three of us as children. I don't think I was especially attached to them and my sisters weren't. All three had some party lots to do. With your maternal grandparents? With my paternal grandparents. My Nan was, I think a very, very gentle soul and got to me in a way that I'm not sure that my... my Dad certainly didn't. I'm not very sure that my Mum did, but there was something about her being rather less complicated and open and just generally more accepting of the me that emerged. A had a tense relationship with my Grandfather too. My Mum and Dad, I mean my Dad had grown up in a very traditional family and I think had come a long way, from his own family background by the time that he had married my Mum. And did that with an enormous amount of conflict. I think he wasn't at all settled with how far he had fallen from the tree, so to speak. And it then... and again this is sort of adult rationalisation, but I think then I went so much further still that the break between his dad and me, who I never knew, in fact my mum never knew, his dad had died when he was in his 20s, as in fact my dad died when I was in my 20s too. So I think he was quite... he had... his dad had been an engineer on the railways and his dad before him and all the men in the family had been involved with mining. And so his dad was a bit of a sort of breaking the mould of that into a more prestigious mechanical professional, mechanical line of work. And then my dad, after doing National Service, trained to be a drama teacher and an English teacher, which was a long way removed from a family tradition.

Big difference.

And then I, you know, went even further, I think.

And your mother?

She had wanted to be... and there is something there for both of them of their own ambitions being frustrated, not followed up... My dad had wanted to train as an actor and I think he must have been one of the last generation of men to do National Service. I think that was coming to a halt at his age, but he did, I think, have to do it. But that meant that he got a university education paid for after he had done it, or something like that. And he got into *[name of institution]*, which is actually where I studied and then taught as an undergrad. I studied as an undergrad and then taught as a teacher. He got into *[that institution]* to study drama way back and then turned it down to do teacher training for English and drama as the more stable profession, but there was a feeling of something having been missed out on. And in National Service he was a... kind of like a nurse or kind of paramedic, although they weren't formally like that back then. And there was similarly a sort of thing of kind of... but he didn't train to be a doctor. Sort of there was something sort of missed out on. My mum was a very talented artist. She had considerable artistic talent. And at the point at which she was deciding what to do after sixth form, had an apprenticeship to joint Wedgewood, as a botany artist, to train. Which she turned down and did an art teacher training and they met at teacher training college. But with both of them having sort of taken the sensible path and regretting I, I think, with small 'r' in the case of my mum, much more substantial in the case of my dad.

Okay.

He and I fought and as I became a teenager it became physical and we fought physically for five years of my teenage experience. Prior to that it had been sort of emotionally distant and cold and he could fly into the most terrible rages and I mean, today it would be wildly inappropriate smacking. But it was smacking as opposed to fighting. He became disabled when I was... well I mean increasingly ill health by the time that I was a teenager and by the time that I was late teens I was stronger than him. And the fighting stopped between us at the time that I actually sort of won a fight and said, never again. So I mean it was pretty... that was... I mean it was pretty full on...

Yeah. Harrowing.

Appendix 12 – Quality control 2: Excerpts from transcripts evidencing examples of quality control criteria (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:164)

Interviewer clarifying

No.17, p.33:14-29

...when I work with something, if I end up spending time with them outside of work then I think we just tend to talk about work and when I'm outside of work I rather want to think about other things, so that I guess is a conscious decision to not to hang out outside of work. But then when I moved to another office to work on something else, then I've found that I often re-connect with my friends from a previous office so then we start to spend time together in our free time. So that's also been a benefit, I've found some friends that I enjoy spending time with, but it's normally been after I've moved on to a different office.

Okay. So in that sense you're not socialising with people not because they are uninteresting or that you don't have things in common, you're choosing not to socialise with them because you don't like being with them outside of work rather than work might be talked about?

Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer querying contradiction

No.5, p.22:6-16

...if you're the clever one there's sometimes um unpleasant reactions then but it's it's just normal

So you experienced that

Yeh I mean that was the bullying thing that I that I mentioned that was probably partly to do with that I don't know

Ok because you talked about that as being as you know - you sort of presented that as though you were bullied because you were more quiet and timid

Yeh I was

But do you think it was also because you were in some way clever

I was just wondering that actually as I even said that

Mm [interviewee goes on to explore and elaborate on this]

No.55, p.27:15-26

And maybe I used to do that and I rarely do anymore. I've learnt that it doesn't help socially.

You were trying to do that socially? I mean that's quite a contrasted idea of censoring yourself so as not to look too clever [which she said p.25:24].

No, no. That's what I mean, I've learnt not to be... not to try to look clever.

But you think there was a point where you used to try to look clever?

I think probably when I was a small child, I didn't understand as well what effect that had.

Right.

Interviewer summarising back to ensure correct understanding and getting confirmation

No.74, p.3:29-p.4:5

I clearly remember a lot of pressure because they were always benchmarking against me, so in fact another child would have a higher score than me in an exam he would say something like, "I got a better score than [interviewee's name]".

Okay, so you had the identity of being the person who was the best and can this person be beaten or not.

Exactly, the best, and I was competitive because I was very good at everything I did, so it was a very good feeling to always win.

No.74, p.18:12-20

But it also sounds like it's something that has been a big part of your experience...

It has been.

... but that you don't talk about very much, it's something that you hide a bit more?

It's a spot-on, spot-on question

No.74, p.24:6-32

He comes to us, we have to do this application, when you talk to him you can only listen, he's always right, [unintelligible 0:57:39] something incredible so for you to make that adjustment somebody coming to you and he tells you about programming things, like he's telling you how to programme, it's something very difficult, I've been doing programming for 20 years...

And what he tells you is of value or not?

He's very intelligent. 80 per cent of the things he will say is great, but he's wrong sometimes, he shouldn't be talking about programming because...

But you have to deal with him as though he is right because of his position?

Exactly.

I see.

Exactly, and that's something that a gifted person, it's a very difficult skill to acquire, I think, it's something very difficult...

To allow somebody to talk about something in a way that's not as good as you know...

Exactly, and especially if he's wrong, you cannot tell him, he will be wrong, right, he will say do this and he's wrong.

No.74, p.29:1-17

I don't take bullshit, in the sense that, I'm not too submissive in the sense that, if you tell me to do something and I think it's wrong, I will do it. But I will tell you, you are wrong. I think this is... so I can be confrontational.

Yes.

And...

So you've learnt quite a lot about reducing your tendency to be like that, but it still comes out sometimes?

I would say so, yeah.

Yeah.

You're spot-on.

No.156, p.2:33-p.3:8

Then you'd have contact in between the meetings as well?

... but in between we interact on the forum on a daily basis, so we're on Facebook and we're on [unintelligible 0:04:24] groups and yeah... and also on my website, which I do a lot myself...

So they have a membership of the forum and then they have access to the resources?

Absolutely.

No.156, p.6:5-28

Yeah that could well be true, but you're seeing it as something about the community they come from, as though it's a cultural phenomenon?

Yes. It must be a cultural phenomenon, but frankly I'm not very well equipped to answer that question because what I find is that some of it is genetic and some of it is cultural. For example, people from my community who are born and brought up in this country, now they are from a different cultural make-up but they seem to have the same mind-set. It may be because their parents have been born and raised in, say, Kenya. They've come in as political immigrants here so the values and the script that is laid out before their children may be such that the children seem to latch on to the fact that this is okay, to put down your own community members is okay and have a laugh about it. But for people from other communities like Gujaratis and Punjabis, even when their own community members are wrong in saying something they would rather keep quiet, because, "Hey, he's from my community so I'm not going to say anything against him even though I know he's wrong". Whereas people from my community they tend to be very honest, too straightforward and so if somebody's wrong they'll say, "Hey you're wrong". "Hang on, this is not the right way and this is a forum and you know, we've got to band together and..."

So you're teaching them this new mind-set to help them thrive and...

Exactly.

No.2, p.45:16-23

I feel more content than I ever have, but that's mostly I think to do with education with my doctorate. I really feel like that's the intellectual challenge that I've needed.

Right, so that's complementing whatever happens to you at work in a way that's really fulfilling for you.

Absolutely, and it's really great to be in a position to earn [gives salary] a year [whilst] treading water until I can do what I really want to do.

No.167, p.5:22-p.6:6

Right. Okay. And in terms of people that you work with, that's also quite a change, having such a large number of people you're working with to, you know, a much smaller team. I wonder what that's like for you?

I don't... I don't necessarily miss having a large team. You know, I might miss sort of being, for lack of a better word, the leader.

Right.

I mean, I'm still the leader, but I'm a leader of two people, as opposed to being a leader of 250. So I'm not like making speeches to staff or anything like that. And there's a little bit of... [pause]... you know, wow, look how well I've done, that I've got, you know, this large congregation.

Yeah.

Which I don't have now.

Right, yeah. So, it's more of a sort of positioning than what the interaction is like or missing the particular kinds of interactions?

Right, exactly.

No.167, p.16:5-22

And how was that side of things for you at school, sort of growing up at school, at university?

At school I probably was friendly with a large group of people, but had a sort of core group of friends, which was fine. At university, I was probably more social and focused more on the social side of things. So that was a very positive experience.

And then would you say you've focused on the social less since university?

Yes, certainly.

Okay. So even though that was an enjoyable experience for you, there's a way that you sort of stopped really investing in that and focused much more on the job?

Yes, I would say that's very accurate.

No.69, p.25:6-19

So for you, you're very much led by what your career opportunities would be as opposed to feeling allegiance to a particular country, or liking a particular climate or any of that lifestyle or any of that sort of thing?

None of that.

Okay, so you're very driven by how you might get to express yourself at work and what opportunities you'll get?

What you're saying is absolutely accurate. I am not motivated by any sense of belonging to a country or any allegiance to any country or religion or group or this or that, it doesn't matter to me. I am interested in going as far as I can, even if it means moving houses every six months, I don't really care.

Appendix 13 – Quality control 3: Interviewer picking up internal contradictions during the interview and querying them (see also Appendix 12 for further examples of interviewer querying apparent contradictions)

No.55, p.8:38-p.9:18: Says her mother was good at helping her to cope with others' reactions to her precocity, and taught her to respect everyone and take other people's feelings into account. And then interviewer asks whether that approach was not successful, given that previously in the interview she'd said she always found it difficult to make friends. The interviewee then explains that she thinks with young children there isn't an ability to reason and so they just dislike you if you are different from them, no matter how much effort you're putting into taking their feelings into account. Excerpt from the interview below:

You know, what the sort of family line was about how you managed that situation?

It was really... I guess it didn't really need to be said, because it was the... the approach was very much the same for everything. Respect everyone.

Okay.

Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. Yours happen to be in academics and they're fairly extreme and you have to understand that people will find that frightening or threatening or makes them feel not so good about themselves. So you have to make sure that you try to make them comfortable with that. Not change yourself, but just be respectful and be polite and be thoughtful about how they're feeling as well as how you feel.

And I'm interested in to what extent you feel that worked, given that you said you found it difficult socially and difficult to make friends?

Well I think that works with adults, to an extent. I don't think with most children it does. They don't... very few children seem to have the reasoning capacity to understand why they feel not so good about themselves when they're with another person, me for example. That improved slightly as we got older, but as a small child, I mean how... What can you do? You can't force kids to like each other.

Appendix 14 – “Working well together” interview theme from PEP

Theme:	Working well together
Interviewee	Interview excerpts and location in transcript
Secure No.5	<p>what [do] you like most about it [her job].</p> <p>I lovethe end of the first night when it’s all happened, and seeing it happen and there’s such a buzz everybody because you all you all worked together on something but it’s only that final night where it all comes together and the fact that you’re doing it live in front of everyone as well... there’s a great buzz when it’s all come together and we’ve all achieved something together um so yeh that’s my favourite thing (p.24:6-14)</p>
Fearful Avoidant No.167	<p>Yeah, for the most part it’s been fun. It’s been very good. Knock on wood. I’ve been fortunate for the most part to work with good people and good products and good companies. Yeah, I’ve been very happy with... in my career and my choice of careers. (p.3:20-27)</p>
Fearful Avoidant No.55	<p>Colleagues, some of them are happy to... some of them have ideas of their own that they want to play with as well, then you can really make things spark and create chemistry and a relationship between the characters. (p.39:30-35)</p> <p>I’m stubborn as hell when it comes to things I actually really believe in.</p> <p>And how does that tend to go then?</p> <p>Depends on the director usually and sometimes colleagues.</p> <p>As to whether they’ll accept your way or not?</p> <p>Yep. Yeah.</p> <p>Okay.</p> <p>Or whether they’re willing to work with me, from their perspective and mine, to find something we can both agree with or even something new.</p> <p>The collaboration you were talking about?</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>Some directors absolutely love that, usually the really, really good ones. Unfortunately I haven’t got to work with many of them yet. Some directors really don’t want it and some directors literally say, “Right, on bar two, you’re going to take four steps to the left. You’re going to put a flower on the table and then you’re going to sit down.” Takes all the joy out of it.</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>All the fun.</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>All the interest even. (p.38:30-p.39:22)</p> <p>What do I love most about it? The moment when it’s all come together and you’re on the stage and you’ve got an orchestra and colleagues and an audience. And you get so involved in what you’re doing and it’s almost like you cease to be you and you’re getting the feedback from the audience. And you’re giving that energy out to them and it just... it’s a symbiosis. It’s wonderful. It sounds fabulous the way you describe it. It is it’s... it’s an awful cliché, but it’s like flying. You stop being grounded, just for a bit. Try feeling grounded when you’ve got a 65 piece orchestra underneath you. (p.35:16-26)</p>

Dismissing
Avoidant
No. 43

What would you say you like most about your job?

It's probably that the other people know what they're doing, that you can bounce ideas off of them and get new ones, so I feel very empowered in being able to achieve things, and there's plenty of openness so, there's plenty of things that [*his company*] does. If you're interested in this or this thing bugs you, you can contact the people directly, you don't have to go through managers or anything, you can just go on instant messaging directly and go, "Hey, this looks odd, could you explain this to me", and they can because they're very competent and this is their work area, so they're gonna...

But again it's very much a culture where there is that kind of freedom of contact and there aren't hierarchies set up where people have to go through procedures?

Right, so there's a culture. The people, because you can have the same culture I guess with less competent people and that wouldn't be as interesting, (p.23:1-17)

What would you say is the best thing about your relations with others at work?

I think the intellectual, being able to talk to people about complicated things and even just anyone, even if you just wanna use someone as a sounding board, even if it's not their topic at all, if you just in a few sentences give them the background, they're gonna be a constructive part of the thought process. (p.26: 14-20)

I very much appreciate it when I see someone's design just in passing, it's not part of my work, it just, "I was interested in this so I looked up how that worked". It's a very open environment, so you can see designs for almost anything and code and everything, and if you send an email or walk up to someone and talk to them about their work and perhaps, well not maybe critique it, they're gonna appreciate it and they're gonna usually be explicit about thanking you for meddling in their design. Usually, like I said, they're gonna have very good justification for your concerns and they will have thought of it more than you and thought of it very well. In the end there may be differences of opinion of how much you value this feature or what their taste is or how much you, how paranoid you wanna be with security aspects. But they will understand and you will understand, you will be able to communicate this difference and then honestly agree to disagree while still understanding the other's reasoning for their point of view of their design and everything. (p.7:18-32)

At previous workplaces, it seems like I had more time, certainly more time than now, but I had more time than the average person. In that time people would ask me things, how this or that worked, and that was interesting to explain so you became, I was like an oracle for things, so achieving less than I do now where I was but explaining more because now I don't have to explain things because people know, either they know it or it's much quicker for other people to understand things, to the point where people have caught me off-guard. I just do a couple of words and they're quicker than you think they'd be able to understand the sentence, they reply and you're, "Wait that's completely right", it was almost like they replied so quickly you didn't think it was a serious answer. So I have to explain things a lot less now. (p.16:17-28)

<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.41</p>	<p>... the best experience I ever had with a guy was he was as fast as me at understanding what I was about to say. We never had to finish sentences, we had the most condensed conversation ever possible because we were speaking at double speed half the time. It didn't matter to each other whether we were interrupting because we understood...</p> <p>... (p.9:27-p.10:33)</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.68</p>	<p>so I make sure the team are made up of people who come from all different backgrounds. It can be architecture, it can be interior design and fine art, theatre is another extreme. So whenever I tell people that I've been with this company for 23 years, they all look a bit surprised but my view is because of the varieties of challenge and also the exposure I have on delivering different design projects and dealing with different designers, other internal or external architects, that you don't get bored and you just always get stretched and also as I'm working with just clever people within the company, it's very stimulating and inspiring as well. (p.3:8-17)</p> <p>...it is a company that's really full of a lot of smart people, [unintelligible 1:01:48] can be creative in all sorts of ways so there's no need to hide anything at all.</p> <p><i>So that's an environment where you feel you really can just be yourself?</i></p> <p>Yeah, be yourself, absolutely, be myself. (p.29:11-27)</p> <p><i>What would you say you like most about your job?</i></p> <p>The varieties and inspiration I can get from different people in all different ways... (p.32:10-15)</p> <p><i>How do you feel you get on with others at work?</i></p> <p>Very well, I think I get on very well with people and I enjoy being among the colleagues who are in my team and people who have a very strong culture of design in their way of dealing with things rather than driven too much about the commercial side. So design people I'm very good with, and I feel very comfortable with and enjoy their company as well, and we challenge each other in all sorts of ways in that sense. (p.33:2-10)</p> <p><i>If you think what do you like most about your relationships with others, what do you think is a really good thing about it?</i></p> <p>I feel like it's a family. With the immediate colleagues in my team it's like a family, and there's an underlying trust and a will to collaborate and create together. (p.33:20-25)</p>
<p>Preoccupied No.189</p>	<p>I also now have a fantastic team, really smart people and to just work in an environment, that's when you... when you see if it's organised the right way, you can be so much better with a team than you can ever be alone. (p.24:8-11)</p> <p>So, this friend of mine came over for a visit over the weekend and we went to [unintelligible 0:26:05], this Sudoku thing, we should try to solve it. You know, like not just a particular Sudoku, but all of it. So we've written... together we've written a programme to solve any Sudoku you throw at it. And just thinking about how you can do that and just, we did it together. Really bouncing off ideas and it</p>

was this... you know, here's an idea. I would criticise and say, "Yeah, that's great, but what about this?" and then you know... And we eventually got the solution and it was fantastic. And I don't think we could have done it alone. (p.24:24-33)

And do you find that it's difficult to value other people and what they might be able to contribute if you are being frustrated by them and being impatient, because they don't seem to be following you quickly?

See this is an interesting question also. For example, the team that I have right now, I'm super proud of them. It's an amazing team. Now, they are all, I think very, very good people at what they're doing. And I have conversations with them, most of the time they understand me, sometimes they don't, but we have these conversations and it works very well, I think. Yeah. It is... I almost, if I can put it this way, if there's a certain minimum skill level there, it's fine. If it's below it, I'm not very good coaching these people.

Right. Okay.

Yeah. So, if they don't pass that threshold, then it's become a... and I've never figured out how I can make someone work well that has been over the threshold. (p.41:14-32)

...the ultimate strategy I found is that, I help them to move on. I don't wanna... I literally don't wanna say fire, because sometimes I do think they might have skills. It's just me as a manager, I'm not the right lead for them.

Okay.

So then I talk to colleagues and we see if they can move to another team. I have two examples where they did. The guys really came out and blossomed. So that could very well be... definitely it was a component of me. I think it was also though, there was also a component, the negative feedback they got from me and the opportunity to start afresh, helped them to say, "Okay, this time I'll put more effort into it."

Yeah.

So I think definitely, partly, I wasn't right for them. And I do believe, you know, I don't think there's anything wrong in that, in that some people just don't fit together well... You need to get on well with everybody. You need to work well with everybody. No. Why? We are all different. So some things we work well, sometimes not. So, why do we try to pair people that don't match?

Yeah.

We shouldn't do that. (p.42:3-31)

Appendix 15 - Quadrants evidence

Interviews

For interview excerpts relating to the two “Hiding self” quadrants (“Inhibited”, and “Despairing”), see Appendix E1 “Hiding self”.

For interview excerpts relating to the “Provoking” quadrant, see Appendix F “Child and Emperor”, particularly those excerpts labelled “Emperor”.

For interview excerpts relating to the “Thriving” quadrant, see Appendix 14 “Working well together”.

Top-left: Inhibited	Bottom-left: Despairing	Bottom-right: Provoking	Top-right: Thriving
189, in Eastern Germany			189, in Western Germany and London.
41, in Eastern Germany and Russia			41, in London
68, in family contexts			68, in her workplace
156			
6	1 depression, giving up on using abilities, thinks they're not wanted		
	2 during a part of her life post-school	2 in her current workplace	2 in her current relationship
55 “all her life”	55 at school when utterly bored, and socially excluded, depressed and suicidal	55 with her music teacher	55 when working with certain directors
2.1 in current occupations			2.1 in current relationship
	2.2 during 4 years in prison		2.3 personal and professional life
			2.2 now in workplace, “plays the game”

<p>43, in previous workplace 69 wearing a mask</p>		<p>74 while growing up, "I was an asshole" 69 socially 36 personal and workplace</p>	<p>74 in current personal and professional life 5 personal and professional 43 in current workplace 69 workplace 30 workplace 2.4 personally and professionally</p>
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Appendix 16 – Excerpts of book proposal prepared

Book Proposal by Sonja Falck

Title of book:

The Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes

Why very bright people have bad relationships (and how they can be better)}

Summary of the importance, relevance, and aims of the book

This book is important because it presents a literature review, original research, and original theory on an area of individual difference that has been almost completely neglected in the UK and in psychotherapy and allied professions, i.e. adults who have extremely high (98th percentile or above) IQ. This book studies closely the unique social development and predicaments of such individuals. It is based on doctoral research I have undertaken in this area as well as my analysis of the related literature; seminars and discussions with specialists in this area in the USA and the Netherlands; and my practice as a psychotherapist and executive coach specializing in working with high-ability adults.

The book is relevant as an informative and enlightening study that any intelligent reader interested in relationships and psychology could enjoy. It can also serve as a core text for psychotherapists and other health and social work professionals to learn about intellectual giftedness. I plan to offer CPD workshops on this topic as there are no CPD workshops in the UK that prepare practitioners for working effectively with this minority population, enabling them to understand the issues involved and make accurate assessments these in affected clients. I am a university lecturer and this book could also serve as a prescribed text for students taking a module on intellectual giftedness, which again I plan to offer. The book will also be of interest to qualitative and psychosocial researchers.

The aims of the book are to provide an engaging resource to cover the uses described in the paragraph above, and to generally raise awareness of and promote understanding of these issues. My fascination that sparked the book, was: why is there a social stereotype that associates extremely intelligent people with being bad at relationships? Through my research I sought to understand this, and I constructed theory that conceptualises how interpersonal difficulty in gifted adults arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome. The existing literature on giftedness is more cognitively based and lacks a psychoanalytical perspective: with this book I contribute an analysis of unconscious processes to elucidating how very bright people can be involved in perpetuating interpersonal difficulty in their lives in ways that they have no wish to do and no awareness that they are doing. I end the book with offering clear pointers on how the intellectually gifted minority of the population and the neurotypical majority can better respect, communicate with, and value one another's differences and diversity.

Primary market for this book:

- The general intelligent reader who is interested in relationships and psychology.

- More specialist relevant markets are: psychotherapists, counsellors, psychologists, and other health and social work professionals; a core prescribed text for CPD and students learning about high IQ/giftedness; a self-help book for the gifted; a book of interest to qualitative and psychosocial researchers.

I expect the book to be about 90,000 words including references.

Books that compare to mine (though mine is doing something related but different than each of these is doing - please let me know if you'd like further information):

- Freeman, Joan. (2010). Gifted Lives: What Happens When Gifted Children Grow Up. London: Routledge.
- Ronson, Jon. (2011). The Psychopath Test – A Journey Through the Madness Industry. London: Picador.
- Nauta, Noks & Ronner, Sieuwke. (2013). Gifted Workers Hitting the Target. The Netherlands: Shaker Media.
- Jacobsen, Mary-Elaine. (1999b). The Gifted Adult. New York: Ballantine Books.

Books that expand on my book (again, none of these actually expand on my particular topic, because there is not a book in existence on my exact topic, but these books expand on the topic of intellectual giftedness):

- Daniels, Susan & Piechowski, Michael M. (Eds). (2009). Living with Intensity. Tucson: Great Potential Press.
- Goleman, Daniel. (1998). Working With Emotional Intelligence. London: Bloomsbury.
- Hunt, Earl. (2011). Human Intelligence. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Silverman, Linda Kreeger. (2013). Giftedness 101. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Sternberg, Robert J. & Davidson, Janet E. (Eds). (2005). Conceptions of Giftedness. (2nd edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Webb, James T; Amend, Edward R; Webb, Nadia E; Goerss, Jean; Beljan, Paul and Olenchak, F. Richard. (2005). Misdiagnosis of Gifted Children and Adults. Scottsdale: Great Potential Press.

Books that challenge my book (they challenge it in that they deny that giftedness or high ability exists: this is a fascinating and controversial contemporary debate that I would be happy to engage in publicly):

- Colvin, Geoff. (2008). Talent is Overrated – What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Coyle, D. (2010). The Talent Code – Greatness Isn't Born. It's Grown. London: Arrow Books.

- Gladwell, M. (2008). Outliers: The Story of Success. London: Allen Lane.
- Stobart, Gordon. (2014). The Expert Learner: Challenging the Myth of Ability. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

Book Proposal Table of Contents

Book Title: The Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes

Why very bright people have bad relationships (and how they can be better)

Introduction

Part 1: Do very bright people have bad relationships?

