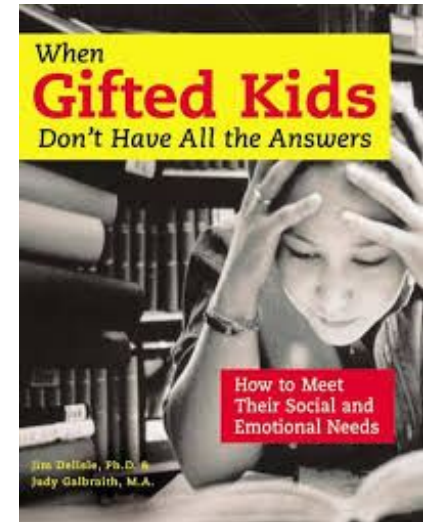


Nature and Needs of the Gifted and Talented



September 20, 2016
CFISD Staff Development Team

Eight Great Gripes of Gifted Kids



#1 No one explains what being gifted is all about- it's kept a big secret.



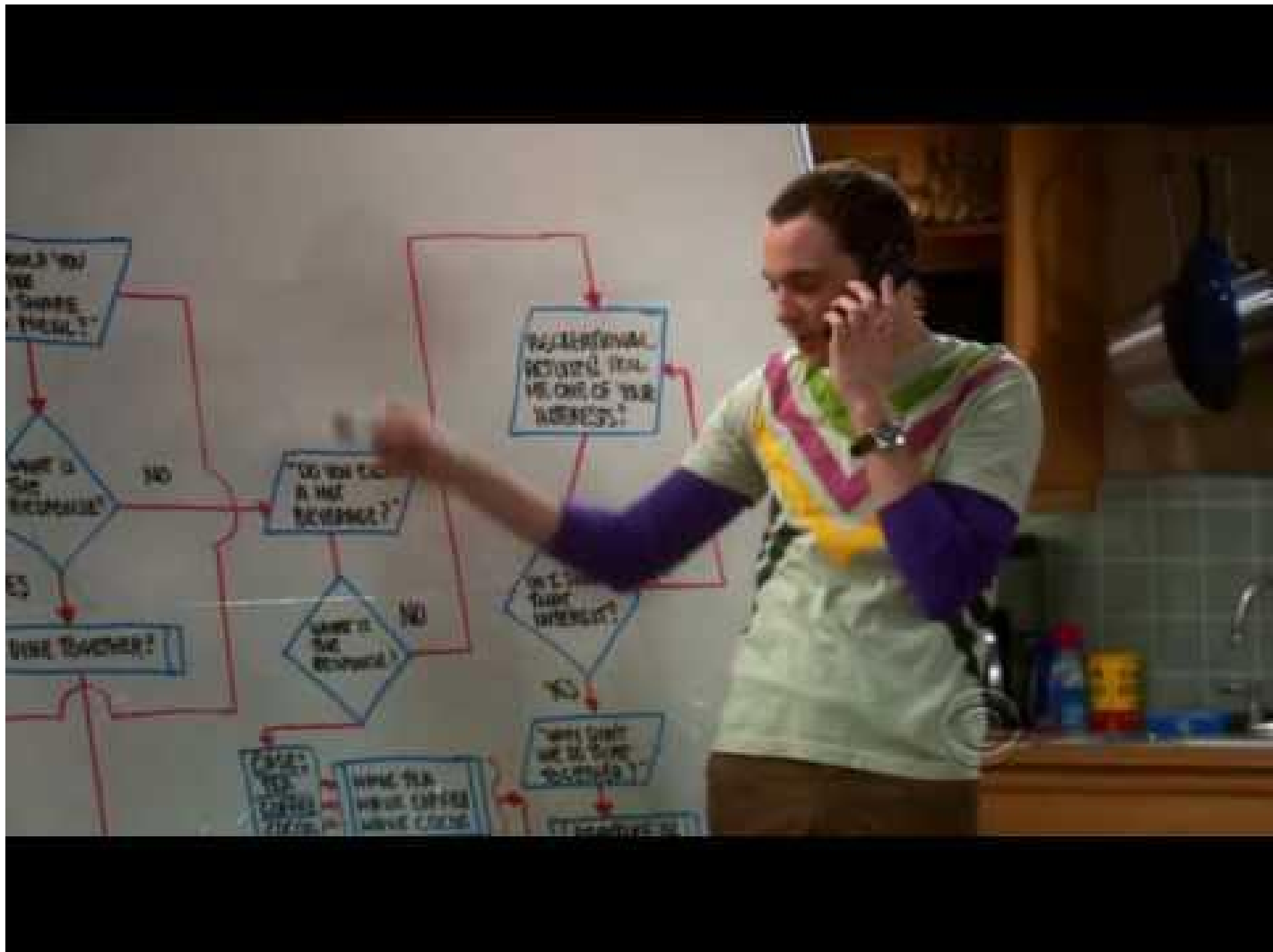
#2 School is too easy and too boring.



