

Conflicts of Gifted Adults and Children

How to deal with them?

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SENG conference, San Jose, July 2014



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Program overview



- Conflicts of gifted workers in NL
- Conflicts of gifted children
 - Interviews: impressions
 - Discussion
- Recommendations
- From conflicts to positive impact

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Who are we?

- Ido van der Waal, **Altena BV**
 - Full time mediator in workplace conflicts since 1996
 - Chairman of the board of workplace mediators Netherlands (VAN)
 - Studying conflicts of gifted workers and children since 2011
 - Coaching and mediation of gifted workers
 - (Sometimes searching for words... dyslectic)
- Noks Nauta, **IHBV**
 - MD and psychologist, PhD
 - Studying gifted adults at work since 2000
 - Publications, presentations, training
 - Book: Gifted workers, hitting the target, Shaker media, 2013

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Gifted people

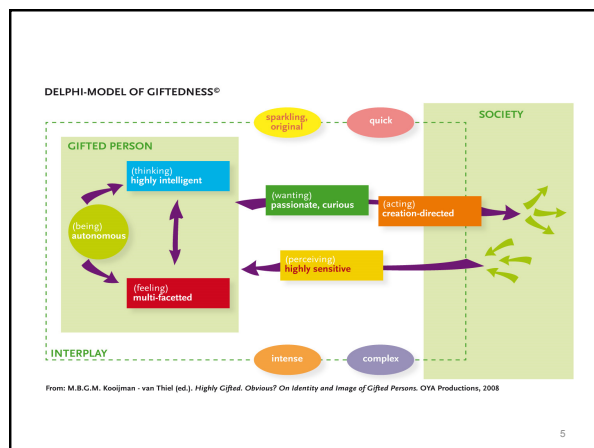


- Quick and intelligent thinkers who can handle complex cases
- Autonomous, curious and passionate by nature
- Sensitive and emotional persons, intensely alive
- Enjoy being creative

Delphi-model (Kooijman - van Thiel 2008)



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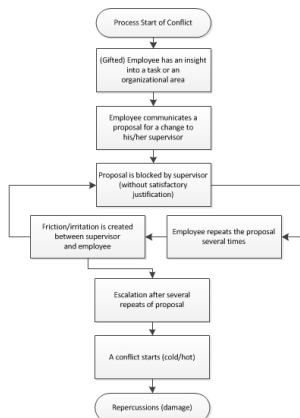
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Interviews gifted adults

- All had conflicts with their direct supervisor
- Gifted employees speak passionately about an insight/ idea
- “I cannot change my opinion (I base it on facts)”
- “I am swimming upstream all the time”

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Phases in development of conflict



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Gifted children?

- Conflicts with teachers?
- A pattern?
- Research?
- Prevention by learning skills?
- Effect in younger children?



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Interviews

- 27 recorded interviews
- Young adults (7) *Centre for Creative Learning (CCL), Sterksel*
- Young adults not in school (2)
- High school (8) *Stedelijk Gymnasium Schiedam*
- Elementary school (10) *Andersenschool Woerden*

➤ Working on analysis

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Interview questions

- Conflicts at school?
- Content?
- Role of giftedness?
- Process and outcome?



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Quotes (elementary school)

- I use my cleverness to avoid conflicts
- We (gifted) always want to be right it's very very difficult to admit that I am wrong
- I like to debate with my friends
- We think differently

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Our first impressions (1)

- Children at CCL and High school: several conflicts at school
- Thinking:
 - differently
 - about a lot of things
 - about many different topics
- Asking (too) many questions
- Some have serious difficulties with teachers
- Feelings of not being respected

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Our first impressions (2)

- Do not admit their mistakes
- Some want to be perfect in almost everything
- Some are learning almost permanently outside the classroom
- Some moved schools several times
- Some have serious depressive moods
- Some conflicts (CCL) had same pattern as adults

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Observed themes

- Fairness
- Vulnerability
- Autonomy
- Being, thinking and feeling differently
- Problems with rules, regulations
- Debating: they love it!
- Physical behavior
- Bullying: serious!

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Elvis, Swiss-German boy (12), living in Switzerland

In a short video fragment Elvis tells how important fairness is for him in the relation with his teacher.

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Conflicts in your life?

- Did you or your gifted child have a serious conflict at school?
- Would you tell us about this conflict?
- In what way did it effect your or your child's life?

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Centre for Creative Learning

CCL provides space and opportunity for development, to children and adolescents with a high development potential, who are temporarily no longer able to shape their own development because they have lost their way and with that, any outlook on a meaningful existence.

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Soul map student CCL



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What's their story?

Two boys from CCL told us about their experience with their own giftedness. They were involved in several conflicts at previous schools.

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Your first reactions?

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Conflicts of gifted children *Your input?*

- Ages
- Gender
- Countries
- Role teachers
- Role parents
- Professional counseling

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Your recommendations?

- Parents?
- Teachers?
- Counselors?
- Gifted children, adolescents?



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Our recommendations (1)

- Explain rules and regulations and change them when they are dysfunctional
- Answer every question, at least give a reaction
- Ask questions, do not present analysis and solution at the same time
- Recognize the outlined patterns and pitfalls
- Try to follow the train of thought of the other

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Our recommendations (2)

- Avoid playing the role of expert (making statements)
- Allow for extra time the other needs to follow your train of thought
- Be aware of thinking style of the other (Sternberg)
- Check insight by other (or stop argumenting ...)
- Prevent loss of face or loss of reputation

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Our recommendations (3)

- Try to find the underlying question (hidden interest)
- Ask for (professional) help if necessary
- Coaching and a lot of practice leads to more effective behavior
- Choose (when possible) a school that fits
- A supportive teacher contributes to your well-being and your health

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Positive impact of conflict

- Approaching instead of avoiding
- Conflict as an important source of information
- A conflict may lead to good ideas and stimulates innovation
- To stop an impasse (deadlock)
- Conflicts can revitalize collaboration and relations

➤ *Managing the conflict is important!*

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Thank you for being here

- Ido van der Waal (ijvdwaal@altena-ned.nl)
Altena B.V.
- Noks Nauta (noksnavta@ihbv.nl)
- Our recent article is on page 163-172
of GTI 2013:
[http://www.world-gifted.org/sites/default/files/GTI\(1&2\)2013_0.pdf](http://www.world-gifted.org/sites/default/files/GTI(1&2)2013_0.pdf)



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