Chapter 1 - What does being 'very bright' mean?

Chapter 2 - The stereotype of the intellectually adept person being socially inept

Chapter 3 - So is it true? It depends on who – and what, and how – you ask

Part 2: The core issues

Chapter 4 - We all seek recognition (and fear rejection)

Chapter 5 - Person-environment interaction

Chapter 6 - Collaboration and competition

Part 3: How relationship difficulty arises

Chapter 7 - The Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes

Chapter 8 - The Naïve Child through to Autism

Chapter 9 - The Arrogant Emperor through to Narcissism

Part 4: How relationship difficulty is perpetuated

Chapter 10 - Games high-IQ adults play (or intersubjectivity: it's not only you and it's not only me – it's both of us)

Chapter 11 - From past to present (or transferences and valencies: it's bigger than both of us)

Chapter 12 - Hiding self, reaching out

Part 5: How relationship difficulty is overcome

Chapter 13 - Breaking the cycle: how very bright people can have well-balanced relationships

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Outline of proposed book chapter by chapter

Introduction

I open with stating that in my 20 years of practice as a psychotherapist I have come to specialize in working with very bright or intellectually gifted adults. I use a quotation from a book on evidence-based psychotherapies to show how being very bright, or intellectually gifted, is not generally considered an individual difference that needs to be taken into account or understood in the practise of psychotherapy and related disciplines.

Conversations with highly intelligent people

I explain that I have undertaken a Doctorate in Psychotherapy to research the social development and predicaments of highly intelligent people. I undertook in-depth one-to-one interview conversations with a mixed, cosmopolitan group of 20 gifted adults, and have based the book around this interview data plus my analysis of relevant literature, seminars, discussions with specialists in this area in the UK and internationally, and on my professional experience.

Outline of the book

I explain that the book is structured in five parts with three chapters in each part, and I outline what each part covers as follows: 1) Reviewing the evidence on whether very bright people have bad relationships; 2) Explaining the core issues involved in examining this topic; 3) How relationship difficulty arises; 4) How relationship difficulty is perpetuated; 5) How relationship difficulty is overcome.

The professional and personal impetus for writing this book

I relate a pivotal incident from my childhood that led to me wanting to find out why it is that there is a social stereotype that associates intellectually gifted individuals with being bad at relationships.

Being alternately compelled by, and repelled by, this topic

I describe the “giftophobia” that makes this topic difficult to talk openly about, the prohibitions on “blowing one’s own trumpet”, widespread cultural superstitions that entail fear of envious attack, and the ubiquity in myth and literature of the caution of hubris being followed by nemesis.

PART ONE: Do very bright people have bad relationships?

Chapter 1 - What does being ‘very bright’ mean?

Definitions are given - high ability, high IQ, giftedness, bright, smart, genius, etc. – and a brief tour of intelligence – history, measures (and uses and abuses, such as eugenics), and the spate of books in recent years that deny that talent or intellectual high ability exists, maintaining that differences evident in attainment are all about opportunity and effective longterm practice. But how does that relate to “intellectual disability”, which continues to be widely recognized as a real individual difference, for example it remains a category in the American Psychological Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)? What the characteristics of intellectual giftedness are.

Chapter 2 - The stereotype of the intellectually adept person being socially inept

This stereotype is introduced by looking at characters in novels and films (eg. Sherlock Holmes, Hermione in Harry Potter, Roald Dahl's Matilda) and the media (eg. Steve Jobs). The academic research on interpersonal relating in the gifted is reviewed, plus less learned sources are looked at eg. blogs and more popular books of the "If you're so smart, how can you be so dumb" variety. My research results that showed a theme of pairing intellectual giftedness with interpersonal difficulty.

Chapter 3 - So is it true? It depends on who – and what, and how – you ask

Is interpersonal relating problematic for the highly intelligent? And how do we know? Popular social stereotypes etc. are one thing, but when turning to 'respectable' or 'reliable' or 'authoritative' academic research, you get into the methodological issues. Explain the contradiction that is found in the research, including my own. And reasons for this: eg. the results confirming that gifted individuals thrive come from samples taken from lists of high achievers eg. the famous Terman study, so in order to get on that list they must already be functioning well. Plus, making reference to Wendy Hollway's work, I explain the difference in what people will report depending on how you ask them: are you accessing their anxiety about interpersonal relating, or their defence against such anxiety? How I addressed this in my own research.

PART TWO: The core issues

Chapter 4 - We all seek recognition (and fear rejection)

First the theoretical background that underpins my analysis of the topic is outlined (the book draws mainly on Psychoanalysis, Attachment Theory, and Object Relations, but holds an integrative perspective and also refers to Maslow, Erikson, Rogers, Berne), followed by a situating of the phenomenon of living with intellectual giftedness within the human biopsychosocial lifecourse. I have constructed an original theoretical framework to explicate the various issues involved and how they relate to one another, which I have called the Overview Model of Giftedness. This model depicts the very bright person as existing within an environment, with which reciprocal recognition and interaction take place. Learning occurs from such interaction, in response to which the person effects modification to the self and/or the environment as is necessary for the achieving of goals.

Chapter 5 - Person-environment interaction

This chapter goes through each aspect of the Overview Model of Giftedness mentioned above, presenting excerpts from my research – my conversations with highly intelligent people – to demonstrate each aspect under the following headings:

What the environment is like

What kinds of family environments interviewees grew up in and their impact on the development of or hindrance of their abilities; the difference in mixed versus selective school environments; socio-economic influences; cultural influences; transitions between different environments.

The very bright person and his/her environment recognise what each other are like

it can be an incremental, organic process, or a memorable moment of recognition, but the very bright person's attributes always come to be recognised. There is an impact on the individual of how this is recognised, whether in a way that is encouraging or deterring – and which of these it is can be ambiguous. There is also an impact on the individual of their own recognising of how their way of functioning – particularly along the dimensions of effort and speed – relates to that of others around them.

Interaction between the very bright individual and the environment

Feelings of guilt at seeming to have unfair advantages in ability as compared with others; experiences of being different from others and not fitting in; developing confidence in own abilities and gravitating towards self-reliance.

Modification

The three main ways that interviewees reacted to experiences of interpersonal difficulty were to make modifications to themselves (eg. withdrawing, hiding their abilities), modifications to their environment (eg. moving to a different location), or modifications to their way of interacting with the environment which would elicit a different response from the environment (by improving interpersonal understanding and skill).

Chapter 6 - Collaboration and competition

In adulthood it is often the workplace where the fulfilling (or not) of abilities is grappled with. My thesis that what underlies interpersonal relating is the (often unconscious, not thought-through) assessment of whether the other person is an ally or an adversary, is explored by presenting excerpts from my interviews relating to the interviewees' workplace interpersonal experiences. Themes include productivity, sociability, and interpersonal difficulty. Experiences are presented of obstruction, threat, and envy, in contrast with the joyful and fulfilling experiences of working well together collaboratively.

PART THREE: How relationship difficulty arises**Chapter 7 - The Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes**

Here I introduce the eponymous Child (symbolising naivety), Emperor (symbolising arrogance), and Fabulous Clothes (symbolising the glamour of high ability: does it really exist or is it a beguiling fabrication?). An original table charts nine differences between Emperor versus Child ways of interpersonal relating, and an original graph shows how interpersonal difficulty increases with increased naivety and arrogance.

Chapter 8 - The Naïve Child through to Autism

How being different, and awkward, relates to autism. Similarities, and differential diagnosis, between giftedness and autism, are explored.

Chapter 9 - The Arrogant Emperor through to Narcissism

How wanting recognition relates to narcissism. Similarities, and differential diagnosis, between giftedness and narcissism, are explored.

PART FOUR: How relationship difficulty is perpetuated

This section shows how very bright people can participate in perpetuating interpersonal difficulty in their lives in ways that they might not wish to be doing and are completely unaware that they are doing.

Chapter 10 - Games high-IQ adults play (or intersubjectivity: it's not only you and it's not only me – it's both of us)

One of my research interviews is presented in much more detail from beginning to end as a case study – “The barrister’s case” – to demonstrate the fine-tuned mutual influence that affects how a sequence of conversation or interpersonal interaction unfolds. The dynamics are elucidated, making reference to psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin’s work on enactments and complementarities, and Stanford professor Carol Dweck’s work on mindsets. Inspired by Eric Berne’s “Games People Play”, I formulate some of the interpersonal conundrums evident within this interview as “games high-IQ adults play”.

Chapter 11 - From past to present (or transferences and valencies: it's bigger than both of us)

In our relations with others we are not just influenced by what is happening in the moment-by-moment current interaction, but are influenced by experiences from the past that impinge on the present (the Psychoanalytic concept of transferences) and by the roles we have historically been assigned by or taken up with others and continue to be susceptible to taking up in relation to others (the Systemic concept of valencies). I demonstrate this through presenting examples from my research interviews. I discuss how it is at bottom a defending against pain and anxiety that causes us to stay trapped in unhelpful patterns of relating.

Chapter 12 - Hiding self, reaching out

This chapter draws together conceptually all the central styles of interpersonal relating that I discerned in all the interviews presented in the previous sections and presents these in an original four-quadrant model of Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating. This model is explicated under the following headings:

Hiding self: top left quadrant

Here interpersonal relating is characterised by a holding back of oneself out of anxiety about harming others. The dominant feeling state is guilt.

Hiding self: bottom left quadrant

Here interpersonal relating is characterised by a disavowing of one’s potential out being traumatised by cumulative damaging experiences with others. The dominant feeling state is despair.

Reaching out (negatively): bottom right quadrant

Here interpersonal relating is characterised by a provoking of others out of anger towards others’ inadequate responses. The dominant feeling state is indignance.

Reaching out (positively): top right quadrant

Here interpersonal relating is characterised by actualising one's potential out of a sense of freedom in relation to others. The dominant feeling state is one of thriving.

Discussion

My Giftedness and Interpersonal Relating model is reviewed in relation to major psychological theories, including Winnicott, Bowlby and Ainsworth, Freud, Berne, Kohut.

PART FIVE: How interpersonal difficulty is overcome

What has been learned from all the preceding sections is consolidated here. Suggestions are offered for how interpersonal relationships involving very bright people can be improved.

Chapter 13 - Breaking the cycle: how very bright people can have well-balanced relationships

Main principles of constructive attitude (respect for all; valuing difference) and effective communication across the spectrum of neuro-diversity are explained here. Becoming aware of one's previously unconscious patterns and positionings – "Know Thyself" – is crucial, as is developing specific skills such as mentalization (Fonagy), reading non-verbal cues (eg. Baron-Cohen), and practicing reflectiveness. The importance of mindset (Dweck), security (soothing your own – and others' – attachment systems, inspired by Bowlby et al), and a commitment to facilitating the regular giving and receiving of feedback.

Evoking the "ally" interpretation of relational status. And 'fake it 'til you make it' (from a book chapter published by me).

Chapter 14 - Parent-child, workplace, romantic, practitioner-client

The key implications of all of the above for specific kinds of relationship is distilled into brief sections on each of the following: parent and child relationships; relationships in the workplace; romantic relationships; and relationships between therapist or coach and client.

Chapter 15 - How to have better conversations

How to have better conversations is discussed, as conversation is one of the most vital building blocks of interpersonal relating. Principles of improvisation and their relevance are presented, and Transactional Analysis's "I'm okay, you're okay" positioning.

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Book Proposal Sample Chapter

Introduction

I have been practising as a psychotherapist for 20 years, and have come to specialise in an area that is almost totally disregarded in the field of psychotherapy and allied disciplines, which is working with adults who are ‘very bright’ – or ‘intellectually gifted’. In the “Handbook of Evidence-Based Psychotherapies” (Freeman & Power 2007), in the section titled “Psychological Treatment of Disorder and Specific Client Groups”, there is a chapter on “Intellectual Disabilities”. The authors of this chapter begin by delineating their topic, in the course of which they write:

One always wonders whether it would be seen as transparently ridiculous if one were to write a chapter on the evidence base for treatments developed for members of MENSA [*sic*], the society for those with superior intellect. (Do we detect one or two of you raising an eyebrow at the possibility of a new research field?) Similarly, no one is looking for a cure for giftedness. (Lindsay & Sturney 2007:193)

This quotation boldly proclaims several assumptions, written in a tone of taking it for granted that these assumptions are shared by the readership – the likely readership for such a book being psychotherapists; other mental health professionals and commissioners; anyone who is in psychotherapy or may be seeking psychotherapy, and their families; students of and teachers of psychotherapy and counselling; and those involved in other related psychological, psychiatric, social work and even medical disciplines. The quotation accepts without question that there are people who have something that can be labelled “superior intellect”, or “giftedness” – which itself has become a matter of controversy, with a spate of popular books in recent years maintaining that it is only the right number of hours of the right kind of practice that distinguishes high achievers (eg. Gladwell’s “Outliers” (2008) and Coyle’s “The Talent Code” (2010)). Although the authors of the above quotation accept that giftedness exists, they also assume that it would be patently “ridiculous” to consider giftedness as relevant to psychotherapy. The authors’ jest at the possibility of this as a “new research field” reveals their assumption that there is not already a research field related to this phenomenon, as well as that it is laughable that this could comprise a plausible research field. The chapter unabashedly accepts variation in intellectual ability as fact, contrasting “intellectual *disabilities*” (my emphasis) with “superior intellect”. Yet the subtext is plain: people with “superior intellect” are obviously fine, or even privileged as the word “gifted” connotes, and this is something we leave well alone – it is not something to be engaged with in therapy or in research. It is a manifestation of what I dub ‘high IQ taboo’.

The above authors’ assumptions, ignorance, and dismissiveness around the subject of “superior intellect” or “giftedness” grow out of and reflect the dominant cultural milieu of Britain, where the book was published, but not only of Britain. The aim of the current book, simply put, is to apply the expertise of a senior psychotherapist to engaging with and questioning these assumptions and their implications, and thereby to help tackle the

ignorance and dismissiveness that surrounds the unique social experiences and difficulties that are associated with being very bright.

Conversations with highly intelligent people

Fifteen years into my practice as a psychotherapist I commenced a Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Professional Studies (DPsych) through Metanoia Institute/Middlesex University. My chosen area of research was the social development and predicaments of highly intelligent people. I recruited twenty intellectually gifted individuals, ten male and ten female, the majority of whom were indeed members of the international high IQ society Mensa, and conducted with them in-depth one-to-one interviews on the subject of their relationships with others. My interviewees were all adults between the ages of 26 and 53. They were a varied and cosmopolitan group, coming from different backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, languages, and occupations, representing ten different nationalities. These interview conversations covered many kinds of relationship – relationships with parents, siblings, friends, school teachers, colleagues, bosses, lovers, children. In my collecting of data, I also collected data on how my interviewees related with me, and how I found myself relating with them. These are areas that in psychotherapy are called intersubjectivity, and reflexivity. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, and I have – with my interviewees' permission – included anonymised direct quotations from these many interview conversations. The book is based around this research data as well as my extensive analysis of other researchers' data and published materials relevant to this topic, plus discussions I have had with and seminars I have attended with other specialists on this topic mostly in the US and also in the Netherlands. To all of this is added my experience from my practice of psychotherapy, executive coaching, and teaching in university and adult education. To ensure the identity of my interviewees is protected, I have selected pseudonyms for them and I do not associate any identifying data such as age or profession with each pseudonym. For readers who would like to understand more about the research process I undertook, this is explained in more detail in Chapter 3. For example, how did I decide that the individuals I had these conversations with were eligible for being called very bright/highly intelligent/intellectually gifted?

Outline of the book

The book is arranged in five parts. Part One starts by reviewing the evidence: do very bright people have bad relationships? I discuss what being 'very bright' means, and begin investigating the stereotype of intellectual adeptness being paired with socially ineptness. The contradictions that abound in the literature and research on this topic are introduced: whether it is presented as true or not that very bright people have bad relationships appears to depend on who – and what, and how – you ask. I describe how this relates to my own research on this topic.

Part Two explains the core issues that are involved in rigorously examining this topic (and Parts Three and Four then show how these issues play out). First the depth-psychology theoretical background that underpins my analysis of the topic is outlined, followed by a

situating of the phenomenon of living with intellectual giftedness within the human biopsychosocial lifecourse. I have constructed an original theoretical framework to explicate the various issues involved and how they relate to one another, which I have called the Overview Model of Giftedness. This is presented, showing how the nature of a very bright person interacts with the nature of his/her environment; how we all strive for recognition (and we all fear rejection); and the central role played by collaboration and competition.

Part Three deals with the way interpersonal difficulty arises. Here I introduce the eponymous Child (symbolising naivety), Emperor (symbolising arrogance), and Fabulous Clothes (symbolising the glamour of high ability: does it really exist or is it a beguiling fabrication?). How being different, and socially awkward, relates to autism, is explored, as well as how the wanting of recognition relates to narcissism.

Part Four engages with how interpersonal difficulty can be perpetuated even though the person involved might have no wish to perpetuate such difficulty and might have no conscious awareness of the part they are playing in perpetuating it. To demonstrate the sorts of relational sequences that can result – which, inspired by Berne (1964), I call games that high-IQ adults play – I present an extended case-study-like example of the exchanges between me and one of my interviewees who is a barrister. It is shown how we repeat our past experiences in the present and through mechanisms such as transferences and valencies, constantly influence each other consciously and unconsciously in the ways that we interact with each other. An original model is proposed for charting how very bright people range socially between hiding themselves or reaching out to others in ways that can be positive or negative. But how can becoming trapped in these sorts of bad-relationship patterns be broken free of?

Part Five addresses what do about this, suggesting how very bright people – rather than having bad relationships – can have well-balanced relationships instead. What has been learned from all the preceding sections is consolidated here. Suggestions are offered for how interpersonal relationships involving very bright people can be improved in the domains of parent-child relationships, workplace relationships, and romantic relationships. Finally, how to have better conversations is presented, as conversation is one of the most vital building blocks of interpersonal relating.

But why have I personally chosen to tackle this particular project?

The professional and personal impetus for writing this book

I began my Doctorate in Psychotherapy because I was seeking, several years post-qualification, to engage in an intensive and challenging block of continuing professional development. I had found in my Central London-based private practice that my clients tended to be intellectually sophisticated, often professionally successful and high-achieving – some exceptionally so, with international renown – but experiencing difficulty mainly to do with personal or professional relationships. Through this I had become increasingly fascinated by the sorts of issues that were bringing these high-functioning individuals to be

seeking therapy. My plan was to use the doctorate to further develop specific expertise in working with this population of clients.

The first task of the doctorate was to write an RPPL, a Review of Personal and Professional Learning, in which you were to look back over your whole life and ask questions you had never asked yourself before about what your personal and professional experiences, choices, and motivations had been, how these related to each other, and how they related to what your proposed doctoral research would be. Writing the RPPL drew my attention to something pivotal from my childhood: when I was seven (in South Africa) my school teacher called my mother in and said they wanted to send me to a university programme for gifted children. My mother said no. “Sonja can’t have a conversation with figures,” she said (and repeated over the years each time she re-told the story), “or marry a book.” My mother recommended that when I finished my work way ahead of the other children, the teacher should occupy me by getting me to help the others. And ever since then, I now realised, I’d been helping others all my life.

My mother was proud of her decision. She always depicted it as the turning point that had saved me from becoming a social pariah. In contemplating this afresh I began to wonder – what did the term “gifted” actually mean? In all those years I had never investigated that – so well had I complied with my mother’s desire not to pay any special attention to this ‘gifted’ identification, as though it was something shameful that needed to be hidden away in order to try to pass me off as ‘normal’. When later presenting some of my work at the SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) conference in Denver, Colorado, I attended a session conducted by American psychotherapist Lisa Erickson entitled “Coming out Gifted as an Adult” in which she presented research on stereotype threat by Claude Steele, PhD, and applied it to “the phenomenon of adults minimizing, forgetting or denying [their] giftedness” (SENG 2015:20).

I now discerned that this attitude of my mother’s was based on an assumption, and a fear, that intellectual giftedness was somehow associated with interpersonal difficulty. In her choice of words when responding to my teacher, her fear was clearly apparent that developing my intellect would make me unmarriageable (which her generation viewed as disastrous for a woman). I started wondering – where did this fear come from that very bright people are bad at relationships? On what was it based? This, I decided, is what I wanted to research.

Being alternately compelled by, and repelled by, this topic

Well, I thought that this is what I wanted to research, but I soon experienced that I also found it somehow distasteful, and repeatedly found myself wanting to push it aside. The ambivalence I experienced about this appeared not to just be internal to me but also to be present externally, manifested in curious displays I experienced of other people appearing to want/not want to focus on giftedness. For example, I received an enthusiastic email from a

member of another high IQ society, Triple Nine, introducing himself and expressing a desire to work with me. However it then took a full four years of sporadic communication from him before he actually finally did meet with me. Another example is a spirited email I received from a psychologist and academic in Australia inviting me to collaborate with her on a book on giftedness, who then shortly after we'd established contact apologised that she needed to put the project on hold and in the years since I have never heard from her again. It might be that this sort of thing goes on in other subject areas also and indeed in other areas of life, but there does seem to be something about the subject of giftedness that creates conflictual impulses of attraction and repulsion. This might be because of the disapprobation evident in our general cultural milieu, as introduced in the quotation above, that we are all affected by, a sort of internalised 'giftophobia'. However it could also be something much more primitive than this, perhaps even at the base level of superstition.

The word 'gifted' connotes having an advantage (whether this is accurate or true or not), something about a person that is special or exceptional, and right from the nursery we are taught not to speak of qualities of our own that could be perceived as positive or impressive. This is viewed as boasting – 'blowing one's own trumpet' – and frowned upon. And why is there this prohibition? Is it at root a fear of inviting envious attack? A superstition that an acknowledgment of having something good might or will make something bad happen? In Western society we are raised on fairytales that early on transmit their warning: in *Sleeping Beauty* a newborn princess has many gifts bestowed upon her before the wicked fairy swoops in and sentences her to an inevitable wound that will paralyse her for a century. Similarly *Snow White's* beauty attracts dogged attentions bent on nothing less than fatality. Such superstition is widespread in various Middle Eastern and Asian societies where it is encapsulated in the notion of 'the evil eye', an omniscient force that can cause serious harm and needs to be defended against. In Hindu society, for example, parents fear that if their newborn baby receives praise it could attract the danger of the evil eye, so they protect against this by drawing a black spot or *kaala teeka* on the face of the infant to mar its beauty and thereby ward off praise. In Greek tragedy it is hubris that is always followed by nemesis (or in the biblical phraseology from Proverbs 16:18, "pride comes before a fall").

Overall, whatever discomfort was involved for me in approaching the topic of intellectual giftedness, I was finding that it was all becoming far too intriguing for me to turn away from. And as William Faulkner (1950) said in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "...the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself....alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat." I hope you will find the writing that has resulted a worthwhile read.

Part 2: The core issues

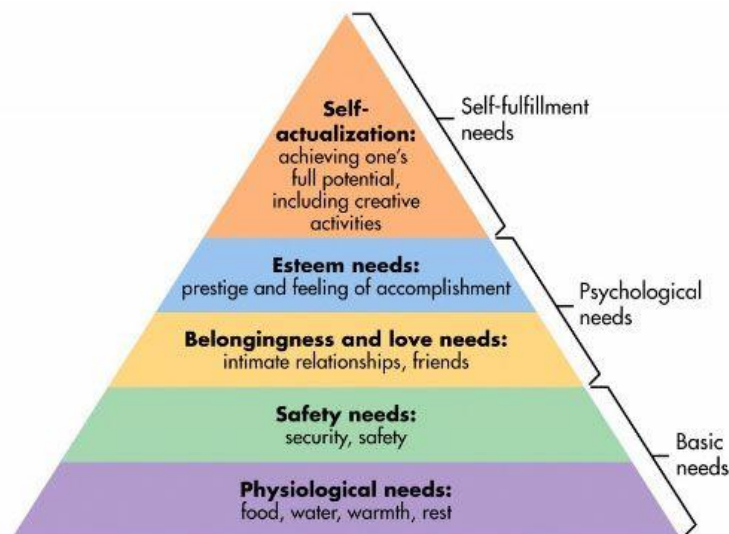
Chapter 4 - We all seek recognition (and fear rejection)

Towards seeking to achieve my aim which is to elucidate the interpersonal and intrapersonal development that is particular to very bright individuals, I have begun with an inheritance of more than a hundred years' worth of existing research, knowledge, and theory that relates to the interpersonal and intrapersonal development of human beings in general. The three most dominant approaches to theorising human development have been the psychodynamic, the cognitive-behavioural, and the humanistic. These are the three main approaches that are most commonly introduced to students of psychology, psychotherapy, and counselling in related textbooks (for example Short & Thomas 2015; Feltham & Horton 2006; Woolfe et al 2003) and academic and professional training courses. Every counselling and psychotherapy training programme will either emphasise one of these approaches (for example WPF's UKCP registered training in psychodynamic psychotherapy), or present an integration of two or more of these approaches (for example the University of East London's BACP accredited BSc(Hons) Counselling programme which integrates all three approaches). My main training has been in the psychoanalytic approach, but I have had some training in the other two main approaches as well as the systemic approach, and because of this it would be most accurate to say that by now my own thinking and professional practise involves an integrative stance. The bodies of theory that I will make most reference to here are all developments out of the psychoanalytic tradition: Object Relations, Attachment Theory, Self Psychology, and the Relational/Intersubjective developments. I am particularly impressed by and convinced by Attachment Theory because of its decades of international multidisciplinary empirical research in the realms of ethologically-informed observation, biology, neuroscience, psychology, psychoanalysis and systems theory (eg. see Cassidy & Shaver 2008) as well as because it is very cogent and pragmatic and resonates most closely with my own personal and professional observation and experience. A distinguishing feature of these developments is their thesis that right from birth human beings are fundamentally oriented towards seeking relationship with other human beings, that this relational need is a primary need as compelling as the need to obtain nutrition, and that it is a need that remains with us throughout life. My work rests on an acceptance of this fundamental thesis. And in my seeking to understand how relationship difficulty in very bright individuals arises, is perpetuated, and can be overcome, I situate this topic within the bigger picture of the human biopsychosocial lifecourse.