#3 Parents, teachers, and friends expect us to be perfect all the time.



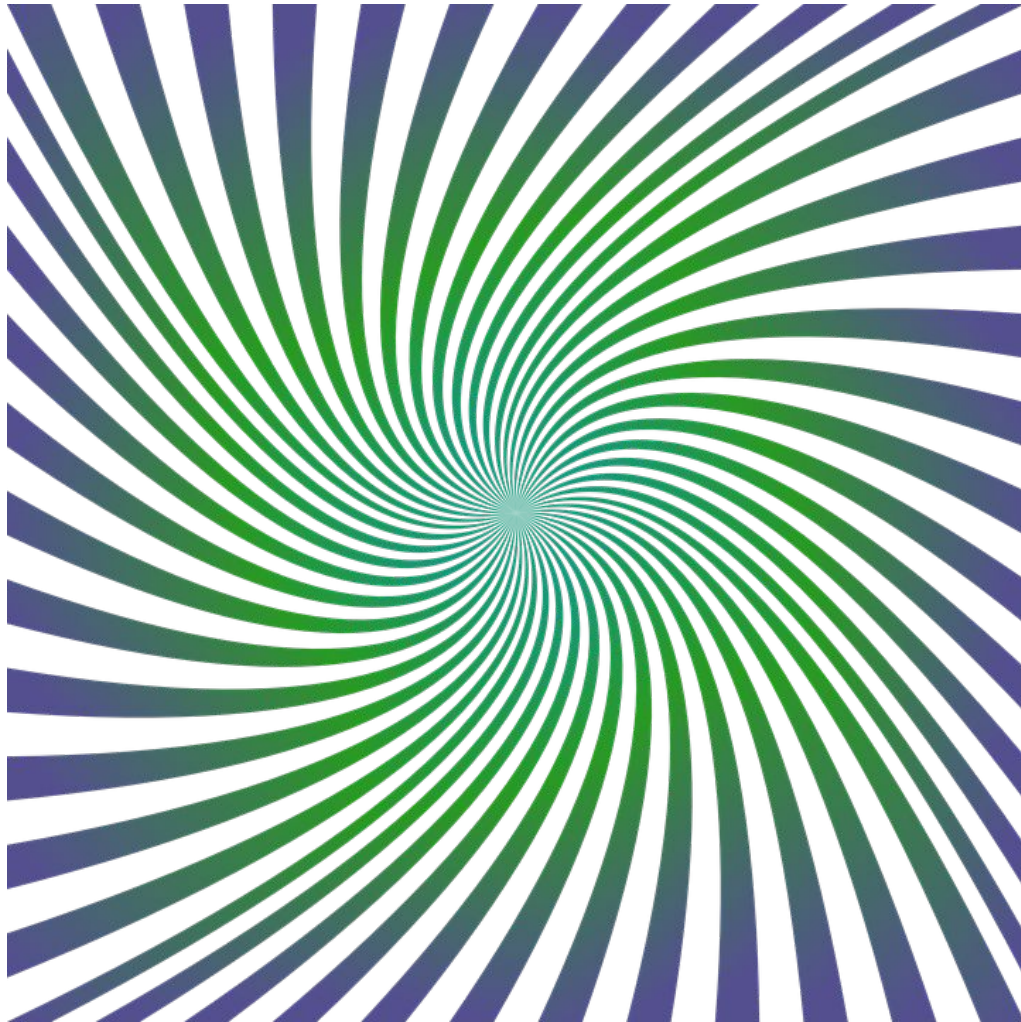
#4 Friends who really understand us are few and far between.



