香 港 資 優 教 育 學 院
The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education
Factsheet

LETTER FROM HELEN

Helen is a 26 year-old adult with an IQ of 146 which puts her in the top 3% of the ability range. She wrote to express some of the feelings she experienced as a gifted child in an environment that was unsupportive, even hostile. It highlights the emotional difficulties young gifted people can go through when they are not understood or educational provision falls short of what is really needed and that the difficulties of youth sometimes continue into adult life (Editor).

"I was bullied and thought "strange" as a child. At school I began to feel embarrassed putting my hand up in class because I always knew the answers and also I was terrified on the occasions that I got it wrong because the whole class would laugh at me! To be quite honest the problems I have socially and the way people relate to me when I am my usual eccentric self have continued into adult working life. I've found people feel threatened even though I'm the nicest person in the world and have worked hard to develop social skills to the detriment of my mind really, because I care about my fellow man so much! As a result, as an adult my self esteem is rather low which annoys me!

I often say that while children with learning difficulties are given a lot of support and recognised as needing that support, we gifted children are IQ tested, patted on the back and sent back out into the playground with a smile, a cheerio and the assumption that we will sail through life. That is not true. It is the loneliest place in the world to be when you are 8 years old and getting A grades and wondering why your friends aren't. It's a mixture of guilt and extreme loneliness because frankly 97% of the population don't think like me or understand me and that wasn't just in childhood but is now too! I am so often the subject of ridicule because I have an active mind, I might try something new and challenging and workmates find it amusing in a nasty way you know? I also don't drink alcohol, smoke or go to nightclubs - I tend to spend my leisure time walking my dog or going round old parts of Hong Kong or a museum or something. I don't socialise the way other people do, especially other people in my age group. I pursue alternative entertainments.

I write creatively, sing (operatically - mezzo soprano, but sing everything, self taught), could pick notes out and play tunes on the piano when I was 6 (still do, haven't got round to developing full piano playing yet but will) I love sketching and foreign languages and speak Spanish fluently at the moment. I love to work with mathematics, algebra and number sequencing (and I love sudoku!!). I love all academic subjects and often read books on biology and particle physics for fun! It took me a while to decide a career (because I love all my subjects - another common gifted problem!) but I am now studying for a psychology degree with the OU, am working in mental health and it is my concrete (honest!) intention to become a clinical psychologist.

I am so glad your Academy is here because we need you so much! The amount of abuse and viciousness we can be subjected to from both children and adults (including family) is unbelievable and quite often we do stay quiet purely to stay out of the spotlight!! Otherwise we're subjected to jealousy and expectation at the very least.

Thank you for reading my long and rambling email! I hope you will be able to help raise the self esteem of gifted children everywhere and help them to use their gifts for the benefit of mankind. That's how I view my IQ. I have it for a reason. It's not so I can be arrogant and think I'm above everyone, it's so that I can contribute something to the world. As we all do - we need our cleaners

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and bin men as much as we need the likes of us rocket scientists!! I actually feel a bit in limbo now that I narrowly missed Mensa because at least that would have given me some support. I wish they'd extend it. Never mind, you're here".

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