The human infant is born helpless, vulnerable, and utterly dependant for its survival on the care of an other – principally usually a mother – for protection, nutrition, and even regulation of its own body temperature. From an evolutionary perspective, it is those humans who learned to group together to help each other to secure safety from predators and to secure resources such as food and shelter who were more successful at survival, and this has bred an instinct for seeking to belong within a group. Belonging is communicated and facilitated by how we talk to one another and how we behave towards each other, termed interpersonal

relating. Throughout the human lifespan belonging and the constitutive interpersonal relating remain vital, as do the securing of fundamental necessary resources like food and shelter. As the human grows and matures, other goals develop such as those of pairing, generating, and nurturing. These goals are associated with the unfolding of our genetic design, with biologically punctuated milestones such as the production of certain hormones setting in or increasing (for example during puberty) or ceasing (for example during the female menopause). The concomitant physiological and psychosocial processes that are experienced have to be negotiated, from childhood growth spurts through to adult sexuality and finally old age and dying. When the fundamental survival-related goals are met, other goals can arise. This is what Maslow (1943) depicted in his famous model of the Hierarchy of Needs (see Diagram.... below). The need that can be called the most privileged of needs, as it is the one that arises only when all the others in the hierarchy have already been met, is the need for what Maslow called 'self-actualisation' (Ibid.); this involves a kind of reaching higher, beyond the provision of basic necessities, to the further developing of one's own special interests and aptitudes in the context of a deeper and broader understanding of and connection with others and wider issues.

Diagram....: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Erikson (1950) built a widely cited eight-stage theory of how different psychosocial goals typically play out over the lifespan of the human being whose basic needs of safety and nutrition are being adequately met. For each chronological age-related stage he proposed an attendant crisis that is encountered, and a corresponding virtue that is attained if the crisis is successfully navigated (see Table... below).

Table...: Erikson's Eight Stages [add ref.]

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Infancy (0 to 1 ½)
2	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Early Childhood (1 ½ to 3)
3	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Play Age (3 to 5)
4	Industry vs. inferiority	Competency	School Age (5 to 12)
5	Ego identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	Adolescence (12 to 18)
6	Intimacy vs. isolation	Love	Young Adult (18 to 40)
7	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Adult hood(40 to 65)
8	Ego integrity vs. despair	Wisdom	Maturity (65+)

The key elements of Attachment Theory correspond with the above outline of the human lifecourse. Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) theorised the “attachment system” as a genetically programmed regulatory system that governs from birth onwards the human infant’s seeking of security. This operates through sophisticatedly nuanced interpersonal relating that is designed to maximise the meeting of needs for safety and belonging. When a threat to security is perceived – which could be a threat directly to the person or a threat to their protective other/s or needed resources – it is said that the attachment system is activated, and this triggers the well-known response of “fight, flight, or freeze”. A visceral fear persists throughout life – felt and expressed more or less keenly at different developmental stages – of loss of the protective other who is termed “the secure base” (Bowlby 1988), with whom there is an enduring affectional tie or attachment relationship, and to whom a maintaining of proximity is sought. Separation from the secure base arouses protest and distress, which at its original and most extreme form is distress at a perceived threat to survival.

The way in which the infant’s need for proximity and security is predominantly responded to by its primary caregiver/s, establishes what Bowlby (1969) termed an “internal working model”, which is a kind of internal map that predicts what we expect of people based on our previous experiences. The internal working model accordingly shapes what patterns of interaction – or “attachment styles” (Ainsworth et al 1978) – the infant will predominantly use in relating with others. Once a person’s attachment style has developed it remains largely stable throughout life unless disrupted by specific intervention or intense experience (Howe 2011). There are three main attachment styles – secure, insecure-anxious, and insecure-avoidant. People who form a secure attachment style have predominantly experienced their needs for security and closeness being welcomed by a reliable other who is responsive, attentive, and is themselves comfortable with closeness in a relationship. People who form an insecure attachment style have predominantly experienced that their

most significant caregiver is not reliably responsive and comfortable with closeness. When a caregiver is inconsistent, sometimes being available and responsive and sometimes not, the child can develop a preoccupation with whether they are wanted or not and they form a strategy to try and get the care they long for by exaggerating their demands and being clingy (which is termed an anxious attachment style or strategy). When a caregiver is rejecting and distant, themselves uncomfortable with closeness in relationship, the child learns to suppress their own relational needs and develop self-sufficiency, becoming dismissive of relationships (which is termed an avoidant attachment style or strategy).

The infant's attachment system correlates with the parent's caregiving system, the latter being the desire to attend to and provide for another. Humans who are in an attachment relationship with each other have been evidenced to form a co-regulating unit where the physiological, psychological, and emotional states of one become synchronised with those of the other and reciprocally affect each other. For example, studies have shown that if a person is undergoing a stress-inducing procedure such as dental treatment, if someone with whom they are in an attachment relationship joins them and holds their hand, the stressed person has an immediate physiological response of lowered heart rate and blood pressure. Similarly, it has been shown that within couples who have been devoted to each other for many decades, when one partner dies the other is at higher risk of death themselves – a literal physiological substantiation of the saying 'dying of a broken heart'. At around puberty the adolescent shifts his/her primary attachment from his/her parents or other adult caregivers to peers. At this stage pair bonds (romantic relationships) are sought and established and with the maturation of the adolescent's own caregiving system, he/she in turn might procreate and nurture new infants.

The important thing to remember here is that our primitive instinct to want to be recognized by others and to belong, together with a visceral fear of rejection or abandonment, does not disappear no matter how far we develop away from the state of literal helplessness in which our lives began. We all seek recognition and we all fear rejection. Throughout life there are innumerable potentials for threats to security, whether in the form of threats to the person directly or to their protective other/s or their required resources, and evolution has selectively propagated humans who are most effectively alert to such potential threats so that danger to survival can best be averted. I view this alertness to threat as being what constitutes the propensity for anxiety that is endemic to the human condition, and I see the attempt to cope with and defend against such anxiety as being what has for all time fuelled the endeavours of religion, philosophy, psychology, politics, and industry. Hollway & Jefferson (2013) explain that each of us is a product of a unique biography of life events and the manner in which we have tried to defend ourselves against the anxiety that different life events have provoked in us. We defend against anxiety in ways that fit within the systems of meaning, or discourses, that are created in our social world, such as the typical language and sets of ideas we make reference to in our customary social groups. And how we do this affects others, and is affected by others. I agree with Hollway & Jefferson that thinking of

persons in this way, as what they term “psychosocial subjects”, is the way of thinking about persons that is most thorough in taking into account not just our conscious thoughts and behaviour but also our more intricate and less visible, often less conscious, histories of what we have experienced and how we have been influenced by our primitive needs for security and how these play out in our patterns of relating with others. In my examining of the relationships of very bright people, I wanted to pay attention to these different layers and show how they all play a part, which is what I have tried to achieve over the next few chapters.

Chapter 5 – Person-environment interaction

A very bright person has certain characteristics as discussed in Chapter 1. But how these characteristics unfold and are developed or hindered is hugely influenced by what the individual’s surrounding environment is like and what sort of response is received from that environment. Each person is born into, and always exists within, an interpersonal environment that is made up of the macrocosm of a particular country and culture, and the microcosm of a particular social group and structure such as family, school, or workplace. An organism of any kind will interact with and be impacted on by its environment, and particularly when the organism involved is as complex as a human being is with dimensions involved such as language, gender, socioeconomics, ethnicity, and sexuality, this process is enormously complicated. However the focus here is restricted to considering how the environment impacts on a person’s experience of, and development in relation to, their intellectual giftedness.

What my research results have shown is that in terms of the development of the very bright individual, the single most important basic point about the environment that they find themselves in, is whether that environment is benign, supportive, welcoming and encouraging towards or even valuing of manifestations of giftedness and able to engage with these or not. For example, my research demonstrated how job satisfaction was highest for interviewees who had mentioned having a work environment that was in this manner conducive (Falck 2013). This will be further looked at in Chapter 6. But here I will begin by looking at the nature of the environments that affected the interviewees during their developmental years.

What the environment is like

In presenting here what interviewees said about their experiences and views of their environments, I want to start by pointing out that any individual's comments on, for example, a particular country or culture, will be coloured by that individual's particular personal circumstances: the environment of which they speak can be viewed as an 'environment in the mind' - one which they have constructed their own particular view of, and I am presenting here these personal views of theirs rather than a view that has been corroborated against wider socio-cultural or historical data.

Starting, then, with the macrocosm of country and culture, many interviewees had experience of living and working in different countries, and several comparisons were made between different countries and cultures. A main comparison made by two interviewees, Ana and Hans, was between Eastern Bloc countries – Eastern Germany and Russia – and Western European countries. The former were described as having a culture where, as Ana put it, “you don’t show yourself”. Hans, who grew up in East Germany and then moved to West Germany at the age of 15, described a “very, very competitive” boy who was in his class after he moved to West Germany: “Never met such a person before in East Germany, ‘cos they wouldn’t exist”. In his new school in this new country, he experienced that, after a culture where “I almost tried to hide that I knew more than the teacher. Now suddenly, I was in an environment group that was very much encouraged to know more, to be better”: there was “suddenly no holding back”. Ana described how Russian and East German culture “pushed her down” so much – “it’s a big suffering” – that when she came on a trip to London where this was not the case, “I fell in love with myself” and decided “I need to move there”.

Hans, and another interviewee, Max, spoke of the egalitarian societies in Scandinavia. “People are expected to be equal”, said Max, speaking about Sweden, and “when you just turn up in a normal class there and you perform very well...then people might...treat you a bit badly”. Hans described how in West Germany, the UK and the US, he experienced needing to write “the CV, the resume” in a way that is “all about my fantastic achievements”, whereas in Denmark after his CV written in that style was read at a job interview he was told “You’re quite a show off”.

An interviewee from Hong Kong – Mei – introduced a gender angle: she talked about how she had to be careful not to “too much out-perform” her husband in family and social contexts because Chinese culture required a female to “respect your husband more being head of the family and so on”. Within her professional context in London however she could “absolutely be myself”. London was repeatedly described as a place that was valued for offering great diversity and freedom – “It’s brilliant...yeah...”, said Hans, “I mean, I love it. I wish it worked like this everywhere. London is particularly special in that respect”. Although many interviewees had moved from other countries to be in the UK, and almost idealised London where they were now based, there were British-born interviewees who spoke of wider British culture in more strictured terms as follows:

Brits don’t like putting themselves forward or being better, there’s this natural reservedness about British people that says don’t stand out, don’t celebrate achievement in many ways. (Tracy)

The average person, especially the average British person, mocks intelligence. (Jane)

There were also British interviewees who grew up outside of London who in their family environment experienced a strong discouragement of intellectual giftedness, even to the

extent of being regularly physically beaten for manifesting precocious curiosity and eloquence.

I was out of line over and over and over again. I had opinions and I articulated them and I insisted on coming back to them and even after he [*his father*] might have told me to shut up or he'd make me shut up, I would just keep going and keep going and keep going...He was just trying to crush me. I mean he was just trying to make me shut up and toe the line... (John)

The latter is something that was also experienced growing up in other countries, such as was described by Avi, an interviewee from India:

...in my own family I was bullied big time, especially by my father, yes. So he felt intellectually threatened... definitely till 11 I used to get beaten big time by my father. And I said something very sharp or, for example, if he asked me a response to, ...a simple example would be like two plus two is four, but then hey one and a half and two a half is also four, do you see what I mean? So I was able to think out of the box and come up with different kinds of solutions, but if that was not the answer he was expecting he would beat me up. So that was really horrible and I hated him all the way.

As Webb et al (2005:61) have written, "Many parents of gifted children are frightened, worried, confused, or even intimidated by their bright, strong-willed offspring."

In contrast, Gill, who also grew up in Britain, was encouraged so much in her gifted qualities that she did her GCSE exams a full three years early, at the age of 13: "some of the time I felt I was also being a bit too pushed, it was a lot of, "You have to do this, you have to do well". Gill, like Hans, also had very different experiences of school based on whether it was a school environment that promoted gifted accomplishment or did not support it. She described having had "a very rocky up and down time" at school:

I suppose the comprehensive school that I went to, I did definitely get, I wouldn't go so far as to say I was bullied but I got teased for achieving well and I certainly felt I needed to dumb myself down to fit in more....

She then went to a grammar school which was "a lot easier, I felt much happier there, it did make a difference".

The above examples give a taste of the different kinds of environments gifted individuals can find themselves in in terms of country, culture, family, school, and workplace, and how much these can differ as to whether the individual's manifestation of gifted abilities is welcomed and even encouraged or frowned upon and even violently deterred.

The very bright person and his/her environment recognise what each other are like

The first people that newborn infants usually come into regular close contact with are their parents and the other members of their family of origin, so these are the people that form their first social environment and who respond in one way or another to the nature of the child they are beginning to experience. Usually the next social environment that the child is most regularly exposed to and therefore most influenced by is that of the school/s they

attend. What these early interpersonal experiences are predominantly like for the child is highly formative of him/her, as is delineated by every major body of theory and knowledge that is concerned with human development such as Psychoanalysis, Attachment Theory, the Person-Centered approach, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Transactional Analysis, etc.

End of excerpt

Appendix 17: "High IQ, Hidden Taboo" workshop

High IQ: hidden taboo Page 1 of 5

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The centre for adult learning

High IQ: hidden taboo

Our society increasingly emphasizes diversity, yet often ignores 'gifted' people and what they may need. Discover the latest research on talent, high achievement, and how to unleash your inner genius. Explore how being 'gifted' affects us all.

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Key course information

Date	Day(s)	Duration	Time
03/04/14	Thu	1 week	10:30 - 17:30
Fees	Venue	Course code	Availability
Full fee: £48	KS - Keeley	PG714	Available
Senior fee: £29	Street		
Concession: £21			

Enrol now

Call enrolments: 020 7831 7831

High IQ: hidden taboo

Course outline

What is the course about?

"Gifted" people as a minority group can be misunderstood with many of their needs often going un-recognised. This course looks at what being "gifted" means, and the implications for individuals. Find out about human potential and excellence in performance: the history, current research, psychological, sociological reactions and implications. Learn about the latest research on definitions of talent and how it can be nurtured. Explore how you can apply this to your own life to realize your potential and maximize personal performance.

What topics will we cover?

The history and nature of intelligence testing; uses and misuses.
Diverse reactions to excellence in various fields, such as science, music or sport.
An evolutionary perspective; the nature versus nurture debate.
Investigation of two opposing cultures and their underlying messages: the "Tiger Mother syndrome" (striving to excel at all costs) versus "cut down tall poppies" (not standing out or excelling)
The neuroscience of high achievement.
Implications for education and competition.
Exercises to discover ways to develop best performance.

By the end of this course you should be able to:

List three features that define "gifted".
Describe which critical brain function leads to best performance in any activity.
Name two crucial requirements that are necessary for high achievement in any field.
Identify a technique learned today that will be useful to apply in your own life.

What level is the course and do I need any particular skills?

No prior knowledge is necessary. Please come willing to reflect and share how the content of this course relates to you personally. You should be able to follow simple written and verbal instructions to support demonstrations, hand-outs and for health and safety information, and will be invited to take part in group discussion.

How will I be taught, and will there be any work outside the class?

There will be teaching input including slides and handouts; group discussion and activities; small group activities with feedback to main group and individual written exercises.

Are there any other costs? Is there anything I need to bring?

No other costs. Bring an exercise book and pen/pencil.

Do I need to have an interview before I can enrol?

No.

What feedback will I get?

You will receive regular feedback from your tutor throughout the course, as and when appropriate. At the end of the course you and your tutor are asked to assess the progress you have made. You will receive regular feedback from your tutor throughout the course, as and when appropriate. At the end of the course you and your tutor are asked to assess the progress you have made.

How will I be able to give my views on the course?

Please complete the evaluation form at the end of your course. These are monitored and help us to continually improve our courses.

How do I find out if I can get some support for my learning?

You may be interested in: education and careers advice; financial and childcare support; disability support; support for Deaf and hearing-impaired students; dyslexia support; English and maths support; counselling, and library services (supported learning centre). To find out what may be available to you, and how to apply, see page 278 of the 13/14 course guide, or visit www.citylit.ac.uk/students

When I've finished, what course can I do next?

We offer further personal development courses such as:
Right brain coaching (PG600)
Attitude is everything (PG705)
Improving your memory and visual thinking (PG674)
Enterprising thinking (PG647).

General information and advice on courses at City Lit is available from the Information and Advice Shop, open Monday to Friday 12:00 – 19:00 during term time, and Monday to Friday 12:00 – 17:00 out of term time. See the course guide for term dates and further details.

Who can I contact for further information?

Tel: 020 7492 2530

counselling@citylit.ac.uk

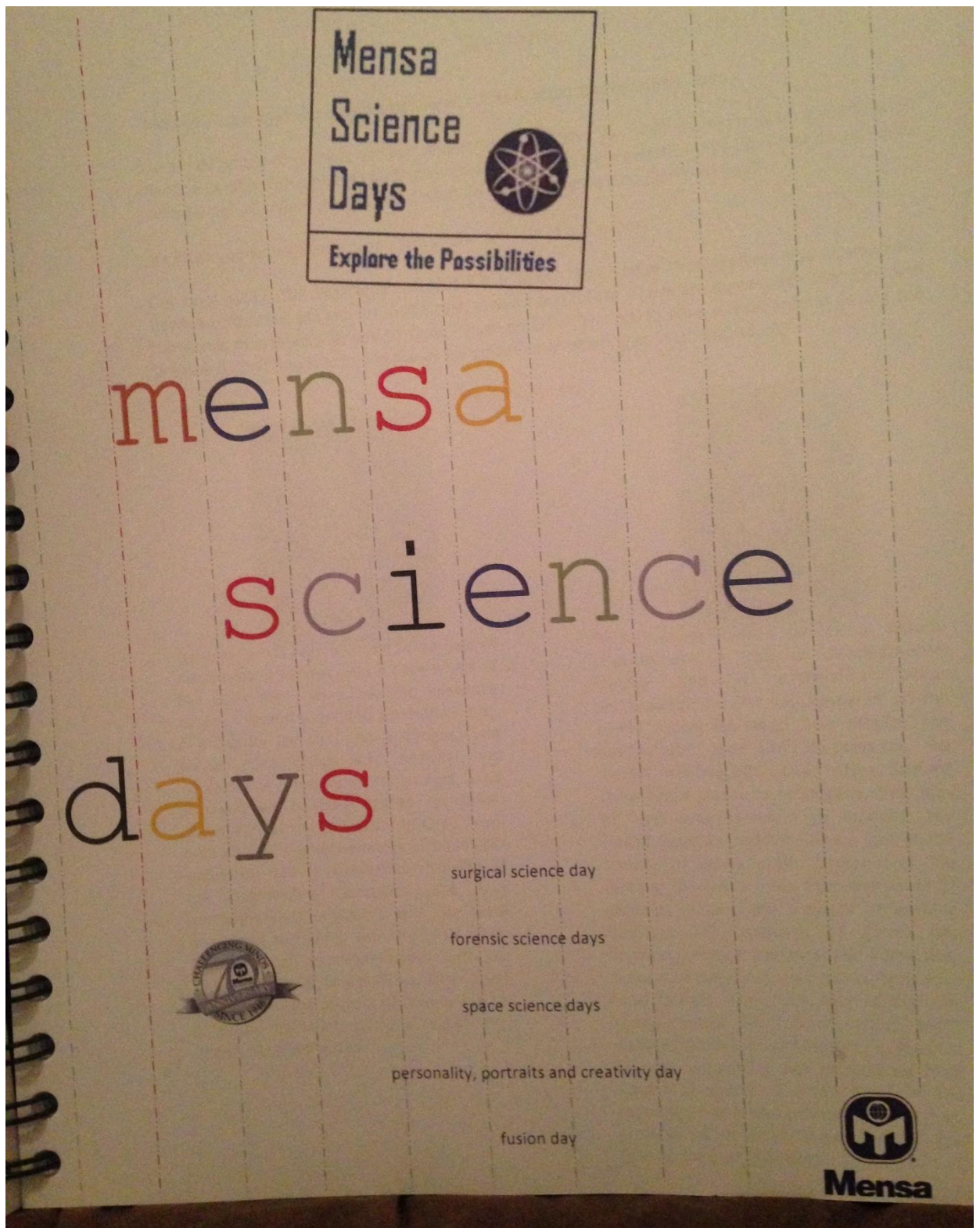
Drop-in course advice (term-time only) **Tuesdays 13.30 - 14.30** (please ask at the Department Enquiry Desk).

To enrol on a course, call 020 7831 7831.

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- City Lit, Keeley Street, Covent Garden, London
 - Enrolment: 020 7831 7831 | Switchboard: 020 7492 2600 | Fax: 020 7492 2735
-

Appendix 18: Mensa Arts & Science day programme



Mind, Body & Soul – A Special Arts & Science Day

Saturday 18th June 2016 – Wellcome Collection, London

Welcome

Thank you once again for supporting Mensa's Arts & Science programme today.

We are delighted to present two top speakers who will give you their professional insight into what makes a person with a high IQ function including mapping their genetic make-up. What do you think having a high IQ means for you? And what do you most hope it could do for you?

We hope you actively take part - join in and ask lots of questions!

Our host today, The Wellcome Collection is a world class venue that explores the connections between medicine, life and art in the past, present and future. There are numerous collections and thousands of artefacts for you to view. Please do take the time to have a walk around during the break and don't forget to join in one of the guided tours starting at 15:15 and 15:45.

Meet the speakers




Sonja Falck has been involved in the field of psychology in various ways for the whole of her adult life – as a qualified executive coach, a senior accredited psychotherapist, a university lecturer, and a designer and leader of workshops and personal and professional development groups. Sonja followed an honours degree in clinical psychology at the University of Cape Town with an MA in psychoanalysis at Middlesex University and psychotherapy training at the Philadelphia Association. She is a psychotherapist registered with the UKCP and senior accredited with the BACP. Sonja trained as an executive coach with the Tavistock (EMCC Senior Practitioner level) and she is in the process of completing her doctorate on the interpersonal relationships of high IQ/gifted adults.



Dr Kat Arney holds a degree in natural sciences and a PhD in developmental biology and is a freelance writer and broadcaster. She has appeared on the highly successful Naked Scientists for the past decade and also co-presents the weekly national BBC Radio 5Live Science show. From plants to pathogens, fruit flies to fungi and hamsters to humans, the Naked Genetics podcast takes a look at the science of genes – the blueprint of life tackling the latest news from the world of genetics, finding the answers to burning questions! The language of genes has become common parlance. We know they make your eyes blue, your hair curly or your nose straight. The media tells us that our genes control the risk of cancer, heart disease, alcoholism or Alzheimer's. The cost of DNA sequencing has plummeted from billions of pounds to a few hundred, and gene-based advances in medicine hold huge promise. So we've all heard of genes, but how do they actually work?

Appendix 19: Equipped Consulting flyers



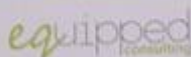
Therapy


When individuals with high ability "fully understand their difference..., know[ing] who they are and who they are not, they gain strength, confidence, and resilience. From then on it's a matter of building skills – of getting smart about being smart. Once equipped, they find that the world in which they must make their way is far more manageable."

Mary-Elaine Jacobsen

Confide one-to-one with someone who is knowledgeable about standing out from the crowd and can help you negotiate a more fulfilling place for yourself within that position.

High-ability adults can encounter the same life challenges as anyone else, but additionally they have certain unique characteristics that significantly affect their lives and which they often hide or try to dismiss, or which are misinterpreted by themselves and others. When not understood and well managed, these characteristics can damage rather than enhance the possibility of prospering.
A therapist who is educated about and understanding of this can make an enormous difference.

 www.equippedconsulting.co.uk helping high-ability adults thrive



Our Approach:

A common factor amongst people who have high ability – regardless of in which domain – is that they usually become noticed for this, usually (but not always) during childhood, and this can lead to issues with:

- **How you are treated** (eg. being set apart as different from others; being subjected to others' high expectations; encountering hostility and/or obstructiveness);
- **Your own experience** (eg. experiencing "out of sync" communication difficulties with others; feeling an outsider; fearing failure - and success);
- **Challenges** (eg. managing your tendencies for sensitivity, excitability, intensity, impatience, perfectionism; grappling with the choices and responsibility involved in how to use high ability well).


These sorts of issues might be experienced mildly or severely enough to cause debilitating frustration, anxiety, and depression.

What We Offer:

We offer therapy (counselling / psychotherapy) as a valuable resource of fully discreet and confidential personal consultation with a highly attentive trained professional, where you are free to say anything at all with no judgment and no repercussions.

Contact Us:

Email us at contact@equippedconsulting.co.uk or telephone **Sonja on 07854 366 871** to book an initial appointment where we will listen carefully to what has brought you to us and work out together with you how best to proceed. At all times we respect your autonomy and independence and our approach will not be simplistic, intrusive or patronising. We work with adult individuals, couples and groups.