#5 Kids often tease us about being smart.



#6 We feel overwhelmed by the number of things we can do in life.



#7 We feel different and alienated.



**#8 We worry about world problems
and feel helpless to do
anything about them.**



Perfectionism

in the Gifted

Student

What does it mean to be perfect?

- a. being entirely without fault or defect: **flawless**
- b. satisfying all requirements: **accurate**
- c. beyond improvement: **ideal**

A child who is a perfectionist strives to be "without fault" and to "satisfy all requirements," **BUT** this is **impossible for anyone.**

Striving for perfection can be great, **BUT** it isn't without its faults.

Healthy vs. Unhealthy

- drives **high effort** and accomplishment
- derives strong pleasure from **concentrated effort**
- **adjusts** work levels as the situation requires
- can also be referred to as the **pursuit of excellence**
- strains compulsively toward **impossible goals**
- sets **unrealistic standards** for self
- sees mistakes as evidence of own **unworthiness**
- lives in a constant state of **anxiety about making mistakes**

What does it look like?

Healthy

vs.

Unhealthy

- High test scores--
Some dips but a
general attitude of
growth
- Always attempts to do
best
- Knows that won't
always be perfect
- Strives to grow

- Scores vary-- Some high, Some
very low,
- May not attempt if the work
seems overwhelming-- "If I can't
do it perfectly, then I don't want
to do it at all."
- Feelings of anxiety and
helplessness when don't do as
well as wanted ★2 F's and 8 A's =
"I'm terrible in this class."
- It doesn't look the same in every
child

Healthy Perfectionism

Doing the research necessary for a term paper, working hard on it, turning it in on time, and feeling good about what is learned

Unhealthy Perfectionism

Doing three drafts, staying up two nights in a row, and handing paper in late because it just had to be perfect

Teacher thinks I just don't care.

Healthy Perfectionism

Studying for a test, taking it with confidence, and feeling good about getting a 96

Unhealthy Perfectionism

Cramming right up to the last minute, taking the test with sweaty palms, and feeling bad about a 96 because a friend got a 98

Teacher thinks all is fine and I should be grateful for that A.

Healthy Perfectionism

Trying new things, taking risks, and learning from both experiences and mistakes

Unhealthy Perfectionism

Avoiding new experiences because terrified of making mistakes, especially in public

Teacher thinks I'm slacking off and just don't want to work.

Recognizing Traits of Unhealthy Perfectionism

- Low self-esteem - "I'm never good enough."
- Guilt - "I could have handled that better."
- Pessimism - "I'll never be a success."
- Depression - "Why should I get out of bed? Nothing good will happen to me."
- Suicidal tendencies - "Why go on?"
- Obsessiveness - "It isn't perfect, so I can't stop."
- Lack of motivation - "It will never be perfect, so why try?"
- Immobilization - "It's better to do nothing than it is to fail!"

Dangers of Unhealthy Perfectionism

- Unhealthy perfectionism is dangerous and can lead to serious mental and physical problems including immobilization, withdrawal, eating disorders, and self-harm.
- Unhealthy perfectionists often need help from trusted adults to give themselves permission to fail.

DEPRESSION

Experts don't agree whether or not gifted children become depressed more frequently than other children in general. Some say that gifted children are more prone to depression and suicide because of their heightened sensitivities, perfectionism, introversion, overachieving behaviors, existential concerns, and alienation. Others contend that no research proves gifted children are more depressed than peers their own age.

*About 10% of gifted adolescents experience clinically significant levels of depression.**

*Suicide attempts occur more frequently among youths who are artistic and creative, unusually sensitive, and who attend highly competitive and selective schools.***

Source National Association for Gifted Children

*Baker (2004) in Chapter 7 Parent's Guide to Gifted Children, Webb et al

**Kerr (1991);Piirto (2004);Silverman (1993)

What Can Parents Do?

- Recognize the positive and negative traits of perfectionism.
- Encourage excellence BUT NOT perfectionism.
- Help student distinguish between them.
- Help student set realistic goals.
- Provide a safe environment for failure.
- Seek assistance from licensed professional counselors.
- Seek cooperation from school personnel.