

# Gifted seniors

not everyone is average



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## Who are these gifted seniors?

- Achievements?
  - Academic
  - Creative
  - Politics
  - .....
- Looks, appearance?
- Intuition? We just see it, feel it, know it...?

- Annemarie Roeper



- Carmen dell'Orefice, model since her 15th, now 82



- Fauja Singh, marathon runner of 100



- Nelson Mandela



- Marian Diamond, neuro-researcher, now 87



- Shibata, wrote first book of poems when 99



- Ute Jesse, was journalist, now 91
- German by birth. living in NL



and many other seniors ...



- not showing their talents or giftedness
- hiding their needs
- becoming lonely and sad
- waiting for the end
- or: happy and lively?



## Overview presentation



- Why attention?
- Characteristics gifted seniors
- Results interviews gifted seniors in NL
- How to talk about?
- How to live?
- Policy in homes for elderly

## Why paying attention to this group?

- Negative reasons
  - Loneliness
  - Mental problems
  - Critical and difficult people
  - Conflicts with care givers
- Positive reasons
  - Understanding themselves
  - Less lonely
  - More suitable activities



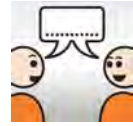
## Personal motivation

- Gifted adults: publications, presentations
- Gifted and Talented Adults Foundation (IHBV) since 2010
- Now 65
- My character
- Many stories
- No research



## Discuss

- Do you know gifted senior(s)?  
OR
- Are you one yourself?
  
- What is most positive characteristic?
- What is most negative characteristic?



## Own study:

### Interviews with 6 gifted seniors in the Netherlands

- Female: 4
- Male: 2
- Ages: 71 – 91
- 1 married, 2 widows, 2 divorced, 1 single
- Living: 5 independent, 1 in residential home
- Health: 5 fairly good and mobile

## Questions in interviews

- Brief description of your life and work?
- What means giftedness for you?
- Discovering your giftedness?
- What are your activities now?
- Advices for others like you?

## Life and work

- 3 from parents with lower education
- 2 had military father
- 1 had academic parents
  
- 2 women and 1 man only secondary school
- 2 women higher educated
- 1 man university later in life
  
- Many searched long for good and fitting work, not always found it

## Discovering of giftedness

- As a child: 1
- During military service: 1
- Because of (grand)children: 2
- Late in life: 1
- Because of the interview: 1

## Meaning of giftedness

- Understanding own life (retrospective)
- Looking for fitting activities
- Good contact with (grand)children
- Happy to know about giftedness

Also:

- Lonely
- Searching

## Discovering giftedness in seniors



- What are *your* experiences in discovering your giftedness?
  - During own childhood
  - When children were recognized as gifted
  - When grandchildren were recognized as gifted
  - Other experiences?



## How to talk about giftedness to seniors?

- How do you explain giftedness in general?
- Could you use that for gifted seniors?
- *'My husband, he is/ was gifted...'*
- *'My father, he is/ was gifted...'*
- Prejudices?

## Living as a gifted senior

- Wishes and needs?
- People around you
  - Other seniors
  - Professionals
  - Family and friends
- Activities



## Film in The Netherlands

- 85 year old man
- Has to go to a home for elderly
- Becomes lonely
- Wants only his own music, books, etc
- Then he allows others into his life



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## Example innovative project

Axioncontinú 'De Ingelanden':  
living, care and wellbeing in Utrecht

- Residents live together in small groups
- Focus on gifted, educated and other residents
- Asking input what *they* want to do and learn
- Let seniors participate in organizing activities



## Needs of residents

- Future-oriented
- Meeting like-minded residents
- Conversing at their own level
- Challenging activities
- In-depth topics



## Steps to a better life for gifted seniors

1. Targeted questions during intake
2. Education of staff
3. Adapt activities to their wishes and needs
4. New activities focused on their needs

Example:

Cultural Club, for and by residents

Future: expand to other locations



*Your suggestions  
for a better life  
for gifted seniors?*



Best wishes for a happy  
gifted seniorship!



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