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Workshops

Sign up for a light bulb igniting day
of engaging interactive input
designed especially for bright minds.

We run pre-designed workshops or create with you bespoke ones tailored to your individual needs.

Our workshops use well-tested experiential techniques at the same time as following rigorous standards of ethics, safety, confidentiality, and equal respect for all participants.

This creates a dynamic and involving experience with take-homes that are not only knowledge-rich but highly memorable and therefore have the most longevity and applicability.

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Winning at Conflict:

How to understand, pre-empt, manage, and resolve conflict.

This workshop is based on extensive international research on personality and behaviour and includes input from the fields of depth psychology, neuroscience, mediation and negotiation.


By the end of the day you will be equipped to:

- **recognise** the key elements required to produce conflict
- **intervene** effectively to pre-empt conflict
- **use insights** into psychological and physiological functioning to your advantage in tense situations
- **identify** your predominant style of interaction and what this means for how you and others with different styles might get into conflict and tend to handle conflict
- **put into action** skills practiced during the day for managing, de-escalating and resolving conflict
- **apply** a new perspective to an existing conflictual situation.

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Testimonials:

"One of the most inspirational, stimulating and revelatory courses I have done in years..."

"Sonja is a very charismatic, caring and captivating teacher who varies teaching styles (group discussion, videos, games)."

"The tutor is excellent, clear, patient, knows the subject backwards. A very engaging personality."

"I love how much we laughed."

"Very supportive and encouraging environment which was expertly facilitated by a reflective, generous and highly professional tutor."

To discuss or book a workshop email us at contact@equippedconsulting.co.uk or phone Sonja on 07854 366 871



Personal Development

An ideal opportunity for developing yourself in these areas is to join an Equipped Consulting weekly Personal Development Group

This group provides psychological learning that is usually only available to those who undertake full university or private sector training in psychology/counselling/psychotherapy

Get your synapses firing and establishing new neural connections that will enable you to make better social connections.

- Are you **intrigued** by what other people's perceptions of you might be?
- Would you like to **improve** your knowledge, skill and ease around communicating with others?
- Would you **welcome** being able to meet and get to know like-minded others with whom you can explore this in a safe, controlled environment?

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Personal Development Group Sessions:

What is involved?

A group consists of a maximum of twelve participants who make a commitment to meet one evening a week from 6pm-8.30pm for one academic year (September to July) or one calendar year (January to November), excluding holiday periods. Dates are provided on application.

Each evening includes:

- An interactive **presentation and discussion of relevant theoretical ideas**. This is designed to explicate pertinent issues and themes that have been noticed to be present or emerging during the previous week's session.
- **Break**
- A **group session** devoted to the group leader facilitating group members to interact with each other in a safe, confidential environment so as to explore different styles and patterns of interaction, to develop self- and other-awareness, to learn and practice constructively giving and receiving feed-back, and to extend group members' knowledge of individual and group dynamics.



"If you are irritated by every rub,
how will you be polished?"

Mevlana Rum

How to book:

Each prospective group member is first interviewed by the group leader before a place in the group can be offered.

To arrange this please email us at contact@equippedconsulting.co.uk or telephone **Sonja** on **07854 366 871**.

Fee: £38 per person for each two-and-a-half-hour weekly session, with a total of 35 sessions in the year. Payment can be made by 12 monthly instalments of £110.

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Coaching and Organisational Consultancy

	FITU division			FIT division		
QMT	264	350	254	274	134	4
QWV	290	320	754	273	825	1
QWU	241	400	284	364	954	1
QWV	214	630	074	657	125	2
QWV	384	145	124	852	741	7
QWV	455	784	954	241	741	2

Refine your performance at work for improved individual astuteness and better collaboration with others whether local or global.

We design bespoke coaching packages that always begin with a free chemistry check and discussion of overall objectives, followed by a detailed assessment and programme scoping.

We work with individuals who are sponsored by their organisations or who contract with us privately, and we work with teams and across organisations.



"If two persons on the same job agree all the time, then one is useless. If they disagree all the time, both are useless." - Darryl F. Zanuck

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Reflective Practice:

Reflective Practice is an activity conducted at regular intervals – for example once monthly – with a team of staff and/or management who on each occasion meet with a facilitator for a 90 minute session in order to together raise, analyse, process and learn from recent work incidents and issues and out of that to plan improvements that can be incorporated into future practice.

Reflective Practice has been shown to:

- enhance and develop clarity of communication.
- improve mutual understanding and co-operation.
- promote honest feedback.
- aid team cohesion and performance.
- provide the most important source of professional development outside of formal learning or knowledge transfer.

A key rationale for Reflective Practice is that for learning to take place, experience alone is not sufficient: deliberate reflection on experience is necessary. Making this a regular activity increases the gains made as people build a trusting working relationship with the facilitator and generalise the reflective capacity and interactive behaviours practiced within the sessions to their daily dealings with colleagues and clients.

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Bespoke Coaching Programmes:

The coaching programmes that we design and tailor to meet the needs of the individual and/or organisation who consults us can include:

- 360 degree assessment
- observation in role with feedback
- facilitation of meetings
- one-to-one coaching
- mediation and dispute resolution
- team building
- leadership development

To book an appointment to discuss any of our workplace-related services email us at contact@equippedconsulting.co.uk or telephone Sonja on 07854 366 871



Appendix 20 – 23 March 2017 email from Mensa

From: Bobby Raikhy <[REDACTED]> Email address was visible to the examiners.
Sent: 23 March 2017 10:50
To: Sonja Falck
Subject: RE: Your email

Hello Sonja

No pressure but we have a full house in readiness for your presentation on Saturday 6th May. **We have 120 reservations and are operating a waiting list!** Thanks for your help, it's going to be a great afternoon.

Next – On Saturday 3rd June we are creating an event called 'Inspire 17' aimed at our junior members and their parents. The day will consist of inspirational talks from

- Johnny Ball – TV personality,
- Tony Buzan – inventor of Mind Mapping ,
- John Cridland CBE, ex CBI president
- and Danielle Brown MBE, double Paralympic gold medallist

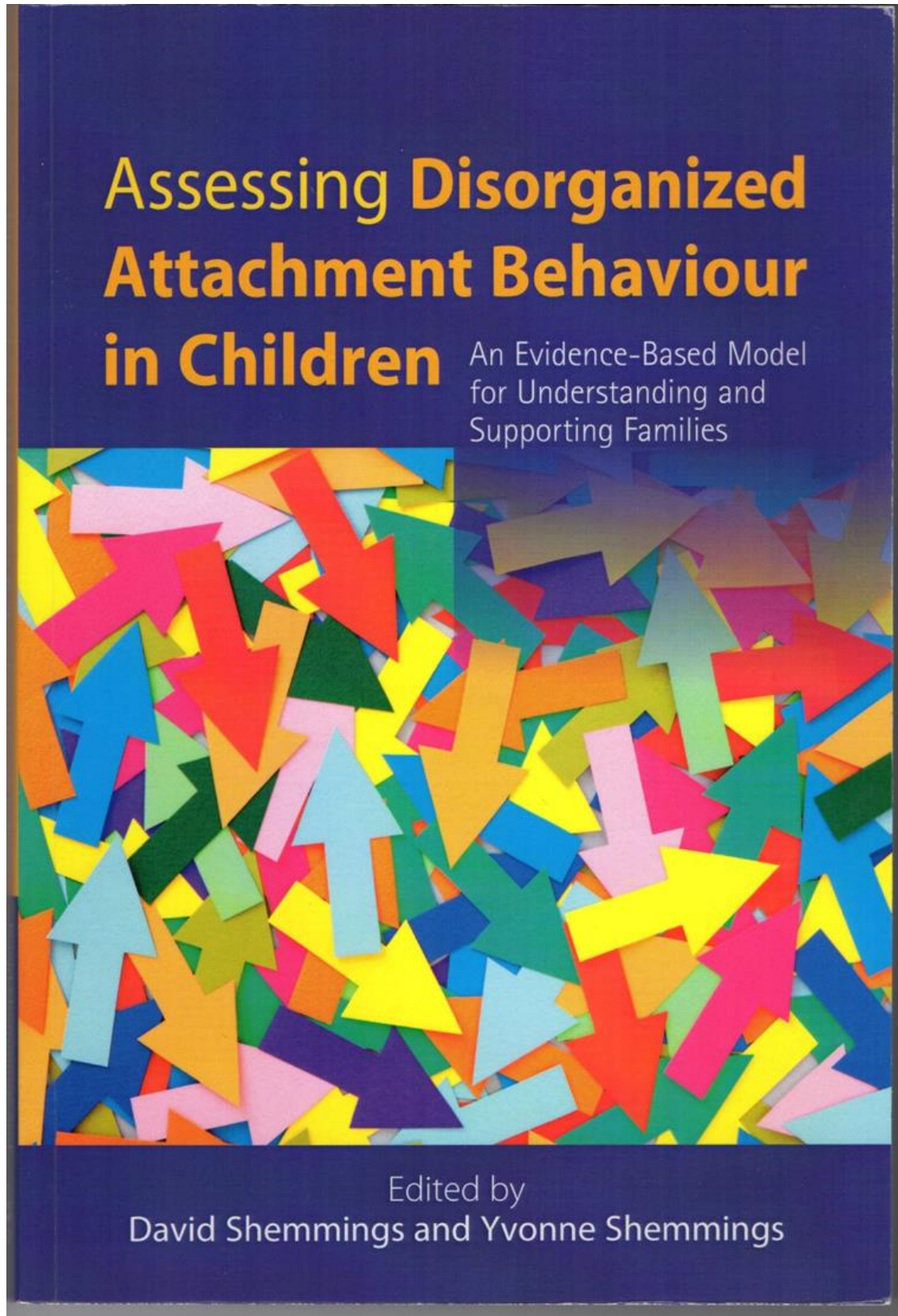
and also workshops for parents hosting by Mensa's gifted child consultant Lynn Kendal and Julie Taplin from Potential Plus.

We have one slot left and wondered if you are available to do something similar to your "communication skills for high IQ adults" presentation for a younger audience.

We would of course pay for expenses, bring your children!

Bobby

Appendix 21: Book chapter



Assessing Disorganized Attachment Behaviour in Children

An Evidence-Based Model for Understanding and Supporting Families

Edited by
David Shemmings and Yvonne Shemmings

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shift from 'muscular child protection/rescue discourses' and 'an expert screen and intervene model' towards a 'project that celebrates families' strengths as well as their vulnerabilities in the context of considerable adversities and (re)locates workers as agents of hope and support'.

We believe we can support *their* project by offering practitioners an articulation and exposition of what they need to look for to help families directly. We believe that remedial social action is needed urgently to address the attendant curses of our 'advanced' capitalist economy: domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, the commodification and manipulation of organised labour etc. But the causes of child abuse are complex. With the exception of chronic physical neglect which, almost by definition, is more likely to exist among poorer communities, and would be reduced by large injections of cash and/or lasting employment opportunities, other forms of child maltreatment occur in richer communities, too: sexual abuse, emotional abuse and emotional neglect are prevalent within all sectors of society. What is without question, though, is that if you are poor, you are more likely to come to the attention of child protection agencies (which would not necessarily be a bad outcome if they were able to help, but as things are as we write this Introduction, they often are not). This is not a criticism of the many dedicated child protection professionals out there; instead, it is, in part, a condemnation of the defensive, bureaucratised and proceduralised responses that have been created to protect politicians, managers, supervisors and practitioners from, at times, a vicious and predatory section of the media. So, for these reasons, we chose to concentrate on the relationship between parent and child, rather than the pernicious and unequal forces surrounding it.

Structure of the book

We begin with a resume of the ADAM Project and the Pathway Model, and then, in Chapter 2, we outline the relationship skills needed to implement them. In Chapter 3, Yvalia Febrer discusses an example of those skills in practise. In Chapters 4–12, our experienced ADAM Project associates, including Alice Cook, David Wilkins, Lissil Averill, Michelle Thompson, Fran Feeley, David Phillips, Claire Denham and Jo George, outline how they have used the model in their work with families. In Chapter 13, Melanie Hamilton-Perry illustrates why culturally competent practice is needed when using the model by

taking as an example the ways in which some of the methods needed to be modified with Traveller families. The authors of Chapter 14 (David Wilkins) and Chapter 15 (Tania Young) describe how they implemented the model across a large section of their organizations (in both cases, London boroughs), and this is followed, in Chapter 16, by an interesting use of the Pathway Model by Henry Smith, in which he shows how it can counter-indicate initial child protection concerns.

Our final chapter, the provocative Chapter 17, is led by Sonja Falck. In that chapter she and David Shemmings argue that some family members could be encouraged to *act* differently when their attachment systems are activated, so that they can begin to *think* differently: perhaps it is possible to 'fake it till you make it'. We conclude by outlining how the ADAM Project is likely to develop. (All case examples have been anonymised.)

'Fake It Till You Make It'

Can Deliberately Adopting Secure Attachment Behaviour Lead to Secure Attachment Organization?

Sonja Falck and David Shemmings

Introduction

The idea that acting as if something were true could cause it to *become* true goes back at least as far as 350 BC when Aristotle wrote that we acquire a particular quality by constantly acting in a particular way: '[W]e become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions'.¹ The question for our purposes is: could we become *secure* by performing *secure* actions? Some of the preceding chapters invite this possibility.

Research by social psychologist and Harvard Business School professor Amy Cuddy indicates that even making the simple change of deliberately adopting a more open and confident body posture for a few minutes actually affects our brain chemistry, by increasing our testosterone levels (the 'power' hormone) and decreasing our cortisol levels (the 'stress' hormone; Baron 2012; Buchanan 2012; Cuddy 2011, 2012; Venton 2012). Adopting a more confident body posture not only makes us appear more confident on the outside, it also alters our brain chemistry, which in turn changes how we feel on the inside. So whilst it is possible to act confident as a result of already feeling confident, it may also be possible to acquire a *feeling* of confidence as a result of deliberately acting confident.

¹ *Nicomachean Ethics, Book II*. Translated by W. D. Ross. Edited by Paul A. Boer Sr. Kindle edition: Veritatis Splendor Publications (2012).

Cuddy also shows how acting confident and therefore being perceived by others as *being* confident leads to an increase in positive social outcomes that are rewarding, such as being successful at a job interview (Halverson 2010). When actions are rewarded they become reinforced; hence, we are naturally drawn to repeating those actions because of the positive result we have associated with them. This is known as operant conditioning (Skinner 1938). It is clear how, in this way, the positive feedback loop shown in Figure 17.1 gets set up.

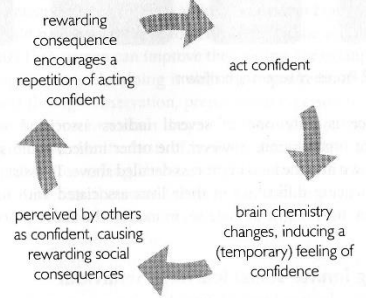


Figure 17.1 Cycle of acting confident

When regular repetitions of any kind of action are performed, what happens neurologically is that a substance called myelin becomes wrapped around the brain circuitry that is used to perform that action (Coyle 2009). Myelin essentially acts as an insulator, causing nerve impulses that move through a myelinated circuit to move along that circuit with less effort and more speed and precision: it is like the difference between having to find a new path through a forest for the first time and moving along a well-worn, fully cleared path that you have passed along many times before and that might even be paved and well lit. It is the difference between having to think about how to do something with conscious effort to make it happen and doing something that comes to you naturally, without conscious effort. What this means is that after someone has gone through many

Appendix 22: SENG presentation



SENG 2015

**The 33rd Annual
SENG Conference**



SOAR with SENG
Seeking Opportunities and Resources

**July 24-26, 2015
Denver, Colorado**

SENG2015 PRESENTERS

— HMM —
John Corsa is the Co-founder of One Heart Consciousness, LLC. He is a multi-disciplined energy healer who combines his psychic intuitive and clairsentient abilities with training in crystalology, Qi Gong and body touchwork to offer a unique blend of healing modalities to gifted youth and adults. Certified in the Melody method of Crystalogy, John uses crystals for specific releasing of physical, psychological, mental and spiritual blocks.

Steven E. Curtis, PhD, NCSP, MSCP, is a child clinical/school psychologist. He completed his PhD at Utah State University, internship/fellowship at University of Washington School of Medicine, and MS in Clinical Psychopharmacology at Alliant University. He practices with Lifespan Psychological Services, is an Affiliate Faculty at Antioch University, Seattle, and a member of the SENG Professional Advisory Committee.

Kara Darling is a freelance biomedical consultant with a focus on metabolic predispositions in the gifted community. She has a BA in Anthropology with an emphasis in Medical Anthropology. Kara worked as a licensed midwife running both a birth center and a homebirth practice for nine years until her youngest son turned her interest to biomedical research.

Joy Lawson Davis, EDD, is an Associate Professor of Education and Chair, Dept of Education at Virginia Union University. She is a sought-out speaker and consultant in educating culturally diverse gifted learners and serving their families. A specialist in K-12 Gifted Programs, her book *Bright, Talented & Black: A Guide for Families of African American Gifted Learners* is a must read for gifted educators. She is a board member for NAGC and SENG.

Larry Davis, a nationally recognized Consultant with specialization in Advocacy for Special Education, Gifted, and IEP/504 Plan development, just completed teaching Middle School to gifted and general classes for one year and looks forward to full recovery! In addition, she is an author, presenter, and trainer for Institute of Heartmath.

Arlene DeVries, MSE, retired from the Des Moines Schools, and is a former board member of SENG and NAGC. She teaches a Drake University online class, Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted. Arlene is a SENG Model Parent Group Facilitator and co-author of *A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children*, and *Gifted Parent Groups: The SENG Model 2nd Edition*.

Newenka DuMont, mother of two highly gifted daughters, was the founding president of her local gifted parent support group, has worked with the Illinois Association for Gifted Children on advocacy and parent support, and she is the Illinois liaison for SENG, as well as a trained SENG Model Parent Group Facilitator.

Sharon Duncan is co-founder of Gifted Identity and Gifted Research and Outreach. She assists people in meeting the needs of gifted children. She is a SENG Model Parent Group Facilitator, has served governing boards of public and private schools, a Mensa Youth Committee member, and as an advisor to a school for the gifted.

Lisa Erickson. Lisa is a psychotherapist specializing in gifted adults and teens. She's been a therapist for over 30 years and has taught therapists and lay people alike. She is a regular presenter at SENG and at NAGC. Her private practice is in Seattle.

Paulina Erices, IBCLC, is the mother of three gifted kids and a psychology student. As a lactation consultant she works helping parents to adapt, grow and enjoy their parenting journey. She has special interest in the gifted multicultural community, and families of children with social/emotional sensitivities.

Laurie Faith, BEd, MEd, works at Monterest School in Toronto. She has been teaching for 15 years in both regular and special education settings. Currently she serves in a classroom for 2e students, many of whom are intellectually gifted with attentional difficulties and learning disabilities. Laurie was nominated to the SENG Honor Roll in 2012 for her work with 2e students. Richard Guare and Peg Dawson, the authors of *Smart but Scattered*, have studied her work on executive functions.

Sonja Esterhuysen Falck is a Senior Accredited psychotherapist practicing in Central London, UK. She is also a qualified executive coach, a university lecturer, and a leader of psychology-related courses and workshops. She is currently completing a Doctorate on how gifted adults' interpersonal relationships affect their prospects for fulfilling their potential.

Ellen Fiedler, PhD, is Professor Emerita of Gifted Education from Chicago's Northeastern Illinois University. She has been a Gifted Program Coordinator and a State Consultant for Gifted. She is an

educational consultant, a published author, and regularly provides professional development for teachers. Dr. Fiedler presents at state, national, and international conferences.

Terry Filipowicz, MA, teaches college communication and journalism classes and leads educator and community workshops. She is the Director of Communications for Great Potential Press and runs a communication and writing consulting business. Terry also has a career in television news producing and writing and in public relations for universities.

Joanne Foster, EDD, is the co-author of *Being Smart about Gifted Education* (2009), and *Beyond Intelligence: Secrets for Raising Happily Productive Kids* (2014). She wrote *Not Now, Maybe Later: Helping Kids Overcome Procrastination* (2015). Featured columns appear in *Parenting for High Potential*, and elsewhere. Dr. Foster teaches Educational Psychology at University of Toronto.

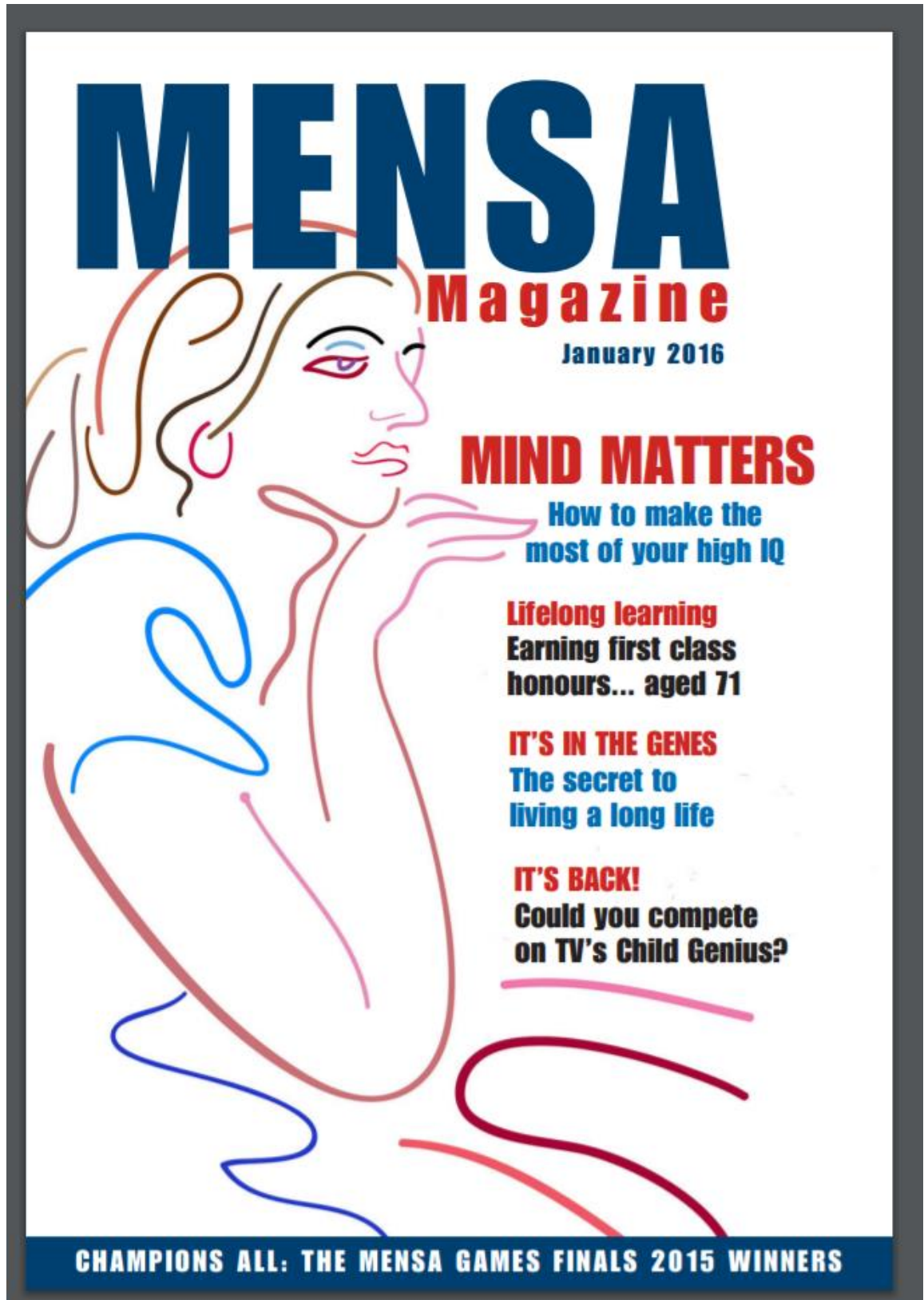
Cheryl Franklin-Rohr, MEd, has been in the gifted and talented field for 28 years as a teacher, GT Coordinator, Past-President of the Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented (CAGT), and a member of the Twice-Exceptional Cadre for Colorado. She earned her Master of Education in Gifted and Talented from UNC.

Jennifer Fredrickson is in her tenth year working in the Gifted and Talented Department in Jefferson County Public Schools supporting pre-K through 12th grade students, schools, and families. She teaches graduate level online gifted courses for adults through a partnership between Jeffco and Adams State College and is an active member of the CAGT and NAGC, and a member of the Colorado Academy for Educators of Gifted, Talented and Creative (CAEGTC).

Terry Friedrichs, PhD, EDD, a member of SENG's Diversity Committee and Gifted Elders Initiative, holds two doctoral degrees related to gifted education and learning challenges. A Twin Cities (MN) learning specialist, Terry has recently adapted his intellectual stimulation approaches for K-12 gifted youth with disabilities to gifted seniors with dementia.

Rosina Gallagher, PhD, former SENG President, was born and raised in Mexico through early adolescence. Her 30-year career includes being a psychologist and administrator in the Chicago Public Schools, and she is Past-President and current board member of the Illinois Associa-

Appendix 23: "Make the Most of Your Mind" article



Make the most of your mind...

