



LIVING GIFTED:

Thriving in Midlife and Beyond

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Gifted individuals experience life in ways that are qualitatively different from most people. Their advanced creative or intellectual capacities and their sensitivities give rise to emotional depth and intensity. They not only **think** differently but also **feel** differently than others do.

In a culture that values “sameness,” gifted individuals may feel out of place. They might not feel understood for their curiosity, drive, sensitivity, nonconformity, quest for perfection, and their search for justice and meaning. As a result, gifted individuals may point a critical finger at themselves: “What’s wrong with me? Why can’t I be like everybody else? Why don’t I feel happy? How can I be accepted? Will I ever feel normal?”

Certain gifted traits are often mistaken for learning disabilities, immaturity, or behavior problems. Frequently, the very traits that make someone gifted are the ones that others want the person to suppress or to give up. **Gifted adults who have learned to deny their giftedness** have spent years hiding their natural tendencies for creative and intellectual expressions. The result may be frustration, boredom, lack of fulfillment, loneliness, resentment, low self-esteem, and/or depression.

To this point, it is a challenge for gifted adults to find the professional services for the kind of support they need. Very few mental health professionals are educated in the specific and unique social-emotional needs and risks of individuals with exceptional intellect and creativity. And, if a gifted adult has a trauma background, this requires additional expertise and appropriate training.

The unique social and emotional challenges and risks of being a gifted individual is a specialized focus within my practice. As a therapist and consultant, with expertise in the unique emotional and social needs and challenges of gifted individuals, I often serve as guide, advocate, or anchor for exploring a specific personal concern regarding giftedness. My online service, "Living Gifted", provides an additional venue for one-on-one conversation and education to help gifted adults thrive in their Midlife years and beyond.

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