Last month we featured research highlighting the cost of unrecognised intelligence. Here gifted and talented consultant Sonja Falck has some valuable advice on how to best develop and use your high IQ

You've become a member of Mensa. What this confirms about you is that you have a very high IQ but beyond that, what do you think it says about you? And what do you think others would think it says about you? What do you think having a high IQ means for you? And what do you most hope it, and your Mensa membership, could do for you? There is much that can be learned about going through life with a high IQ, yet in our society generally there is a lot of ignorance – and many stereotypes, myths, pressures and insecurities – surrounding the concept of high IQ. One of the first assumptions it creates is that it means you have 'high potential'. What would 'fulfilling' your potential entail? I see four aspects to this. You might already be well-versed in all four, or perhaps you'll find that one or more – or all – of the four could benefit from being given more of your attention. These aspects have been drawn from my own doctoral research into the use of IQ and which part-formed the basis of a presentation I made recently to the annual conference of SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) in the US.

Continued on page 10

Appendix 24 – Reports on the professional significance of the work

From: Jerald Grobman [REDACTED] Email address was visible to the examiners.

Sent: 14 March 2017 20:54

To: Sonja Falck <sonja.falck@btinternet.com>

Subject: Re: Gremlins

Hello Sonja,

I need only several more hours to complete the review of your entire project and organize my thinking so that our collaboration can be focused, efficient and most helpful before arranging for our skype call...this is an impressive, authentic piece of work Sonja, very stimulating, a pleasure to read through and a meaningful contribution-- you should feel very proud of this ...

I'm thinking perhaps Saturday for our skype call so as to make scheduling easier for both of us but I'll keep you up to date --might be as soon as Friday ...

Best regards,

Dr. Grobman

.....

From: Jerald Grobman [REDACTED] Email address was visible to the examiners.

Sent: 15 January 2017 16:49

To: Sonja Falck <sonja.falck@btinternet.com>

Subject: Re: Our skype call

Hello Sonja,

It has been a pleasure to be an academic consultant to your project "The Child, the Emperor, and the Fabulous Clothes..."— it's always stimulating to interact with another professional interested in contributing to the deeper psychological understanding of gifted individuals so they may achieve better interpersonal functioning.

Your work has great value on several levels:

Your subjects' responses to the questionnaires and your guided interviews with them in themselves will help other gifted individuals "normalize" the dynamics of their own interpersonal experiences.

Your specific focus on how your subjects' past difficulties have influenced their current difficulties can help other gifted individuals apply this understanding to their difficult interpersonal problems

Your 4 part model categorizing different aspects and origins of your subjects' interpersonal experiences is quite useful in clarifying these.

Psychodynamic and systemic concepts of transference, valency, repetition compulsion and intersubjectivity should be useful windows into the deeper psychology of the gifted "inner experience" and the "outer experience" of interpersonal difficulty. Not only will your discussion of them give gifted individuals confidence that their problems can be understood but that therapists can actually address their problems in productive ways. As you no doubt well know, gifted individuals often are reluctant to seek professional help because of a conviction that therapists can't "get them" and are not intelligent enough to help them. Unfortunately this means that many of gifted individuals will accept a restricted, or worse, a marginal life with serious interpersonal dysfunction, unexplained physical distress and crippling psychiatric symptoms.

Sadly many will give up access to their remarkable assets never to have personal satisfaction and interpersonal gratification. I believe your work is an important resource that can help reverse this trend.

Congratulations on a fine piece of original research — so rare an occurrence in our field.

I found your work very stimulating and enjoyed our collaboration. I look forward to more of both in the future.

Best Wishes,

Dr. Jerald Grobman MD

Jerald Grobman M.D.
1044 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y., 10075
(1) 212-249-7351

www.psychotherapyservicesforthegifted.com,

Member of the SENG professional advisory committee.

Recipient of the SENG SERVICE AWARD 2013.

Lifetime member of the American Psychiatry Association.

From: Joan Freeman [REDACTED] Email address was visible to the examiners.

Sent: 03 April 2017 13:03

To: Sonja Falck <sonja.falck@btinternet.com>

Subject: Re: End of project report by JF

Dear Sonja,

Congratulations - it has indeed been a long hard haul for you - but you are a great perseverer.

Your completed project is of great professional significance in providing a study on gifted adults' interpersonal relating of a kind that did not exist before, notable by the absence of publications, services, or specialists pertaining to gifted adults.

Your research provides a valuable contribution towards building Continuing Professional Development offerings that can engage mental health professionals in becoming aware of, and thinking carefully about, issues pertinent to working with this minority population, as no such training is currently available in the UK. It will raise awareness to improve the well-being of gifted adults and prospects of using their abilities for the benefit of the individual and society.

Best wishes, and again - so well done,

Joan

Prof Joan Freeman, PhD, FBPsS, Chartered Psychologist

Lifetime Achievement Award by the British Psychological Society for work with the gifted and talented

Lifetime Achievement Award MENSA International

Founding President European Council for High Ability (ECHA)

Executive, European Talent Support Centres

First European Talent Networking Award

Web-site: www.joanfreeman.com

From: Noks Nauta [REDACTED] Email address was visible to the examiners.

Sent: 03 April 2017 18:17

To: Sonja Falck <sonja.falck@btinternet.com>

Subject: Re: Your short report for me

Dear Sonja,

What you sent me looks very interesting and very good!

This study will really add to more knowledge about gifted adults and (the origin of) their mental health problems. This is important for themselves and for mental health professionals.

This knowledge will also lead to better understanding gifted children, so teachers and parents can better guide them and that will lead to gifted adults being more healthy and happy. Society will also profit more from the talents of these people.

I hope your study will be published to let all those who are interested, read it.

Best wishes,

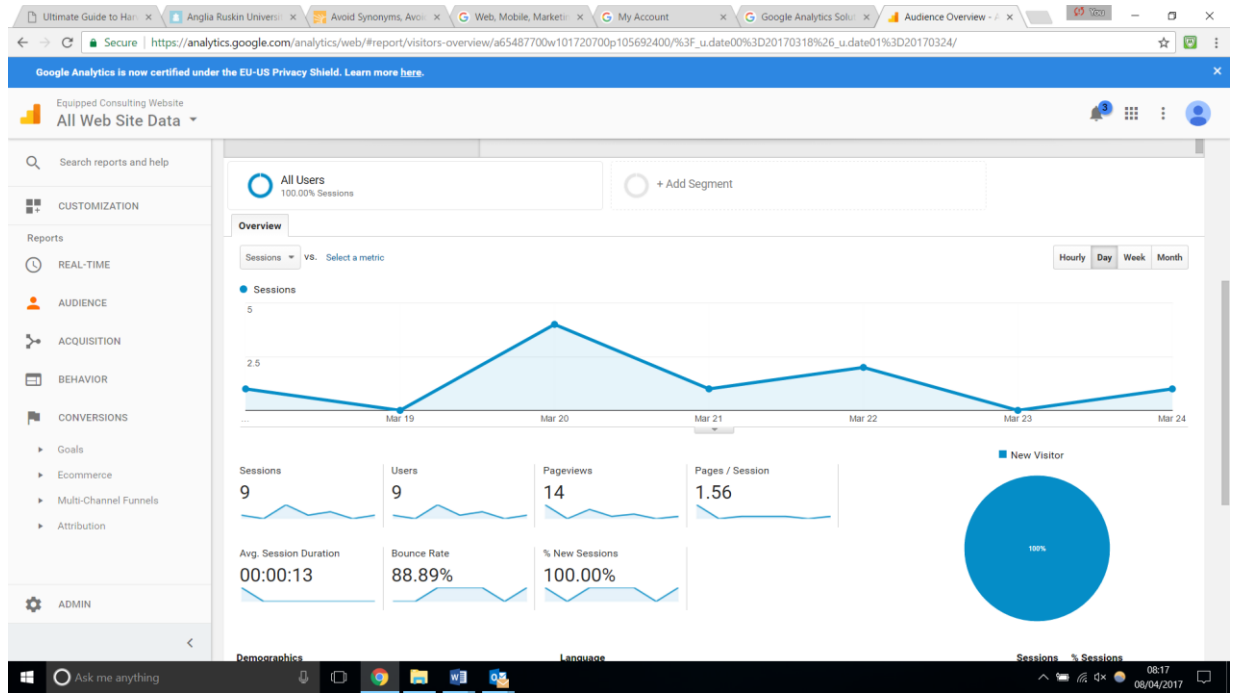
Noks Nauta, MD, PhD

Psychologist

Instituut Hoogbegaafdheid Volwassenen (Gifted Adults Foundation), Netherlands

<https://ihbv.nl/>

Appendix 25 – Equipped Consulting website statistics



Appendix 26 – Interview schedule for final four interviews

<u>Questions</u>
<p>1. To start, I'd like to get a sense of your background: can you say something about your family background and schooling?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Where did you grow up? Family of origin structure and occupations? Type of schooling? Experience of school? Results?</p>
<p>2. What path did you follow after leaving school? (Education? Career?)</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> What type of tertiary education? Experience of it? Results</p>
<p>3. What would you say you are most proud of or most pleased with in how your life has developed since leaving school?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Career aims/ambitions, highlights, successes, achievements. Turning points?</p>
<p>4. What would you say you are most dissatisfied with or most disappointed with in how your life has developed since leaving school?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Career challenges, frustrations, puzzles, failures. Turning points?</p>
<p>5. The title of this research study uses the word "gifted". Could you say something about how you feel this relates to you?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> When/how was it first noticed? Personal history around achievements, assessments etc. Comparing self to others? What comprises 'being gifted'? What is distinctive about it?</p>
<p>6. How do you feel about this aspect of yourself?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Gives you security? Confidence? Self-esteem. Pride, pleasure, find it useful, guilt, awkwardness, isolation, burden, self-conscious about abilities.</p>
<p>7. How do you feel this aspect of yourself was reacted to as you were growing up?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> By family and others: noticed? praised, supported/nurtured, message to hide/be humble, valued, exploited, rivalry.</p>
<p>8. Do you feel this aspect of yourself affects the way you relate with others?</p>
<p>9. What kinds of reactions do you get from others to this aspect of yourself?</p> <p><u>Prompts:</u> Positive/negative. Envy? Admiration, not noticed, treated as ordinary, enjoyed, in awe, grateful, uncomprehending, baffled, irritated, resentful, exploiting, tease, bully. How do you think others perceive you?</p>

10. How do you feel about the reactions you get?

Prompts: Which do you like/feel most comfortable with? Which dislike/feel uncomfortable with? Feel scornful when too much praised, impatient, bored, frustrated, angry, down. Feel too powerful? Feel guilty? If someone not on your level intellectually do you find it difficult to look past that and value other things in that person? Unmet needs: does having to 'gear down' impede ability to give empathy to others? (ie. difficult to give others what you feel others can't/don't give you)

11. How do you think the reactions of others affect your behaviour?

Prompts: amount of free self-expression; dumbing down? Hiding self/false self. Become proud? Afraid of envious attacks? Fear of failure?

12. I wondered what your experience has been in life of meeting and fully engaging with a 'kindred spirit' – someone who you feel 'gets you', with whom you don't have to hold back at all, and you 'get' them?

Prompts: How easily/often has this been experienced? What has the effect been of experiencing this/lacking this? Merger?

13. How do you feel overall about your interpersonal relationships?

Appendix 27: Screenshot of Equipped Consulting website home page

equipped consulting helping high-ability adults thrive

home about us coaching & organisations workshops personal development therapy contact us blog

We provide emotionally intelligent consulting services designed to improve the personal and professional lives of high-ability adults.

Coaching & Organisations
Refine workplace performance for yourself or your staff for improved individual astuteness and better collaboration with others whether local or global.

Workshops
Sign up for a light bulb igniting day of engaging interactive input designed especially for bright minds.

Personal Development
Get your synapses firing and establishing new neural connections that will enable you to make better social connections.

Therapy
Confide one-to-one in someone who is knowledgeable about standing out from the crowd and can help you negotiate a happier place for yourself within that position.

Can you be decent and gifted at the same time?
[Read our blog.](#)

ability
/əˈbɪlɪti/
noun

1. The power or capacity to do something.
synonyms: capability, potential, faculty, aptitude, facility, propensity, means, competence, knack
2. Skill or talent.
synonyms: expertise, proficiency, adeptness, prowess, mastery, artistry, calibre, accomplishment
- Paperback Oxford English Dictionary (2010)

Are you a high-ability adult? Do you know, or work with, high-ability adults?
[Read more about how we define this](#)

Our specialism is researching and attending to the differences, challenges and needs related to high ability.

Ability alone never determines outcome because of other factors like opportunity, motivation, and effort.

At two extremes, a person with high ability could be navigating a high-profile career with exceptional levels of challenge, reward, and responsibility, or they could be undeveloped, frustrated and suicidally depressed. High ability is used in very different ways, from benefiting millions, to living a contented low-profile life, to mastering serious crime. At Equipped Consulting we are fascinated by all of these.

We work internationally and welcome worldwide enquiries. We consult face-to-face, by video call, telephone and email.

We are happy to hear from and to work with any persons who feel our interests resonate with them and who are attracted to our approach and services. Please feel free to [contact us](#).

+44 20 8883 0361 / +44 7854 366 871 contact@equippedconsulting.co.uk 12 Harley Street, London W1G 9PG

Appendix 28 – Teaching qualification



**Level 4 Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector
500/2005/5**

is awarded to
SONJA ESTERHUYSE FALCK

who attended
Future Training College

This holder has a number of formal Unit
Credits by which this Award was achieved

Awarded 14 February 2012

140212/7303-11/062727/WXH2747/F/03/05/68

5500401641/80

Michael Howell

Chris Jones

M Howell
Chairman
The City and Guilds of London Institute

Chris Jones
Director-General
The City and Guilds of London Institute

Ofqual
.....



**Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government**



L678



The City and Guilds of London Institute founded 1878 and Incorporated by Royal Charter 1900.
The City & Guilds Group comprises City & Guilds and ILM.

Appendix 29 – Executive coaching qualification

Tavistock
CONSULTING

The Tavistock and Portman 
NHS Foundation Trust

TAVISTOCK CONSULTING

This is to certify that

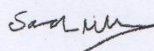
Sonja Falck

has attained the

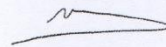
Tavistock Certificate in Executive Coaching, 2012

The Tavistock Certificate in Executive Coaching has attained the Quality Award of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council at Senior Practitioner level

OCTOBER 2014
THE TAVISTOCK CENTRE, LONDON



SARAH MILLER
COURSE DIRECTOR



KAY TRINOR
COURSE CO-DIRECTOR



Tavistock Consulting, Centre Heights, 137 Finchley Road, London, NW3 6JG, UK

Appendix A1 – Gifted qualities

Gifted qualities	Numbers of the interviewees who mentioned this
<u>Performance relative to others</u>	
Quickly sees solutions	156, 68, 1
Deeper, better, faster understanding than others	156, 69, 17, 1, 55, 2, 43, 167, 6
Found school very easy, even “absolutely boring” (No.69)	74, 2, 5, 55, 1, 17, 69
Has had an identity of being the person who was the best	74, 189, 43
Special facility for language (good with words and spelling)	2, 55, 6, 2
Good at maths	68, 1
Speaks fast	36, 41, 68
Started reading very young	2, 69, 68, 1, 36, 55
High confidence in own ability to do anything	156, 2, 69, 68, 43
<u>Way of seeing the world</u>	
Capacity for seeing the whole picture, seeing patterns, and thinking strategically	156, 2, 17, 69
Sees a lot of different aspects to everything	156, 5, 55
Creative, original thinker	156, 74, 55, 68, 36
<u>Way of engaging with the world</u>	
Enjoyment of and need to keep busy with challenges, such as solving problems	156, 5, 74, 2, 167, 6, 69, 68, 43, 189, 17
Passion to always be learning	156, 2, 69, 189, 5, 6, 36, 17, 1
Loves reading	2, 69, 68, 1, 36, 55
Sensitive	156, 74, 17, 30
“Over thinks” things	55, 36, 17
Has a very logical mind	2, 69, 68
Ability to understand and explain	2, 1, 189, 43
Is determined, persevering	2, 69, 55
Competitive, ambitious	74, 167, 189, 69
Is forthright and outspoken	74, 6, 69, 1, 36
Has multiple interests. “What were my interests when I was 16? Everything.” (No.55)	55, 5, 36, 189, 17
Enjoys helping others, making a contribution	5, 2, 156, 6, 189, 36, 17, 74, 43, 1
Social interaction and understanding didn’t come naturally or easily	167, 55, 69, 68, 1, 17, 189, 74, 36, 30, 2

Appendix B2 – Differences in place or context

Focused code:	Differences in place or context	
Interviewee	Location in transcript	Codes
Secure No.74	<p>It's just small things really and working in Spain for instance, is much worse than working here, because in Spain, the managers have a very bossy attitude.</p> <p>Okay.</p> <p>And here they are more laid back. (p.37:17-23)</p>	Country/culture (Spain, Britain)
Secure No.156	<p><i>[Developed at own initiative a whole report on an opportunity that his company could expand into.]</i> He <i>[the boss]</i> came down heavily on me on why he didn't like this and that. He gave some very ludicrous reasonings such as, "That's not what you've been mandated for, that's not what we've hired you for..." (p.31:3-16) But his colleagues loved the idea and got excited about it.</p>	Different context, different reaction
Secure No.2	<p>Brits don't like putting themselves forward or being better, there's this natural reservedness about British people that says don't stand out, don't celebrate achievement in many ways (p.59: 10-13), p.60: 7-8</p> <p>How interpersonal relationships go at work "depends on who you're dealing with... There was an administrative manager, who I technically came under cause I was there as an admin worker, who hated me and there were all the economic development officers and project managers who loved me. So they recognised my ability and basically took me out of the administrative loop and took me under their wing because they recognised the benefit that I could have. But this administrative manager, <i>[name]</i>, hated me." (p.21:23-p.22:5)</p>	British culture Different context, different reaction
Fearful Avoidant No.6	<p>p.7 Had "A very rocky up and down time" at school.</p> <p>I suppose the comprehensive school that I went to, I did definitely get, I wouldn't go so far as to say I was bullied but I got teased for achieving well and I certainly felt I needed to dumb myself down to fit in more, and so that's something that I think that's almost stuck with me through later life actually and I think I'm only just beginning to appreciate my skills I suppose and try not to hide them.</p> <p>Then went to a grammar school which was "a lot easier, I felt much happier there, it did make a difference."</p> <p>p.12: at school there'd be a lot of words like 'square' and thinks like that whereas at work the similar things are if I give too much help or too much... if I can hear that someone's struggling with something and if I too often say, "Oh you could do it like this, oh I think it's this", you might get the odd comment like, "Oh it's clever clogs again".</p> <p>Eight more pages of interview excerpts were provided to the examiners.</p>	Different environment, different experience (comprehensive school, grammar school)

Appendix C1 – Others recognising giftedness

Focused code:	Others recognising giftedness	
Interviewee	Transcript excerpts and locations	Codes
<p>Secure No.2</p>	<p>p.2: "I was a really, really bright kid. I was way ahead of my peers really and my teacher kept saying, she needs to be tested because she's gonna be bored and she's gonna rebel soon. My teacher was trying to get my parents involved but because my parents were so working class, they really worried that I was going to get ahead of myself, to the point that on the back of the IQ test and my teacher's intervention, I was offered a place at a grammar school, a very prestigious grammar school in the area that I grew up, and my parents wouldn't let me go because they said, "you'll think badly of us".</p> <p>p.2 Being kept apart from peers: "it ended up meaning that I was really apart from my peers because my teachers deliberately said, "well there's no point you doing that work because that will be too easy, so we'll set you some other work".</p> <p>p.3 "When I was at primary school there was a small group of us, maybe five kids, who were the bright kids if you like, but I was, in IQ terms, not in social skills terms, but in IQ terms, I was ahead of them even. But at secondary school I was singled out really, and it's funny because your study on interpersonal relationships at work and I can see the parallels between being at school and being at work and being apart."</p> <p>p.4 with spelling tests, and the teachers would say at the end, "Okay (<i>name</i>), all those words now you're going to tell the whole class what they all mean". So there was always this setting apart, and so there was no structured programme. " I was very apart really in many ways. I was a very solitary child and always had my nose in a book, nothing's changed and I've grown up like that.</p>	<p>Recognised by teacher</p> <p>Set apart</p> <p>Set apart</p> <p>Set apart</p>
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.167</p>	<p>p.10 You know with different classes and different extracurricular opportunities, it was sort of identified early on, oh, you know, you're intelligent. You're not so good at sports... Like no one sort of said, "Hey (<i>name</i>), you know, do you wanna go up for the football team or the baseball team?" but they did say, "Hey (<i>name</i>), do you wanna join the chess team or the debate team?"</p>	<p>Recognised by peers</p>
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.6</p>	<p>Set apart by doing GCSEs three years earlier than her peers, at age 13.</p>	<p>Set apart Feeling an outsider.</p>

<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.1</p>	<p>Well at first, what happened eventually, when I was about eight or nine I got taken in the office one day after my latest bout of misbehaviour. I was in the office with one of the senior teachers, this was in England, and I was introduced to a gentleman, I remember his name actually, it was Dr (<i>name</i>). I actually remember his name. This is going back into the 70's. My dad came up the school, he was there, with Dr (<i>name</i>), the teacher and me, and I got these tests to do.... And of course they all looked at each other and nodded and smiled and they carried on with more questions, and I had questions about probability, like playing cards. I didn't know anything about cards at that age so they explained to me what a pack of cards was, so I worked the answers out and got them all right.... Later that evening I've come home from school, my dad came home from work, and he said to me, I said, "What was all this about, what were these questions about at school?", and he said to me, "I've got a genius", and he laughed. That's all I knew, because it must have been an intelligence test, it must have been an IQ test. Obviously the teachers had become concerned about me and they'd obviously explained to someone I messed around a lot at school but I was very clever, so obviously they set up a test for me, but I didn't know about it until it happened and thereafter I was given harder work to do. But it wasn't official, it wasn't planned, it was just for me, tailored to me. (p.5-6)</p>	<p>A special person coming into the school to test him. His father reported to him after that "I've got a genius".</p> <p>Set apart, the only one being given different work.</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No. 43</p>	<p>Well I certainly was the best guy around with computers and maths, so you become an authority on that, on those subjects. (p.14:32-p.15:11)</p>	<p>Recognised by peers</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.68</p>	<p>p.9 her chemistry teacher saying – why be so good, you'll just end up in the kitchen anyway. "You're just too brilliant, I can't find a question that you can't answer."</p>	<p>Recognised by teacher</p>
<p>Preoccupied No.30</p>	<p>p.11 Says she really "recognized it" (giftedness) at primary school "because I was very much on my own in terms of... I remember we did this... we had like, it was like a spelling thing and you had different levels and they were all different colours of the rainbow. And so red level was like very low and then I was in the only one on violet, which was like the last level." She was on her own in that highest group until about year 5 when a new boy joined the school and then he was in the same group with her.</p> <p>p.12 Reaction of teacher to words she came up with: And my teacher was just like... I just remember there being this kind of reaction and I'd spelt it right as well and so she was a bit like... you know, like... you know, there was... not like, that's really weird, but, you know, she was impressed, but also it was a bit like...</p> <p>Unexpected? Yeah</p>	<p>Set apart</p>

Appendix C3 – Effort and speed

Focused code:	Effort and speed
Interviewee	Location in transcript
Secure No.74	...when I was at school, at primary school, I never carried my books back home. I never did homework because for me it was so easy at school, just in a break, like five minutes, I would do the homework very quickly and I wouldn't do homework. I wouldn't ever have particular classes with teachers, that would be unthinkable because for me it was so easy,... (p.3:16-22)
Secure No.2	p.4 it frustrates the heck out of me to work in a team sometimes 'cos people are too slow, that's terrible isn't it. You just want people to get there quicker and they don't,
Fearful Avoidant No.167	p.8 "I remember being able to, for some of my work, especially on the math side, being able to finish it and grasp the concepts quicker than my peers." Said he was better probably than most, but not as good as others.
Fearful Avoidant No.69	p.16 I know I'm very good at what I do. I don't do a lot of things but I'm extremely good at what I do. I can't be bothered to work very hard. I'll give you a very simple example. If somebody were to tell me that you've got three days to do this, I would probably not start working till maybe 10 minutes before the deadline, and I would do a marvellous job in those last 10 minutes.
Fearful Avoidant No.6	p.24 Ability made her complacent ""Oh I'll do well in this without doing any work", which isn't always the case obviously."
Fearful Avoidant No.55	I mean you look at something and you come to a conclusion and you wonder how half the rest of the world hasn't come to that conclusion, then you realise that they can't or just don't, because they don't... the microprocessors in the brain aren't running at the same speed, or something. (p.30:19-22)
Dismissing Avoidant No.1	p.3 had an adult reading age at 8 yrs old. Maths "came very easy to me". Behaved badly at school, disruptive, because "I had no challenges".
Dismissing Avoidant No. 43	<p>I expressed frustration that why aren't these people better at what they do? If they just tried they could just learn how to do it, and a friend of mine told me that no actually, some people they may actually be trying right now. So I guess that's when I realised that, "Oh, okay, so maybe it is easier for me to learn similar things". (p.5:7-11)</p> <p>it seemed if I just put in more time and effort I would be better at it. There didn't seem to be really a limit anywhere, which is also why I didn't understand why other people didn't know their thing that they were supposed to know because at least to me that would just be, "Well put more effort into it" and that's it. In retrospect that may, I don't know, that may have been like telling a depressed person to cheer up, I don't know. (p.10:33-p.11:4)</p> <p>Still struggles to accept that some people would not be able to learn things or have to put in maybe 10 times as much time" (p.17:8-12)</p>

<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.41</p>	<p>It's the same obstacles but worse because you haven't been in someone else's head so you don't know that your head works much better, and even if along the way people tell you, "Oh you're quite smart", you don't put that into context because you have no context. (p.13:17-21)</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.68</p>	<p><i>That was your teacher at school?</i> Yes. He was just joking with me, "You're just too brilliant, I can't find a question that you can't answer. Why try so hard anyway". But I wasn't trying and I just got it. (p.9:11-15)</p> <p>p.22 at age 11/12 At that point she was "beating all the boys" and always got the top marks. "I never bothered to learn anything, I just got it"</p> <p>p.15 Experience of getting to answers very quickly and others (her husband in this case) not managing it.</p> <p>The girls seem to just let me be what I am and there was only one that, I have a school friend who we're friends and we go to school together, the same class, and we also go to the same tutor as well, and the tutor would tend to award if you get 100 per cent at school for the tests and we'd take it to the tutor to show them. And this girl literally took my test paper, changed her name, it said 100 per cent, changed her name and took it to this tutor to claim the award. I remember it clearly because I actually recognised this was my paper that I lost, and I didn't want to say it and expose her because I'm one of those really passive persons. I just thought if she needs to do that, do it, but in reality she didn't get it, so she had an immediate award but in the long term she was just fooling herself. So this is just jealousy, I think she just wanted to achieve rather than being jealous of me. She was not doing me any harm at all, apart from I just won't get the award because I haven't got a paper to show.</p> <p><i>And that didn't upset you?</i> No not at all, because I just felt I can get 100 per cent next time. I just don't feel if she needs one, and I almost felt sorry for her that she had to almost steal to get something rather than try harder.</p> <p><i>And did you have a sense of if she tried harder she could also get such good marks?</i> No I don't think so. So I just felt more of a pity, I just felt yeah I can always get another new rubber. (p.24:1-28)</p> <p>Where I come from I know I have put effort in because every time I'm given a task I will try to do my best, so there is an effort element in it but also some people can try their very best but they still don't get there, and because they don't have the right gifts at the start. (p.31:26-34)</p>
<p>Preoccupied No.17</p>	<p>Was never worried about exams, unlike his peers. (p.10:6-7) Didn't understand why peers would have so many problems re exams (p.10:5-6)</p> <p>I didn't want to show anyone or make anyone aware that I was doing well, but whenever... people were known to be doing well at school, people were</p>

	<p>looking straight at them and saying, the kind of feeling that, “Do you think you are better than us others?” or they’d think like either that or they thought that you are a very big geek or something, that you just kept studying all the time and had no social life. But that wasn’t really the case with me. I still didn’t study so much but I still did very well at the exams. (p.12:10-28)</p>
Preoccupied No.189	<p>Whatever it is it measures, I’m good at turning, you know, objects in my head and you know, if you have four objects and you have to pick, which one is the fifth one that [unintelligible 0:05:17]. So something like that just comes very easily.</p> <p>Right.</p> <p>So yeah, these puzzles that they have... they are not difficult for me to solve. (p.7:1-9)</p> <p>So, if I may say so, I definitely do think I’m good at this IT stuff....And that just comes naturally. It’s not actually a lot of effort... (p.10:26-p.11:6)</p>
Preoccupied No.30	<p>p.14 There were people, I guess who were... who I would, without sounding malicious, were less intelligent than me, but they were still in the top set. But they visibly kinda struggled, so... You know, like for me I would be getting like 85 per cent and above and other people might be getting like 65 to 70...</p> <p>p.23 re her brother: he’s pretty much been in the same job since he left uni and it’s... it’s so easy for him, you know like he words for insurance claims and what everybody else can do like in a day, he’ll do it in like, you know, two hours in a morning and then he spends the rest of the time reading, going on the Internet, whatever, whatever.</p>
No.2.2	<p>Did well at school without trying much. Truanted from school severely then still passed exams.</p>

Appendix D1 – Belonging or not belonging

Focused code:	Belonging or not belonging (see also all the “set apart” themes in “Others recognising giftedness”: the being set apart, as part of how recognition plays out, leads to a sense of not belonging. Wanting to belong – seeking others with whom you can belong, whether “like-minded” or equally unpopular, etc.)
Interviewee	Transcript excerpts and locations
Secure No.74	Discussed the experience of being an outsider.
Secure No.2	<p>p.4: I remember teaming up with the unpopular kids, the girl who was ginger and everyone took the mick out of her because she was ginger, or this girl who’s dad had died of a brain tumour, and everybody took the mick out of her. This is what children are like, they’re horrible, but we bandied together a little bit, an unpopular clique really to work against the popular kids.</p> <p>p.26-27 When asked is there anyone she can be with without hiding, just totally be herself. She says yes, her partner, and with her doctorate. “I sit down with my supervisor and he tests me, and it sounds so conceited, but there’s not many who do, who really, who can ask a question and I’ve really got to think about it. So yeah, probably my supervisor, my partner, because my partner isn’t threatened by it at all.”</p> <p>P.27 Re her partner: “she’s not threatened by it, she loves it. She accepts it, she revels in it, she wants to learn from me, she wants to encourage me to... she sits there, she does it all the time, she says, “tell me about something, tell me about anything, explain something to me”. If we’re in the car or something, she’ll say, “tell me about Russia in the 19th century”, or something and it’s really lovely,”</p> <p>p.51 Teacher joined her to Mensa out of idea she’d meet others there she could get on with who were like her.</p> <p>p.2: “I was a really, really bright kid. I was way ahead of my peers really and my teacher kept saying, she needs to be tested because she’s gonna be bored and she’s gonna rebel soon. My teacher was trying to get my parents involved but because my parents were so working class, they really worried that I was going to get ahead of myself, to the point that on the back of the IQ test and my teacher’s intervention, I was offered a place at a grammar school, a very prestigious grammar school in the area that I grew up, and my parents wouldn’t let me go because they said, “you’ll think badly of us”.</p> <p>p.24 “I don’t get on with my peers at all. Well it’s not that I don’t get on with them, but they just don’t... I’m like a complete outsider,”</p>
Secure No.5	<p>Her group of friends that she belonged with, then moving to senior school was no longer with them and that’s when she got bullied</p> <p>But there’s the four of us who were the strongest friends um and we would’ve been the quite er geeky swatty group I suppose...(p.18)</p>

	So those four of us were split up and I think and the different schools were coming together to be in the high school so I think that the children are trying to find their way aren't they. Which means there there's a lot of psychological elbowing going on and stuff and I was I was always quieter and um and more shy so it sort of meant that I was maybe trampled on a bit in that way. But um thankfully that didn't last too long and uh you found recovered a bit a bit of self-confidence (p.19)
Fearful Avoidant No.167	p.10 You know with different classes and different extracurricular opportunities, it was sort of identified early on, oh, you know, you're intelligent. You're not so good at sports... Like no one sort of said, "Hey Todd, you know, do you wanna go up for the football team or the baseball team?" but they did say, "Hey Todd, do you wanna join the chess team or the debate team?"
Fearful Avoidant No.69	p.32 ...whenever you're talking about a person you don't remember their entire personality, there would be two or three highlights that you remember and then you build your whole impression around that. That's the skeleton that you flesh out later. So the skeleton that they would have in mind is, "Well he's not like us, he's an outsider". I hate being an outsider, but I can't help it, I'm always an outsider... Absolutely everywhere I'm an outsider. "He's an outsider, he's not like us..."
Fearful Avoidant No.6	p.7 "I often feel definitely the outsider in a group". p.13 deliberately sought out friends like herself p.17 wanting to work with like-minded people
Fearful Avoidant No.55	when you're a child and you're already aware of your differences, you'd really quite like to fit in sometimes. (p.6:5-13) deliberately sought similar friends
Dismissing Avoidant No.1	...at school there's two groups of people. You've got the first group of people which is very well behaved and very academically minded, and you've got the group of rougher people who mess around and aren't really interested at school. So I was in the position where I had kudos with the academic ones because I was getting better test results than they were, but I used to hang around with the rougher lot, the rougher people, so in the end I worked out that I wasn't popular with either group because I didn't fit in the social circles of the better off and more academically minded children and I wanted to be in the easiest, lowest denominator, which was the rougher kids and muck around, play football, be naughty. But they always knew that I was clever as well so I wasn't really one of them either. So I was neither here nor there at school but I was good at passing exams. (p.3-4)
Dismissing Avoidant No.68	How she can't do girly chats
Preoccupied No.17	p.12 you perform very well then people might not, they might rather be [unintelligible 0:30:25] people treat you a bit badly. <i>In what way?</i> I don't know, it's very hard to, not as in bullying, but maybe always feel a bit outside and whatever.
Preoccupied No.30	p.12 And then, I mean like... on the negative side, I mean I was bullied at school, because I was clever... basically.

p.13 Wanted to go to the comprehensive as “I remember just being so desperate to fit in with the people that I’d already been around with”. Didn’t take the 11+, “it didn’t even cross my mind that I might be among kind of like-minded people” (if she went to the grammar school).

p.16 With maths: “I got it and so I would just wiz through them and you know like, so I was always the one being set extra questions and you know, that kind of thing. And then I guess in a real mixed ability primary school in the middle of nowhere like, that... it makes you stand out

But the prone to being a bit depressed, what’s your understanding of that?

p.67 I think I... I think it’s... I do think it’s to do with my intelligence. Like, I do think that like... I think it’s partly stuff to do with like, you know like, being bullied at school and not really knowing why...

it was just a total culture shock for me when I went to uni.

Okay.

You know like, I couldn’t rely on my intelligence anymore. I needed social skills. I needed, you know... I couldn’t relate to anybody, because I hadn’t had any of the same experiences as them.

Right.

And I think my brain just shut down a little bit and it just went... oh, I just can’t deal with this. Yeah, I mean I lost two stone in about two months...

When you started at the uni?

Yeah. Just absolutely miserable and I just couldn’t handle it, like...

So it was the culture shock socially?

Yeah, I think so, you know, I think... I think, you know possibly have, you know like, if I hadn’t had the issues at primary school, then it might not have, you know... I hung around with people who were also very intelligent, also slightly socially awkward, you know like, because we got on with each other.

Yeah.

And then, I realised that we got on with each other, but nobody else got on with us kind of thing. And it wasn’t because, you know like, I was desperate for everyone to know that it wasn’t cause I wasn’t a nice person, you know, but that was... you know like, I hadn’t fitted in for so long, to fit in with these people felt amazing. And then I got to uni and all of a sudden I didn’t fit in with anybody again.

Okay.

And then... and I found it baffling that there were intelligent people there who were also, you know, socially brilliant and wonderful and everyone wanted to be around them and I was like, but you’re clever. You know.

Yeah.

So I found that... you know, I found it really hard, really hard.

And what do you think makes the difference between someone who’s intelligent and manages well socially and ones who don’t?

I think it’s confidence. You know like, so... I’m gonna talk again about the guy who challenged me to the Mensa thing, but...

	<p>Yeah.</p> <p>... I mean his parents are very wealthy. You know, his dad is very successful in a large consultancy firm. You know and so... his parents are both very confident, you know, nothing phases them, there's nothing that they can't sort out. He went to a very good school full of similar people and yeah, you know, and like... at... you know at those schools it was cool to be intelligent. At my school...</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>... you know, in a sort of like village comprehensive with, you know, real mixed ability, you know variety of levels, it was not cool to be clever. And so, you know like... you know like, he can be really mean and dismissive about people who aren't very intelligent, who aren't as clever as he is, you know, but he's always been in an environment where people are the same social level as him. You know, the same level of intelligence as him and you know like... and that breeds a level of confidence/arrogance... (No.30, p.68:29-p.70:33)</p>
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**Appendix D2 – Interpersonal difficulty (first 9 pages provided out of a total of 35:
9 more pages were provided to the examiners)**

Focused code:	Experiences of interpersonal difficulty	Difficulty experienced or anticipated	Perceived reason
Interviewee	Interview excerpts and place where found	<p>Key to highlighting:</p> <p>Pink = Obstruction Blue = Hostility (including being disliked, being excluded) Green = Relationally out of sync</p>	<p>Key to highlighting:</p> <p>Yellow = Threat (including jealous, insecure) Olive = Disliking 'cleverness' Red = Own challenging behaviour (impatient, critical, obstinate) Turquoise = Impact of context/environment</p>
Secure No.74	<p>Nobody wants to be around somebody that's every time right. (bottom p.7 to top p.8)</p> <p>and that's something that a gifted person, it's a very difficult skill to acquire, I think, it's something very difficult...</p> <p><i>To allow somebody to talk about something in a way that's not as good as you know...</i></p> <p>Exactly, and especially if he's wrong, you cannot tell him, he will be wrong, right, he will say do this and he's wrong. You do it, he comes two weeks later, he will say, "Why did you do that?" and I say, "Because you told me to do it", "No, no, no, I didn't tell you to do that, you are wrong, you are so stupid". He talks like that. Then what I would usually say is, "You're an asshole, you told me to do that, it's your fault, I didn't want to do it in the first place". In a company you can't say that. (p.24:1-p.25:11)</p> <p>Well I have two problems and I'm going to tell you because it's about the job. The first one was because they were doing things quite wrong, they seemed to have low quality [of work]. I came and I saw it, it's like, when you are new you're not supposed to say anything, but at the same time I was very senior and I was assigned to that project to make it better quality, so it was very difficult, and sometimes they said I was not</p>	<p>People don't want to be around you</p> <p>They felt the way he was handling the situation was not respecting them</p>	<p>Challenging the way they do things</p>

	respecting them because I was trying to change the way they were doing things, but it's because they were wrong. ... (p.26:17-26)		
Secure No.156	<p>But bullying is not, it's not always bullying. It's sometimes a cold stare and they socially exclude you, then that's not very nice either. (p.15:7-8)</p> <p>Because I'm sure even somebody as powerful as David Cameron, he experiences envy from all directions, from all people including his, not just his fellow MPs but even his cabinet members, because I'm sure that every member of his cabinet has this aspiration to be in David Cameron's place. Now I could be Prime Minister, what's he talking about, I can do better than that, and therefore maybe if David Cameron comes up with some suggestion whatever, they might throw cold water on him. So yeah I had a similar, I can understand that feeling so I try not to raise my profile. (p.23:30-p.24:3)</p> <p>...if you appear intellectually superior to others, especially those who are in authority or higher up, your bosses, then it may not go down very well. (p.16:20-22)</p> <p>...people generally have this feeling that if somebody's gifted, if somebody's intellectually superior to them, they feel threatened in a way. It may be irrational because they are years ahead of you in terms of experience, work, knowledge, education maybe, but the moment you talk of being intellectually gifted it can actually work against you.</p> <p>Why do you think it has that impact? Because like I said, they just feel threatened. "Who's this guy who thinks that he's intellectually gifted? So what, he's a member of Mensa and so what? I deliver the goods, I bring results and so I know less than him, but if he feels he's smarter than me I'm going to find ways of putting him down." (p.13: 2-14)</p> <p>...if they perceive me, "Oh this guy, sorry to use this phrase, but he thinks he's a smart arse, or he's intellectually gifted", they might try and be obstructive.</p> <p>And why do you think they would do that? Because they might feel threatened themselves... (p.20:23-29)</p> <p>Yeah, I would feel vulnerable [<i>if people knew he was gifted/a Mensa member</i>]. I would get not very friendly looks from the people around me... (p.20:14-15)</p>	<p>Hostility Exclusion</p> <p>Obstruction</p> <p>Might not go down well</p> <p>Putting someone down</p> <p>Obstruction</p> <p>Hostility</p> <p>Hostility Obstruction</p> <p>Obstruction</p>	<p>Envy</p> <p>Appearing intellectually superior</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Envy</p>

	<p>...and if somebody's hostile or has some negative feelings for you, they can put a spoke in the wheel any which way they want. (p.20:18-20)</p> <p>...envy means they are going to start building walls and barriers (p.22:24-25)</p> <p>For example, when I was given a lot of projects there was some form of envy from my colleagues, "Hey this guy, he joined after us but he's getting a lot of projects".</p> <p>And what was that like for you?</p> <p>It was disturbing, so I wouldn't update them on how well my projects are doing just so that they didn't know, and therefore I was expecting a reduced level of envy. But envy is very disturbing cause it can build walls and no, I don't like that, I feel very disturbed. (p.23:1-10)</p> <p>...envy is such that it can hamper one's progress (p.23:21-22)</p> <p>...a lot of the MENSA members have also said the same thing, <i>[if they've mentioned their membership at work]</i> it's had the opposite effect, so to the extent that sometimes they might feel they've lost out on a promotion. (p.14:3-5)</p> <p>People knowing could make you be "side-tracked" (p.14: 23), the "object of ridicule" (p.14: 25)</p> <p>Some people do have an attitude and they don't want to know you. I have no idea what the reason is... (p.30: 4-5)</p> <p>...my boss sometimes is very strange in a way that he's very encouraging as long as you don't appear as smart as him, as long as you don't talk back. But if you produce something that is way better than him, he's very good in what he's doing, the quality of work that he produces is very, very good, but if you come out with some insights that he feels threatened with, oh he comes down very hard. (p.30: 28-33)</p> <p><i>[Developed at own initiative a whole report on an opportunity that his company could expand into.]</i> He <i>[the boss]</i> came down heavily on me on why he didn't like this and that. He gave some very ludicrous reasonings such as, "That's not what you've been mandated for, that's not what we've hired you for..." (p.31:3-16) But his colleagues loved the idea and got excited about it.</p>	<p>Obstruction</p> <p>Obstruction</p> <p>Obstruction</p> <p>Obstruction Hostility</p> <p>Exclusion</p> <p>Comes down very hard</p> <p>Obstruction</p> <p>Obstruction</p> <p>Incommunicative, not knowing where you stand</p> <p>Obstruction</p>	<p>Envy</p> <p>Envy</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Impact of context</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Threatened</p>
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	<p>...[if someone comes up with a business proposal] it's quite likely that he would be put down under the carpet, because his boss's position is then threatened,... (p.32:5-6)</p> <p>When others don't talk too much or when others don't want to talk too much about the work then I don't know where I stand, and that can be very difficult. (p.34:7-8)</p> <p>I do mention it [<i>Mensa membership</i>] on my CV but that's only to go up the ladder really, it's just to indicate that hey I'm not a duffer, I can count, that kind of thing, but it's not in any way to indicate that I'm smarter than my boss because one of the things I would never want to do is let my boss feel threatened...</p> <p>Sure, yeah. ... cause that wouldn't get me up the ladder anyway. So, it's the social skills, not intellectually... (p.13:16-24)</p>		
<p>Secure No.2</p>	<p>Although I'm good in a team, it frustrates the heck out of me to work in a team sometimes cause people are too slow, that's terrible isn't it. You just want people to get there quicker and they don't, so it forces you to go on a back foot and just shut your mouth because otherwise you're going to be seen as the woman who knows everything, or thinks they're better than you because people are threatened by it. (p.4:21-p.5:2)</p> <p>"...they're really threatened by you when you're obviously able, capable." (p.10: 5-6)</p> <p>I can understand concepts very quickly, first time pretty much, and if I do that, whether it's in a project sense or say even in a team meeting, and I'm no wallflower so I'll always say generally the answer or whatever it is, if everyone's sat there going, "I'm not saying anything", I'll generally put forward and I think people either think, "oh she knows it all, she thinks she knows everything", or they think, "oh she doesn't value my opinion", or, "she won't listen to me", or something like that. (p.10:20-p.11:2)</p> <p>How interpersonal relationships go at work "depends on who you're dealing with... There was an administrative manager, who I technically came under cause I was there as an admin worker, who hated me and there were all the economic development officers and project managers who loved me. So they recognised my ability and basically took me out of the administrative loop and took me under their wing</p>	<p>Relationally out of sync</p> <p>Being hated</p>	<p>Impatient</p> <p>Disliking 'cleverness'</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Imagining people thinking she's a know it all and won't value their input</p> <p>Disliking 'cleverness'</p> <p>Impact of context</p> <p>Stay in your place</p> <p>Respect boss</p>

	<p>because they recognised the benefit that I could have. But this administrative manager, [name], hated me." (p.21:23-p.22:5)</p> <p>Why do you think she hated you? Because I was, not because of me, but I circumvented her rule if you like. She thought, "well who are you, you're just an agency admin worker".</p> <p>So she hated you when you got moved? Okay so before you got moved she was ok? Before that, she was okay, yeah. As long as I just stood by the photocopier and did... she was a bit of a miserable person anyway to be honest with you, but she really didn't like the fact that I'd been almost promoted from under her nose, and that I wasn't under her command anymore, and I got the intense feeling... she was very nice to me when I left, which surprised me, she was a bit odd like that, but it was clear that she didn't like that, it was like she felt that I was a bit big for my boots if you know what I mean, and so for me, the way that I've interacted with people in terms of interpersonal skills has completely depended upon their level and what they want from me. So somebody in my chain of command in a rubbish job wants me to stay at that level, because otherwise I'm going to go ahead of them, and people who can get something from me but aren't in my chain of command, they have reacted really well to me because they recognise what I can do for them, they've been happy to encourage that, but people who are above me who recognise that I'm above them if you like, in terms of ability, haven't been able to deal with it. (p.22:7-23:6)</p> <p>the team that I'm in now, I don't get on with my peers at all. Well it's not that I don't get on with them, but they just don't... I'm like a complete outsider, and I don't know whether that's got anything to do with this whole issue or whether it's just that they're a really cliquy bunch. (p.24:3-11)</p> <p>So you feel they don't accept you? No not at all. They don't like me.</p> <p>Okay. And do you have a sense of why that is? Well I've gone over it and over it really with my partner and I don't know. I think partly it's the fact that they're quite a closed group. They've all been working together for a long time, pretty much, at least two to three years, and partly because I probably come across as a complete know it all without trying to. (p.25:11-21)</p>	<p>Relationally out of sync</p> <p>Relationally out of sync</p> <p>Is disliked</p> <p>Not given a chance</p> <p>Bad atmosphere</p>	<p>Miserable person</p> <p>Stay in my power</p> <p>Impact of context</p> <p>Stay in your place</p> <p>Disliking cleverness</p> <p>Jealous</p> <p>Impact of context</p>
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	<p>Feels people haven't given her a chance (p.26: 7-8)</p> <p><i>I'm also thinking about what you said about your sister in terms of being jealous, whether you feel that dynamic is something you encounter in the work place?</i></p> <p>Absolutely, yeah, it is. That's exactly it, and that's why I always have it in the back of my mind to tone it down, which is a shame really...</p> <p><i>Where do you feel in your life you really can completely be yourself and not have to hold back?</i></p> <p>With my partner.</p> <p><i>Is that the only place?</i></p> <p>Well that and with my doctorate actually. (p.26:10-25)</p> <p><i>And what's worst for you about your job?</i></p> <p>The team. I said that to my boss the other day, the atmosphere that I have to work within. ... I don't deal with them that much but I have to sit in the office with them and I hate it. (p.30:12-23) [but in a previous job, loved her team, got on with them very well.]</p> <p>I don't feel like it's me that's a problem. I feel like I really try and manage the relationship with them and that's probably completely wrong, and I'm not close-minded to it, but I don't feel like I do anything wrong. I feel like I'm always trying and I'm trying not to be too much and I'm friendly, I'm nice, I try to engage people, maybe I try too hard, maybe that's what it is, but I feel like I try with them and I don't know what else I can do really because they're so closed off and so... (p.31:9-p.32:1)</p> <p><i>So why do you think they don't want to listen to you?</i></p> <p>I don't know. They either don't think that... I've not been there very long I suppose. They either don't think that I know what I'm talking about, or that it's just spite. I don't know whether they just think, "oh she thinks she knows everything".</p> <p><i>Why would they want to be spiteful towards you?</i></p> <p>I don't know if they are threatened by me or... there's definite bad feeling and I don't really know what it's from, I really don't. I've thought about it a lot. (p.33:2-13)</p> <p><i>So to the best of your ability you are really trying to go down well with the team as much as you can, but there's something that's a bit of a mystery about quite why it's not happening?</i></p>	<p>Relationally out of sync</p> <p>People closed off to her</p> <p>Bad feeling</p>	<p>Disliking 'cleverness'</p> <p>Threatened</p> <p>Disliking 'cleverness'</p>
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	Yeah, and I can only think that it's because they think that I'm clever clogs, a know-it-all or something. (p.33:23-p.34:2)		
Secure No.5	<p>Reasons for not letting people know about Mensa membership: Don't want people to think you're showing off (p.14: 11-12) Don't want people to think you're being superior (p.17 line 23) Don't want people to think you feel you are superior (p.17 lines 23-24)</p> <p><i>[at one job]</i> there were two girls who took an instant dislike to me and I think it was because I sounded slightly more posh than they did Oh ok And they might've they might've said something about being stuck up and clever but again I don't think that was they would've had no knowledge of how clever or not I was I think they just had a perception that I was I thought I was better than them. (p.23:15-21)</p> <p><i>[at another job]</i> there was uh one girl who was there briefly who took a dislike to me and a few other people actually um I think she again I think she was that sort of person she was quite insecure um and it was her way of uh dealing with that is that she would either latch onto some people or um badmouth other people behi... but I mean those are some very limited incidents in my life (p.23:22-27)</p> <p>...just sometimes in some situations you - all you get is grief off the actors. And because they're obviously quite panicky about their role on stage so they – not, most of them are lovely but occasionally you get actors who treat me badly (p.24:26-p.25:1)</p>	<p>Disliked</p> <p>Disliked</p> <p>Treated badly</p>	<p>Might think you're showing off Might think you think you're better</p> <p>They thought I thought I was better than them</p> <p>Insecure</p> <p>Panic about their role/stress</p>
Fearful Avoidant No.167			
Fearful Avoidant No.69	<p>If I became aware that somebody was envious of me it would make me feel very, very happy. But I'm not sure I've come across that at all.</p> <p><i>It would make you very happy?</i> Of course it would.</p> <p><i>Why would that make you happy do you think?</i> Because I've got something that the other person wishes that he had. That would make me feel nicer wouldn't it? (p.15:22-33)</p> <p><i>How would you say you get on with others at work?</i> Very well, extremely well because at the end of the day I don't have a conflict of interest with</p>		<p>NOT aware of being envied</p> <p>NOT a threat professionally</p>

	<p>them. I'm not seen as much as a threat by others professionally so I get along very, very well with them. (p.22:18-22)</p> <p>So I'm more of an opportunity than a threat. So they have every reason to be nice to me. (p.23:22-23) <i>[found a way to present himself that way, which has been very effective]</i></p> <p>I am labelled odd, or difficult or awkward by most of my friends. (p.11:16-17)</p> <p>...for the most part I do have a reputation of being very awkward or very odd, and I enjoy that. <i>[says he ENJOYS being thought of as awkward or odd...]</i></p> <p>Okay, so do you feel you've tried to be that, live up to that reputation?</p> <p>I don't try at all. I think I try to be extremely nice, it's just the way things happen and I've started enjoying it.</p> <p>Can you give an example of what somebody, what it might be that happens that somebody would find difficult or odd?</p> <p>I don't know. If I knew why people found me odd I would probably try to cover that up as well. <i>[but if he knew how to change it/hide it, he would]</i> I have no idea, but that's generally the impression everybody has.</p> <p>They give you that feedback, you know that's how they view you?</p> <p>It's always third party feedback. Somebody comes back to you and you say, "I met so and so", and he says, "Yeah, I was talking to him and your name came up and he was saying <i>[his name]</i> is a very difficult person to get along with", or, "He's a strange person", or, "He keeps to himself", some comment which comes back to you. (p.11:22-p.12:11)</p> <p>What do you think others would say is worst about working with you? That I'm very awkward, very odd, very difficult to get along with (p.32:2-5)</p> <p>I come across people who are extremely successful from a worldly perspective, and who I know are absolute idiots... I am fond of just calling people idiots, not to their face but I do feel like that. And it's amazing. They are superbly confident, they stand up and they consider that they're entitled to everything that they are getting and they're not really because they are idiots. (p.10:10-15)</p>	<p>Relationally out of sync</p> <p>Relationally out of sync</p> <p>Critical of others</p>	<p>Not a threat</p>
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	<p>There's no single point of time when I thought that this thing [<i>high IQ</i>] is manifesting itself, it's just that there would have been a time when I realised that something I was taking for granted was not so commonplace.</p> <p>Okay, and how did you notice that?</p> <p>Because people are idiots and they can't see what's in front of them. You have to spell it out for them. (p.10:31-p.11:4)</p>		
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.6</p>	<p>at work the similar things are if I give too much help or too much... if I can hear that someone's struggling with something and if I too often say, "Oh you could do it like this, oh I think it's this", you might get the odd comment like, "Oh it's clever clogs again". I think I got a comment like, "Oh expert on everything", or something like that and I thought oh dear, maybe I've gone a bit too far and should hold back a bit, but it's all said in good humour. But then it does make you start to think oh yeah, is it all in good humour possibly, but in other ways, in social ways a lot of my friends are of similar quite high, I wouldn't say high achieving but they're definitely very intelligent I think, a lot of my friends, not all but and with them I would never worry about that, it's definitely a work place worry that I have. (p.12:22-32)</p> <p>Politics and backstabbing in office more prominent when people within the same grade are having someone "always telling them a better way to do something or to do something differently", that "seems to particularly get my colleagues' back up" (p.14:6-13)</p> <p>I wouldn't want them ever to think that I was perhaps showing them that I was, deliberately showing them that I was cleverer than them and that I possibly thought that that made me better somehow, because I don't have that belief and I worry that that's possibly how I came across when I was young at school, and possibly that might have been why it had a negative impact on school mates, and I don't want that to be repeated at work. (p.13:19-25)</p> <p>I suppose the main aspect of the main problem that I encounter at work is that I want to show how skilled I am and what I can do, but it is the social side of things, the office etiquette that holds it back, so I suppose it is about finding ways around that and showing what you're able to do without rubbing people up the wrong way I suppose. That's my main issue with it. Thinking about it like this and going through it has made me realise really that's my main problem at work,</p>	<p>Don't like being told how to do something better Gets their backs up</p> <p>Negative impact at school</p> <p>Feeling held back by 'office etiquette'</p> <p><i>Playground tactics (6), office politics (36), game-playing (36, 189),</i></p>	<p>Disliking 'cleverness'</p> <p>Impact of context</p> <p>Disliking cleverness</p>

	is that I probably shouldn't be quite so afraid to show what I can do I suppose. (p.28:28-p.29:2)	Relationally out of sync	
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Appendix E1 – Hiding self

Focused code:	Hiding self	Codes
Interviewee	Location in transcript	<p><u>Highlighting:</u> Yellow = conceals being a member of Mensa Grey = knowing an answer but not giving it Green = Putting on a mask, an act</p>
<p>Secure No.74</p>	<p><i>But it also sounds like it [having high IQ] is something that has been a big part of your experience...</i> It has been. <i>... but that you don't talk about very much, it's something that you hide a bit more?</i> It's a spot-on, spot-on question (p.18:12-20)</p>	<p>Hides/doesn't talk about having high IQ</p>
<p>Secure No.156</p>	<p>Hiding or holding back on showing your intelligence (p.15:21-26)</p> <p>Hiding self as consequence of having had one's own high performance draw unpleasant attention (also pg.16 lines 19-26)</p> <p>I haven't mentioned this [<i>Mensa membership</i>] because I just feel threatened myself, if somebody knows... <i>You feel vulnerable you mean, you'd feel vulnerable to...</i> Yeah, I would feel vulnerable. I would get not very friendly looks from the people around me... (p.20:9-15) and see p.13:1-2</p> <p>Because I'm sure even somebody as powerful as David Cameron, he experiences envy from all directions, from all people including his, not just his fellow MPs but even his cabinet members, because I'm sure that every member of his cabinet has this aspiration to be in David Cameron's place. Now I could be Prime Minister, what's he talking about, I can do better than that, and therefore maybe if David Cameron comes up with some suggestion whatever, they might throw cold water on him. So yeah I had a similar, I can understand that feeling so I try not to raise my profile. (p.23:30-p.24:3)</p> <p>For example, when I was given a lot of projects there was some form of envy from my colleagues, "Hey this guy, he joined after us but he's getting a lot of projects". <i>And what was that like for you?</i> It was disturbing, so I wouldn't update them on how well my projects are doing just so that they didn't know, and therefore I was expecting a reduced level of envy. But envy is very disturbing cause it can build walls and no, I don't like that, I feel very disturbed. (p.23:1-10)</p>	<p>Doesn't mention Mensa membership to others</p> <p>Tries not to raise his profile</p> <p>Stopped updating people on his projects so they wouldn't see how much he was doing</p>

	<p>I feel I shouldn't expose myself too much because I could be hurt. But that's really my problem, my internal problem really, and it's me who needs to come to grips with it, rather than expecting another person to change their way (pg.35 lines 31-33)</p>	
<p>Secure No.2</p>	<p>You just want people to get there quicker and they don't, so it forces you to go on a back foot and just shut your mouth because otherwise you're going to be seen as the woman who knows everything, or thinks they're better than you because people are threatened by it. (p.4)</p> <p>Wanting people to be quicker and they don't want to try to speed up, forces you to "just shut your mouth" (p.4:23-24)</p> <p>It took me a long time though... I don't know if this is relevant... it took me a long time to be able to, I always want to use the word intimate but that makes it sound like you're talking about sex, I don't mean that, but that, being able to be completely open with another person on that level, and I'm sure it relates to all of this. For a long time, cause I was so solitary and because I was so in my own head I didn't open up to people at all, and it wasn't until I met my ex when I was 24 that that was like my first proper relationship that I opened up in. So I think it took me a heck of a long time to emotionally mature in a sense. <i>So, when you say it's related, are you suggesting that in some way you were feeling you had to hide who you were, or that you just weren't meeting people who were eliciting who you were?</i></p> <p>I think it was actually that I was keeping it back, I was hiding it back. (p.8:23-p.9:12)</p> <p>I learned when I was quite young that there was part of myself that I had to keep to myself because people wouldn't like me or they'd think I was... people do, honestly, we'll talk obviously about work but people think you're being... they're really threatened by you when you're obviously able, capable. (p.10:1-6)</p> <p><i>[On why she thinks others don't like her at work]:</i> ...partly because I probably come across as a complete know it all without trying to. I've always had the sense that people can't really handle that, and that's why I'm always feeling like I need to... you know like in a team meeting, I'll know an answer or something and I just sit there wishing somebody else would say it... (p.25:20-26)</p> <p><i>I'm also thinking about what you said about your sister in terms of [her] being jealous, whether you feel that dynamic is something you encounter in the work place?</i></p> <p>Absolutely, yeah, it is. That's exactly it, and that's why I always have it in the back of my mind to tone it down, which is a shame really...(p.26:10-25)</p> <p>About planning not to let people generally know she has a PhD when she has completed it: "it all comes down to that,</p>	<p>Keeping back who she really was</p> <p>Keeping to herself the capable, able parts of herself that others might be threatened by</p> <p>In meetings, knowing an answer but not giving it</p> <p>Toning herself down</p>

	<p>hiding little bits of yourself I think probably. I don't necessarily want to put that out there so that people can think that I'm, that people can be intimidated by me. " p.54 (and p.40?)</p>	Hiding bits of herself
Secure No.5	<p>Um but I don't show it to anybody [<i>her Mensa membership card</i>] because I don't want them to – nobody ever has treated me differently but I wouldn't want them to think I wa...treat me differently or think I was showing off or anything like that (p.12:22-24)</p>	Doesn't let people know she's a Mensa member
Fearful Avoidant No.69	<p>Came to interview as "this is our only meeting", never see me again, "even if you judge me it doesn't matter" (p.4:7-10). "Most of the time we do put on an act, don't we, everybody does? So it's too much of an effort" (p.4:20-24).</p> <p>"If I knew why people found me odd I would probably try to cover that up as well" (p.12:1-3)</p> <p>I enjoy being by myself, and it's not just at work, it's in any given situation, because there's that mask that you have to wear. Right now I have an office which is the last possible office, the last possible desk in my [<i>workplace</i>], and I'm so happy because I can just be there and I don't need, I don't have people going up and down the corridor and just popping their head in and saying hello because if they say hello then I have to put on my mask and say hello. I'm happy being by myself. (p.27:4-10)</p> <p>...if at lunch time a couple of my colleagues say, "We're going across to [<i>names of places</i>] for lunch, would you like to join us?" I would try to find an excuse to say no, not because I don't enjoy being with them, it's too much of an effort.</p> <p>Okay, because you have the feeling that you have to so much put on a mask? Absolutely. (p.27:26-34)</p> <p>Modesty. Choosing not to blow own horn, rather let people discover you have something good to offer rather than declaring to them that you do (p.29:5-11)</p> <p>The people I admire have so many hidden qualities and talents, it's just looking at people around me and saying, "I really like that person" ... You'd like to be like that. I would absolutely love to be a tenth of what that person is. So you try to mould yourself on that model. (p.30:1-8)</p> <p>Understanding of why people brag about themselves: insecurity (p.30:16) Six more pages of interview excerpts were provided to the examiners.</p>	<p>Having to put on a mask to deal with others</p> <p>Avoids socialising with others because it involves the effort of having to put on his mask</p> <p>Modesty = opposite of boasting: how relate to hiding self?</p>

Appendix E3 – Improving interpersonal understanding and skill

Focused code:	Improving interpersonal understanding and skill	
Interviewee No.	<p>Location in transcript</p> <p><u>Key to highlights:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention of having changed (yellow) • Motivation for change (purple) • What the change involved (turquoise, pale grey, green, cerise, olive, dark grey) • Resources used (red) 	<p>Codes</p> <p>Mention of having changed</p> <p>Motivation for change</p> <p>Gaining better understanding of individual differences</p> <p>Slowing yourself down</p> <p>Appreciating the value in others</p> <p>Becoming aware of other's perspective</p> <p>Making adaptations so as to better include others</p> <p>Effort involved to improve interpersonal skill (and continuing effort needed to sustain)</p> <p>Resources used</p>
Secure No.74	<p>I realised I was quite arrogant so I decided to say, "Okay I had to change, I'm just an arsehole". (p.5:33-p.6:1-2)</p> <p>"I see people developing social skills naturally. For me they never came naturally, I developed them because I basically read a book and that's it basically." (p.7:8-9)</p> <p>"I had to make the effort to acquire the knowledge, while for other people it just came naturally, and I think probably many IT people they are like that." (p.7:18-20)</p> <p>So I think that the most important thing to be able to adjust to this problem is to be humble and flexible and to ride the floor in the sense that, well, being humble in the sense that you are not so special, because if you are intelligent, it's a big world being intelligent, it should be more [unintelligible 0:17:30] in a logical and mathematical sense, but you don't know about social skills, about emotional skills, musical skills. I'm terrible at music, I'm really, really bad, so, and for instance, my brother has the most social skills of intelligent people that I know, it's absolutely incredible, and for me it was a very role model, so I think it's another thing to be able to adjust, it's very important to have role models." (p.8:14-23)</p>	<p>Decided he had to change</p> <p>Comparing self to others.</p> <p>Harder for self than others, didn't come naturally.</p> <p>Made effort</p> <p>When met other people more intelligent than him.</p> <p>Compared self with others.</p> <p>Self-realisation.</p>

	<p>“Then you can take kinda of... I see it as taking a decision. You can say, “Okay I’m very intelligent, everybody’s wrong, I’m right. The world is wrong. Girls don’t know what they want, they should be liking me because I’m more intelligent.” And then you get inside yourself, it’s like I read this article and it’s called The Outsiders”, have you read it?</p> <p>I don’t think so.</p> <p>It’s called The Outsiders”.</p> <p>Do you know who it’s by?</p> <p>It’s, no, it’s like a classical article, it may be like 30 years old, I read it in MENSA. It’s very interesting. It’s about this guy who is the most intelligent person ever, IQ of 220, and then at three years old he taught himself Greek, and then at 16 he decided to be celibate, he never married, he never had children, and he spent the rest of his life doing many works. So I could actually understand him, it’s like a breakdown. The world is cruel and big and if you try to do this attitude, “I’m right, the world is wrong”, it’s the end.</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>So at one point I said, “Okay, I want to get along with girls someday”. So I basically tried to change myself, I tried to be less of an arsehole.” (p.9:8-31)</p> <p>“It’s something that is more difficult to be aware of, but that’s a bad self-awareness, but basic self-awareness is like maybe they were punishing you in the sense that people say you are, people calling, “You are very arrogant”, people saying that.” (p.10:29-32)</p> <p>“Get feedback, not having friends for instance, cause I had very few friends when I was at high school, and it’s because of that. Basically, because when you, if you want to make friends when you are at high school, you have to do what everybody does, and I was very confident and I didn’t want, I wanted to do my thing, and in the sense of being too not considerate to other people in the sense of saying, “Oh you know, I’m doing this, what they are doing is a waste of time, you should be doing this too and you are stupid”. Obviously I didn’t have any friends with that attitude, I’m probably exaggerating a little but I’m being dramatic but it was that, so yeah, at that point of your life you say, “I want to have friends, I want to be like everybody else”. (p.11:2-11)</p> <p>I think my social skills are good now. (p.12:16)</p> <p>What he’s learned that has improved his social skills: look people in the eye, smile, if somebody says something don’t say you’re wrong, say, “Yeah, yeah, yeah”, because you don’t have to remind people that they are wrong. (p.12:2-10)</p>	<p>Wanted relationships with girls</p> <p>Decision to change</p> <p>Feedback from others</p> <p>Not having friends, and wanting to have friends.</p>
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	<p>...you always get this feeling that, "Oh I'm the best, I'm always right, I want to be the boss of everybody", you have to fight with it. (p.13:4-5)</p> <p>"...you always change, to adjust, maybe you will still carry that feeling a little in your life, but you can make it better. And you become aware of it and how it, what effect it has and then you can adjust, yeah? Yeah. That's it about self-awareness, I was reading a lot at that time so that helped a lot. I don't know." (p.13:29-p.14:3)</p> <p>So how would you say you feel about that aspect of yourself now? Well I had this feeling that I wanted to be normal, and people will say I'm weird and it would really hurt me, and people in my family will say that and they will notice it really hurt me. I have always wanted to be a normal person in the sense that having a normal job, having a girl. Now I'm immensely proud of being brave and saying, "I was an asshole, I want to change". It's something that takes a long time and it's very difficult, but now I'm very normal, I don't have any health problems, I have many friends, I'm doing well at the office. (p.14:5-14)</p> <p>"I said, "Okay, I have everything sorted out except the girls, I really don't understand them". I probably don't understand them yet, but understanding basic relationship mechanics, I made the effort of going to the field, getting experience and... yeah I have a girlfriend now, and I had one before and I think I'm pretty normal now." (p.14:23-27)</p> <p>Yeah okay. And how do you feel you get on with others at work? Well we have this problem I always repeat it. Everybody is very intelligent so everybody thinks they are right. We are quite senior in the sense that people have time to polish their social skills a little but we always still have this inner baby saying, "I'm very clever, I'm always right". And you think the others all have it as well? We all have it. Yeah okay, so you have to find a way to communicate with each other when you're each feeling that? Exactly. So I've been told in this company they like my attitude, like I'm humble, and yeah, so it's because everybody is like that, everybody wants to be right... (p.23:15-31)</p> <p>That's something I learnt over time, to find value in every person. p.25:18)</p>	<p>Continuing effort involved</p> <p>Believing in capacity to change. Self-awareness.</p> <p>Made an effort to improve his interpersonal skills, and the resulting change has had benefits for his health, social life and work.</p> <p>Having a self-motivation: wanting to be "normal", have a girlfriend and a job. Making a decision. Persevering through the difficulty of bringing about change.</p> <p>Making a decision. Making the effort, going out and getting experience (practicing).</p> <p>Polishing your social skills, learning to be humble and resist behaving as though you are always right, even if deep inside you feel you are.</p> <p>Learning to find value in all others.</p>
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	<p>Well I have two problems and I'm going to tell you because it's about the job. The first one was because they were doing things quite wrong, they seemed to have low quality [of work]. I came and I saw it, it's like, when you are new you're not supposed to say anything, but at the same time I was very senior and I was assigned to that project to make it better quality, so it was very difficult, and sometimes they said I was not respecting them because I was trying to change the way they were doing things, but it's because they were wrong. So it's something you have to be very careful of, you cannot say to somebody, "You are wrong, never do that". Always come to the back door... (p.26:17-26)</p> <p>I go there twice a year and have a nice talk and it's very good. So, last time I told him about my problem that I was trying to, you know, this code quality is not so good. And I said, "I want to come too strong." And he said, "Yeah, yeah, don't come too strong. Don't worry." He said, "Leave it like that. I mean if it's bad, it's better don't pick and fight," and he said that and it was very good useful advice and I cannot... felt good, but not saying anything. Leaving it. So, it was incredibly helpful, so...</p> <p>Okay.</p> <p>... I absolutely... I'm a real fan of coaching. (p.33:5-15)</p>	<p>Learning how to address problems in a respectful way</p> <p>Helpfulness of coaching</p>
<p>Secure No.156</p>	<p>One of the things I try and educate them in a very subtle way is that it's extremely important social skills to go up the ladder. Degrees and your academic certification may be important and can only get you this far, but beyond that you definitely need the social skills to be able to negotiate your way in... whether it's a performance appraisal or with your business clients or with the top management of the company to be able to get up the ladder. I'm learning myself as well. I've learnt a lot from this group (p.2:6-12)</p> <p>Essentially I try and keep my interactions to a level where there's not bound to be any friction. And once there is no friction then they lower their barriers and then I'm able to, I would like to come to their level, definitely, so even if they're way below me I don't mind going down to their level. (p.22:22-33)</p> <p>Someone being too honest and straightforward and telling someone they're wrong rather than thinking "Hey, he's from my community so I'll support him" (p.6: 17-22)</p>	<p>Considers social skills very important for making progress at work. Teaches this, and learns a lot about this, within a group he has voluntarily convened.</p> <p>Matches his level of interaction to that of whoever he's dealing with [includes components of all the highlighted categories]</p>
<p>Secure No.2</p>	<p>Although I'm good in a team, it frustrates the heck out of me to work in a team sometimes cause people are too slow, that's terrible isn't it. You just want people to get there quicker and they don't, so it forces you to go on a back foot and just shut your mouth because otherwise you're going to be seen as the woman who</p>	<p>Being aware of others' perspectives and keeping your mouth shut when you're finding others frustratingly slow.</p>

	<p>knows everything, or thinks they're better than you because people are threatened by it. (p.4:21-p.5:2)</p> <p>Yeah, there's a guy in my team, <i>[name]</i>, one of my subordinates, who is very thorough, very capable when he knows exactly what he's got to do, and I'm very aware that all I need to do is give him more information than I would need, spell it out a bit more and I know that he's got the ability to run with it, so I just adapt it a little bit really. I would never think, "oh just because you don't pick it up as quickly you've got no value to me at all". Never, no, because people have got different abilities. Just because I might be able to learn something quickly doesn't mean I'm good at everything, and I wouldn't think that of somebody else either, if they were good or bad at everything, and I wouldn't think that of somebody else either, if they were good or bad at everything. I think I'm definitely aware of it though because it's something that I've reflected on with <i>[him]</i> because I recognise that he's not, he's not a whizz... whereas <i>[another name]</i>, my other subordinate, he is... I don't like that word, direct report, that's the... my preferred...<i>[he is]</i> very capable, very able to understand concepts but a bit, he doesn't use his own initiative particularly so I've recognised that in him so I have to support him to a place where he can push himself a little bit. So with <i>[the first mentioned above]</i> he's not as able to pick things up quickly but I adapt that by just letting him take his time and understand it more fully. (p.34:24-p.35:17)</p> <p>...in the end, well what saved me really I would say, I probably never said it to her, but what saved me was meeting my ex, <i>[name]</i>, when I was 24, and I moved to <i>[place]</i> to be with her. (p.18)</p>	<p>Valuing others and learning how to adapt the way you work with people according to their individual differences so as to get the best from them.</p> <p>A 'rescuing' romantic relationship.</p>
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.69</p>	<p>Considers people might find him difficult because he has strong opinions and expresses them, though does try to avoid hurting people's feelings (p.13:4-6)</p>	
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.6</p>	<p>I wouldn't want them ever to think that I was perhaps showing them that I was, deliberately showing them that I was cleverer than them and that I possibly thought that that made me better somehow, because I don't have that belief and I worry that that's possibly how I came across when I was young at school, and possibly that might have been why it had a negative impact on school mates, and I don't want that to be repeated at work. (p.13:19-25)</p> <p>"I feel I have to tailor the things that I say sometimes just to fit in a bit more" (p.7:5-6)</p> <p>Example of how she adapts self to avoid envious reaction: I know one colleague in particular who always gets very frustrated by her own, she's fairly weak with Twenty more pages of interview excerpts were provided to the examiners.</p>	<p>Recognises a way of being that might have previously caused interpersonal problems, and is now careful to avoid those problems.</p>

Appendix F – Child and Emperor

Concepts:	Child and Emperor
Interviewee and category	Interview excerpts and place where found
Secure No.74 EMPEROR	Well I have two problems and I'm going to tell you because it's about the job. The first one was because they were doing things quite wrong, they seemed to have low quality [<i>of work</i>]. I came and I saw it, it's like, when you are new you're not supposed to say anything, but at the same time I was very senior and I was assigned to that project to make it better quality, so it was very difficult, and sometimes they said I was not respecting them because I was trying to change the way they were doing things, but it's because they were wrong. ... (p.26:17-26)
CHILD	For my particular case it's quite strange. I see people developing social skills naturally. For me they never came naturally, I developed them because I basically read a book and that's it basically. (p.7)
Secure No.156 EMPEROR	...if they perceive me, "Oh this guy, sorry to use this phrase, but he thinks he's a smart arse, or he's intellectually gifted", they might try and be obstructive. (p.20)
Secure No.2 EMPEROR	Although I'm good in a team, it frustrates the heck out of me to work in a team sometimes cause people are too slow, that's terrible isn't it. You just want people to get there quicker and they don't, so it forces you to go on a back foot and just shut your mouth because otherwise you're going to be seen as the woman who knows everything, or thinks they're better than you because people are threatened by it. (p.4:21-p.5:2)
EMPEROR	I can understand concepts very quickly, first time pretty much, and if I do that, whether it's in a project sense or say even in a team meeting, and I'm no wallflower so I'll always say generally the answer or whatever it is, if everyone's sat there going, "I'm not saying anything", I'll generally put forward and I think people either think, "oh she knows it all, she thinks she knows everything", or they think, "oh she doesn't value my opinion", or, "she won't listen to me", or something like that. (p.10:20-p.11:2)
EMPEROR	<i>So you feel they don't accept you?</i> No not at all. They don't like me. <i>Okay. And do you have a sense of why that is?</i> Well I've gone over it and over it really with my partner and I don't know. I think partly it's the fact that they're quite a closed group. They've all been working together for a long time, pretty much, at least two to three years, and partly because I probably come across as a complete know it all without trying to. (p.25:11-21)
EMPEROR	<i>So to the best of your ability you are really trying to go down well with the team as much as you can, but there's something that's a bit of a mystery about quite why it's not happening?</i> Yeah, and I can only think that it's because they think that I'm clever clogs, a know-it-all or something. (p.33:23-p.34:2)
EMPEROR	p.6 With her sister, "That was a difficult relationship growing up. Can you imagine being three years older and your little kid sister's a lot cleverer than you? There was a lot of jealousy on her part from when we were growing up,

<p>EMPEROR (or wounded child?)</p>	<p>definitely. I can't blame her really, <u>I probably didn't do anything to help the situation</u> but when you're a kid you can't... You can't be expected to. That must have been really difficult for her.”</p> <p>p.14 “I had a massive row with my dad and just didn't get on. I was a precocious child to say the least, like I say very headstrong, and I suppose I was quite resentful really of my parents because they didn't understand me remotely. They'd really stopped me from flowering if you like, and I knew that, I knew that when I was eleven.</p>
<p>Secure No.5</p> <p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>[at one job] there were two girls who took an instant dislike to me and I think it was because I sounded slightly more posh than they did Oh ok And they might've they might've said something about being stuck up and clever but again I don't think that was they would've had no knowledge of how clever or not I was I think they just had a perception that I was I thought I was better than them. (p.23:15-21)</p>
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.69</p> <p>EMPEROR</p> <p>CHILD</p> <p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>If I became aware that somebody was envious of me it would make me feel very, very happy. But I'm not sure I've come across that at all. It would make you very happy? Of course it would. Why would that make you happy do you think? Because I've got something that the other person wishes that he had. That would make me feel nicer wouldn't it? (p.15:22-33)</p> <p>I am labelled odd, or difficult or awkward by most of my friends. (p.11:16-17)</p> <p>...for the most part I do have a reputation of being very awkward or very odd, and I enjoy that. [says he ENJOYS being thought of as awkward or odd...] Okay, so do you feel you've tried to be that, live up to that reputation? I don't try at all. I think I try to be extremely nice, it's just the way things happen and I've started enjoying it. Can you give an example of what somebody, what it might be that happens that somebody would find difficult or odd? I don't know. If I knew why people found me odd I would probably try to cover that up as well. [but if he knew how to change it/hide it, he would] I have no idea, but that's generally the impression everybody has. They give you that feedback, you know that's how they view you? It's always third party feedback. Somebody comes back to you and you say, “I met so and so”, and he says, “Yeah, I was talking to him and your name came up and he was saying [his name] is a very difficult person to get along with”, or, “He's a strange person”, or, “He keeps to himself”, some comment which comes back to you. (p.11:22-p.12:11)</p> <p>What do you think others would say is worst about working with you? That I'm very awkward, very odd, very difficult to get along with (p.32:2-5)</p> <p>I come across people who are extremely successful from a worldly perspective, and who I know are absolute idiots... I am fond of just calling people idiots, not to their face but I do feel like that. And it's amazing. They are superbly confident, they stand up and they consider that they're entitled to everything that they are getting and they're not really because they are idiots. (p.10:10-15)</p> <p>There's no single point of time when I thought that this thing [high IQ] is manifesting itself, it's just that there would have been a time when I realised that something I was taking for granted was not so commonplace.</p>

EMPEROR	<p><i>Okay, and how did you notice that?</i> Because people are idiots and they can't see what's in front of them. You have to spell it out for them. (p.10:31-p.11:4)</p>
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.6</p> <p>EMPEROR</p> <p>EMPEROR</p> <p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>at work the similar things are if I give too much help or too much... if I can hear that someone's struggling with something and if I too often say, "Oh you could do it like this, oh I think it's this", you might get the odd comment like, "Oh it's clever clogs again". I think I got a comment like, "Oh expert on everything", or something like that and I thought oh dear, maybe I've gone a bit too far and should hold back a bit. (p.12)</p> <p>Politics and backstabbing in office more prominent when people within the same grade are having someone "always telling them a better way to do something or to do something differently", that "seems to particularly get my colleagues' back up" (p.14:6-13)</p> <p>I wouldn't want them ever to think that I was perhaps showing them that I was, deliberately showing them that I was cleverer than them and that I possibly thought that that made me better somehow, because I don't have that belief and I worry that that's possibly how I came across when I was young at school, and possibly that might have been why it had a negative impact on school mates, and I don't want that to be repeated at work. (p.13:19-25)</p>
<p>Fearful Avoidant No.55</p> <p>EMPEROR</p> <p>EMPEROR</p> <p>EMPEROR</p> <p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>I would be reading subtext and sub-subtext into lines in a play, for example, that others on the stage with me, adults as well as children, would not necessarily see or pick up or understand how I'd found that. And that quite often... it led to problems, because they were taken aback by that. They thought it was me trying to be clever, in inverted commas, or to show off in some way. And it caused fiction on a personal level as well as a professional level. (p.2)</p> <p><i>And what do you find the most difficult aspect of your relationship with others at work?</i> That a lot of them really don't know anything about anything other than singing. <i>Okay.</i> And some of them, again, are threatened by someone who has an active mind, is well spoken and too posh. Who has ideas and thinks about it and doesn't just accept the standard interpretation at face value. It's the same problem it's always been, really. (p.38:1-11)</p> <p><i>But so you were saying... you said it's a hindering factor...</i> Now, I think it is. <i>... because of people finding you more difficult to work with?</i> Even my singing teacher. We butt heads regularly, because he's used to people who will take his word as gospel. <i>Okay.</i> And every time I come into the studio, if I don't understand, if I don't agree, I'm going to say so. Well I'm there to learn. I'm not going to learn unless I ask the questions, but he finds that really difficult at times. The last lesson of this year was a total disaster, because he was getting his back up and I was being perfectly pleasant and just asking questions. (p.42:34-p.43:7)</p> <p>Well, it's very difficult to respect authority if authority really clearly has no idea what it's doing. I have very low tolerance for ineptitude, probably partially, because of that year. I've learnt to temper it in most situations, but I really do sometimes lose my rag completely when I see someone just blindly doing something, because that's what they've been told to do, even if it makes no sense at all. (p.16:23-27)</p>

<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>When I get an idea in my head and I really believe in it, I will not let go. Okay. Even when it would be much easier for all concerned if I just walked away. Okay. I'm stubborn as hell when it comes to things I actually really believe in. (p.38-39)</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.1 EMPEROR</p>	<p>I have never, ever put MENSA on an application form as one of the clubs I'm in or one of my interests, never ever put that on there, because you always look like a smart alec and they won't like you. (p.32:27-30)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>To be honest I know exactly why I didn't get it, because it's a fledgling company, the two people who interviewed me had only been there six weeks and eight weeks, they were new staff. I think, it's my belief, it's not arrogant, but I, the lady who got me the interview, the agency, she hinted at this but didn't say it, I believe that I came across as too knowledgeable and too confident. (p.19)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>when it comes to applying for a job or a position, but I would say it's [high IQ] a hindrance because my tendency is to sound knowledgeable when I talk to somebody. I go for an interview and I try and think of smart things or clever things to say to make me stand out, but I don't think they do, I just think they threaten people. (p.32:31-34)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>what do you find is the most difficult aspect of your relations with others at work? I think frustration when people can't understand what I'm trying to tell them. Again this could be seen as some sort of intellectual arrogance cause to me most of what I work with it involves working time and motion and numbers out, and there is always a right answer. To me it's black and white. This is the way to do it, this is the most efficient way, it can't be done better, I've already worked this out, trust me, doing it the way that you're doing it is not efficient, it's wasteful and I'm not doing it like that. So I think I'm saved because I'm very particular and very pushy about how something has to be done, because I have this unfailing belief which is a fault of mine, I must admit, that my way is the best way or the right way, and occasionally other people will say oh he's very sure that this is right, he's very confident, and they might doubt it, so I suppose, very meticulous to my way of doing things. (p.29:17-31)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>what do you think others would say is worst about working with you? Bossy. I'm very unhappy if things aren't done my way (p.27:21-24)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>p.7 When I go out they talk about things and discuss things in conversation, I can easily see the answer or see the problem, and I've learnt now as I've got older not to say anything, just to go along with what other people say, cause it's easy to turn round and say, "Look that's wrong, I'll show you why it's wrong". But if you do that too much, as I've learnt through my life, you end up unpopular.</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No. 43 CHILD</p>	<p>I expressed frustration that why aren't these people better at what they do? If they just tried they could just learn how to do it, and a friend of mine told me that no actually, some people they may actually be trying right now. So I guess that's when I realised that, "Oh, okay, so maybe it is easier for me to learn similar things". (p.5:7-11)</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.41</p>	<p>And what do you think others would say is worst about working with you? Interesting, I don't know. The problem as a freelancer again is very little feedback, you don't really hear about that. Maybe again the same that is the best, that sometimes people who feel uncomfortable about themselves may</p>

CHILD	<p>respond irritatedly to me messing with their jobs. I had that a couple of times that people would be, or a person would start saying, “You’re not supposed to do that”, but then realising they can’t say that because they should be happy about someone thinking even in their direction. It’s the emperor’s clothes child again, pointing things out and maybe sometimes... it’s not general because if people were comfortable within themselves they would never, ever pick up on that. (p.31:10-23)</p> <p><i>What do you see it as being about giftedness that makes somebody oblivious to things like politeness? How do you see that as going together?</i> Well again as I said, if you never are impolite, if that is not a part of your social interaction, because then... okay we’re using these words of course we can describe it like I did with the Germans before. If someone steps in your space, impoliteness is a part of that.</p> <p><i>Are you saying that a gifted child would never be impolite?</i> They shouldn’t do that. It’s like the emperor’s child, the emperor’s clothes, the child doesn’t want to tell other people they are stupid, he just says the emperor’s naked, and I think when you grow up as a gifted child and people not recognising that, which happened to me, maybe that’s why I’m so aware of that, is they get irritated by that and they push it down, which happened to me in Russia and in Germany.... I learnt, for instance, when I’m helpless I might actually out of desperation step into other people’s spaces or something, but usually I wouldn’t have the interest. So for instance, if I interrupt people for me it’s not stepping into someone else’s space, it’s like this thought needs to get out whilst for someone else it would be impoliteness. For me again already I understood what they wanted to say so I don’t, it’s not impoliteness to not let them finish speaking...</p> <p><i>I completely get that. So you’re talking about from a gifted person’s perspective, their behaviour is completely innocent in terms of just manifesting aspects of their giftedness, however the other person might experience it very differently. The other person might experience it as being offensive, or impolite....</i> (p.9-11)</p>
<p>Dismissing Avoidant No.68</p> <p>CHILD</p> <p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>Sees answers and solutions very quickly, in ways others may not. She’s very quick at arriving at an answer “but I’m very bad at explaining to people how I got there, I just got there, I don’t need all these steps and I can’t explain how these steps go.” (p.15:15-19)</p> <p>I think at work I’m with people who are almost like me. It’s fine, [unintelligible 1:21:20] which I’m learning to appreciate them, it’s fine, it’s only at home that I’m learning to change and this is what they dislike, is me being impatient and maybe having unrealistic expectations, and not appreciating what they’re good at. (p.38:34-p.39:3)</p>
Preoccupied No.17	<p>But I think that that’s the thing, so when you just turn up in a normal class there and you perform very well then people might not, they might rather be [unintelligible 0:30:25] people treat you a bit badly.</p> <p><i>In what way?</i> I don’t know, it’s very hard to, not as in bullying, but maybe always feel a bit outside and whatever. For example, whenever I did a test from I think all the way from grade one to nine, I never told anyone about my results, I just wanted to hide them. I didn’t want to show anyone or make anyone aware that I was doing well, but whenever... people were known to be doing well at school, people were looking straight at them and saying, the kind of feeling that, “Do you think you are better than us others?” or they’d think like either that or they thought that you are a very big geek or something, that you just kept studying</p>

<p>FEAR OF APPEARING EMPEROR</p>	<p>all the time and had no social life. But that wasn't really the case with me. I still didn't study so much but I still did very well at the exams. It was very, I think I would have gotten a much worse reputation or whatever if had actually shared my results with others. I just tried to keep it down and not tell anyone. (p.12:10-28)</p> <p><i>And how did the teachers relate to you doing so well?</i> I think the teachers, they always liked me and that was also a problem I guess in school because when you're in the young ages it's not, I think when people see that the teacher likes you they just get more annoyed with you. (p.12:30-34)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>On the more negative side, I think just because some people who are, especially some people who are I guess they were, they have been, I don't know how to express it, but perhaps that they were in a position before where people always came to them for help, and then some people came to me instead and they might feel that they lost some of their... and I know because there's one person I have particularly big problems getting along with and he is a very ambitious, incredibly ambitious and motivated person, but he's a bit slow. So I think whenever we have ended up doing projects together then it's just he always wants to do everything by himself and he always wants to, if we're gonna present it, he wants to present the project and he wants to get... so as long as we have been working together it's just a bit difficult because I just felt that it's hard to disagree with him and I think if he's with other people, maybe a lot of people they think, "Okay, he's ambitious and good at what he's doing", so nobody would, maybe he's used to just having a lot of people saying yes to whatever he is suggesting, but as I feel that a lot of what he's doing maybe I don't agree with and as soon as I don't agree with it I will raise my voice and try to question it, and I think he's just not used to it so he has always had problems and I've had problems with him. But that's one source of disagreement. And other times I think some people might just think I'm a bit boring because if I start to end up having a personal relationship with them and they have no interest in what I like to discuss, they just think I'm... I guess it's very easy to be labelled as a bore when you like politics and current events. (p.35:29-p.36:17)</p> <p>...I sometimes find it a bit hard to find some common interests and common things to discuss, because what they want to discuss is maybe the latest, what happened in X-Factor or Made in Chelsea or whatever, but I would never have any interest in those kind of topics. And then they might feel that I, "This guy is quite strange, why does he want to talk about the upcoming US election or whatever has happened in the world or criticise foreign policies", or something. (p.11:1-18)</p>
<p>CHILD</p>	<p><i>And what do you find is the most difficult aspect of your relations with others at work?</i>just having a few people that I get on very well with but a lot of people who I don't get on at all with and being together with them every day it is uncomfortable. (p.34:13-27)</p>
<p>CHILD</p>	<p>in some situations I sometimes think maybe if I didn't have to think so much and remember so much maybe life will have been easier. So I think that that's also one thing about me, and that's something why, especially my girlfriend always comments on that I always think so much in every situation so that might make me a bit reluctant to do things sometimes because I might think these steps and then I think, "Okay, what will this person think?", and even if I just sit and talk to someone and then they make a funny face or something about something then I might, then I start to think about that, so it might make me uncomfortable and I</p>

<p>CHILD (sensitive)</p>	<p>overthink things in simple situations. And that's something she can get, not I wouldn't say annoyed but she definitely comments on it...</p> <p><i>So you're very sensitive?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I'm quite sensitive and I think that's just a consequence of me overthinking a lot of situations and ending up, I don't know, I guess I must think of a suitable term for it, but yeah, it's just I'm, that that makes me, I think it would have been much easier for me in a lot of social situations if I didn't think so much about what other people think about what I'm saying and reacting, how they're reacting. I don't know if that's just, if that has to do with my intelligence or if it just has to do with my...</p> <p><i>Personality.</i></p> <p>... personality, that's quite hard to distinguish. (p.16:19-p.17:16)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>I know I'm a bit easy to draw judgement on people sometimes and that's a bias I have, so I think whenever I hear someone is talking about something that I would label as stupid things, then I just think oh god this person must be, I don't know, someone I couldn't stand, and I think if they can enjoy this outside of work they just can't be clever enough to be able to do any positive contribution to whatever we do here. (p.37:14-19)</p>
<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>I tend to always... even though I don't try to argue just because of the political relationship I always tend to end up in some dispute with my superiors. I don't know, I think I'm more of an individualist when it comes to working as I can't stand having too many orders given at me, especially when I feel, I don't know, <u>I guess it sounds up myself</u> but I feel often at times that I'm better at analysing the situation than my superiors. So I think I don't need them to give me orders, they do this because of their power and the situation. (p.32:1-8)</p>
<p>CHILD</p>	<p>I think being gifted is very different depending on the environment, because being gifted in terms of intelligence is, while it might be seen as a positive thing, it's not very, it's often not the case I think because when you end up like in normal socialising situations I think, I don't know, probably there are a lot of intelligent people who can also be very social but I don't know. I find that when I have to end up in situations and talk with, like chit chat with people, I have a very hard time finding areas that are of common interest and things, so I always felt that whenever I end up in those situations I just end up silent or talk about things that the other one might find it a bit awkward maybe. (p.15:4-14)</p>
<p>CHILD</p>	<p>The most difficult part for me is when people are either arguing with me or being negative to me, saying negative things. I always remember whenever someone has said something negative about me, I just couldn't take it. I think I was too sensitive for the job basically. (p.28:6-25)</p>
<p>Preoccupied No.189</p> <p>CHILD</p>	<p>I'd like to think that I'm generally a nice guy, but I can, involuntarily, hurt people by saying something or doing something or reacting in a certain way that is just not appropriate given their current state of mind.</p> <p><i>Okay.</i></p> <p>And that is something that happens to me time and time again.</p> <p><i>Okay.</i></p> <p>And I'm almost... I now need to start... you know how stuff comes naturally or you need to think about it?</p> <p><i>Yeah.</i></p> <p>So I find myself, I need to think hard about these sort of things that I don't do something accidentally. (p.35:4-21)</p> <p>So I often find myself, when I write an email, I let it sit, you know, if it's something more sensitive. I let it sit and then I come back to it and I think about</p>

CHILD	<p>it again and I often find myself, thank God I've done that, because that could be quite offensive. But I didn't feel it in that moment.</p> <p>Okay, yeah.</p> <p>And so that is typically an issue. And that often, you know, has had somewhat negative consequences, in that I just simply pissed off some people. Sometimes senior people that I didn't want to...And hasn't helped my career. (p.35:25-p.36:4)</p> <p>There was a lady who I used to report to, and I genuinely, I actually really like reporting to women rather than men, because they're not as competitive, although there are exceptions. And so I didn't have anything against her. But we were in a meeting together with lots of other people and my colleague came to me afterwards and said, "You should not do this again." I said, "What?" "Well you really made your boss look bad, because you were talking over her and you were... you were answering too quickly. You should have let her answer stuff more, you should have empowered her more." It didn't sit good... well with her and it did also turn out that she was not happy about the whole situation.</p>
CHILD	<p>Okay.</p> <p>So this I had no negative intentions at all, but I simply didn't think about how she could feel about the whole thing.</p> <p>So you were just kind of relating to the content of what is being talked about...</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>... and saying what you had to say and...?</p> <p>There was a problem and I had an answer, so I just blurted out the answer.</p> <p>Right, okay.</p> <p>Shouldn't have done that.</p> <p>Oh right. And so, you've been learning about this through colleagues giving you feedback at that?</p> <p>Yeah, colleagues giving me feedback and telling me. So that's very helpful.</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>So now I'm always a bit conscious, but you know, you forget sometimes.</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>And it's the point. It's an active effort I need to make to do that, because I really there I lack something, yeah, that other people have more naturally. (p.36:9-p.37:21) [<i>Has to think hard about saying or doing things so as not to hurt people or be inappropriate given their state of mind, as he has often accidentally, involuntarily caused problems like this.</i>]</p>
EMPEROR	<p>And do you find that it's difficult to value other people and what they might be able to contribute if you are being frustrated by them and being impatient, because they don't seem to be following you quickly?</p> <p>See this is an interesting question also. For example, the team that I have right now, I'm super proud of them. It's an amazing team. Now, they are all, I think very, very good people at what they're doing. And I have conversations with them, most of the time they understand me, sometimes they don't, but we have these conversations and it works very well, I think. Yeah. It is... I almost, if I can put it this way, if there's a certain minimum skill level there, it's fine. If it's below it, I'm not very good coaching these people.</p> <p>Right. Okay.</p> <p>Yeah. So, if they don't pass that threshold, then it's become a... and I've never figured out how I can make someone work well that has been over the threshold. (p.41:14-32)</p> <p>...the ultimate strategy I found is that, I help them to move on. I don't wanna... I literally don't wanna say fire, because sometimes I do think they might have skills. It's just me as a manager, I'm not the right lead for them.</p>

<p>EMPEROR</p>	<p>Okay. So then I talk to colleagues and we see if they can move to another team. I have two examples where they did. The guys really came out and blossomed. So that could very well be... definitely it was a component of me. I think it was also though, there was also a component, the negative feedback they got from me and the opportunity to start afresh, helped them to say, "Okay, this time I'll put more effort into it."</p> <p>Yeah. So I think definitely, partly, I wasn't right for them. And I do believe, you know, I don't think there's anything wrong in that, in that some people just don't fit together well. You know,... You need to get on well with everybody. You need to work well with everybody. No. Why? We are all different. So some things we work well, sometimes not. So, why do we try to pair people that don't match?</p> <p>Yeah. We shouldn't do that. (p.42:3-31)</p> <p>there was this incident when I was... in the early days, I started having my first team of people and there was one lady who struggled. And I think I initially tried to help her, but I became impatient and the feedback, my friend overheard the conversation, and said to me, "You know, what you do, you make people feel stupid." Yeah, and I think he was right. Yeah. I was impatient with her and I didn't help matters the way I approached it. I made her feel just bad. (p.40:6-13)</p>
<p>Preoccupied No.30</p> <p>CHILD?</p> <p>CHILD</p> <p>CHILD</p>	<p>this sort of more emotional intelligence stuff is a blessing and a curse as well, because I see things that other people don't see, but I can't talk to anybody about it or...</p> <p>Right. ... you know like... or, you know, it makes you extra sensitive to small things, you know... you might have irritated someone slightly, but if it's not enough for them to mention it to you then it's probably not that important. But I see it and I know and then I'm like, what's wrong? What have I done? And I guess, because of my experiences and school and that kind of like...</p> <p>Yeah. ... I've got no idea why this person might not like me kind of thing. Right. So then it sort of beavers away at you a little bit. (p.36:5-24)</p> <p>Coach asked whether she ever thought people might be threatened by her, being 27 and becoming a manager, whereas her peers in other companies are about six years older (p.56:31-p.57:3) ...and this was just almost like a complete blind spot, you know, that I'd never really kind of thought about before. In a work context, you know, so... I've got... I had someone who was like a director age 29 earning two times more than I was and you know... and so, why would I ever think that he would be threatened by me, like, you know... Or, you know, a finance manager who has 13 years experience doing what she's doing, earning a good wage, you know, why would she ever be kind of threatened by me? But did it make sense? Yeah. (p.58:9-30) Because she was better at her job at her age than they had been when they were her age. (p.59:1-2)</p> <p>Re a job interview: "I asked him these questions that I'd got for them and they looked at me as if I was frigging weird." And then the recruitment person gave her feedback that "actually they were really hard questions" (p.60:25-34)</p> <p>if you're the person that everybody comes to to talk about somebody else, you know, there can... you can be seen as a bit two-faced.</p>

CHILD	<p>Yeah. And you can feel divided loyalties, and it's hard, because you're trying to be understanding for everyone and because I can see every angle of every thing, then I can sit there and go, "Yeah, you know like, I can totally see that you felt like this when so and so did that." But if the other person comes to me, I can say, "Well, I can see why you did this, cause so and so did something..."</p> <p>Yeah. You know like... so it's really difficult and you can be seen to be taking sides and stuff, when actually you're seeing the whole thing. It's just... you know like you're just talking to the opposite party and it can get a bit kind of messy. (p.42:25-p.43:9)</p> <p>even my CEO, like I said, there's only seven of us in the company, but my CEO, in my appraisal that I had the other day, we spent pretty much most of the time talking about other members of staff.</p>
EMPEROR	<p>Okay. And he was like, you know, "What do you think?" You know, "So and so's struggling at the moment. What do you think I should do about that? And what do you think I should do about this and..." and you know, in a way I was sort of like... I didn't really feel like I should be talking about...</p> <p>Right. ... this. But then... but then, at the same time like, he is clearly someone who can't see what's going on... .. and maybe he just needs to be told, you know like, if he can't see what's going on, I mean he's probably a bit, you know stupid, but if he... if he doesn't get told then nothing's ever gonna kinda happen about it. So, you know like, I've... I kind of feel very sort of almost like moral kind of dilemma as to whether...</p> <p>Right. ... I should say something or not. (p.43:19-p.44:12)</p>
CHILD	<p>And I think, you know, maybe like my previous experiences and having been bullied, I assumed that people were reacting in a negative way towards me, because I'd done something wrong and I'd never assumed that it might be because it was something going on for them. Which I suppose is weird as well, because I can recognise all these things in other people, but actually, for myself, I'm not very good at doing that. (p.66:22-28)</p>
CHILD	<p>And it's really irritating, because you see the bad things in people and then... that other people kind of might miss and then you have to like almost reason with yourself as, you know, like I know they've done this and I know they've done this for a reason and this is the problem and you know, like... you know, and in one hand it helps, because if someone does something bad, then I don't just go, oh they're a cow or he's a bit of a git kind of thing. You know, you think about why that might be, but on the other hand sometimes you see things that nobody else has seen that are negative. And you know, like even if I told someone else, they'd think I was being weird or sort of oversensitive...</p> <p>Right. ... but I keep a lot of stuff to myself. (p.29:6-20)</p>
EMPEROR	<p>I mean like, I get very frustrated, because I'm very self-sufficient, so if I don't know something I'll just go and find out and you know like, the Internet, you can find anything out on the Internet pretty much. And you know, even before then I'd go and find a book or you know, I'll go and do a bit of research... you know whatever it was, if I didn't know it I'd go and find it out. And it baffles me how</p> <p>Four more pages of interview excerpts were provided to the examiners.</p>