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*What I like most about the Gifts Project is that each student experiences their own victories and successes by claiming their own gifts. One of my students stated that this is a great program for children with low self-esteem because it gets them to look at the qualities they possess and instills confidence in themselves. I definitely agree with this statement. - Sharon Blumberg.*

## Chapter 1

### Introduction to the Concepts of Gifts

#### Too Stupid To Learn

My mother loves God, is committed to the church and yearns to have me meet her in Heaven. I have developed my own spirituality, and it does not exactly match my mother's. She regularly seeks ways to bring me closer to her path to Heaven. Her dream is that we may be there together in the bye and bye. In my efforts to be in some degree of harmony with my mother, I seek various sources of spiritual inspiration. This sometimes includes radio broadcasts by evangelists.

As I drove up Highway 101 just north of San Francisco, I was listening to a random selection of Bible ministry broadcasts on the car radio. The point of one preacher's message was that we judge and condemn each other. "These harsh condemnations," he said, "often miss the mark." The preacher gave an example. He said there was once a schoolteacher who called upon the parents of a child in her class. The teacher advised the parents to take the boy out of school. "This boy," she asserted, "is too stupid to learn."

This teacher was talking to the parents of Thomas Edison.

Thomas Edison's parents did take him out of school that day. His mother, who was a former teacher, taught him at home. Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) is considered by many to be one of the greatest inventors in history.

Thomas Edison was born in Milan, Ohio. He obtained patents on inventions in such fields as telegraphy, phonograph, electric lighting, and photography. He changed the lives of almost everyone. In his lifetime, he patented 1,093 inventions.

In 1882, he designed the first hydroelectric plant in Appleton, Wisconsin. However, his most famous invention was the electric light. He valued long, hard work. His habit was to take a nap and then go back to work. One of his famous sayings was, "Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration." Although Edison had over a thousand inventions, he had scores of failures. "Each failure," Edison said, "represented one more obstacle that had been overcome on the way to success." Diligence and persistence were two of his major gifts.

As you work with your students and recognize the gifts, don't forget the importance of giving students the opportunity to refine those gifts. By doing so, they will grow in self-confidence and will often make unbelievable progress in their educational efforts. An opportunity to share the procedures the teacher might use to allow students to exercise their gifts is available in the forms provided called "Application of Gifts."

As you work with the Gifts Project, your children will bond their thankfulness, appreciation, and gratitude to you in perpetuity.

### ***Making Plans***

First, the concept needs to be embraced. That is, all children have gifts. When teachers feel the truth of this idea, they are ready to do the project.

Every teacher has a style. That style is encouraged. The explanations and worksheets in are designed for immediate use, but can be modified and personalized for teacher/student use. Use what is helpful to implement the Gifts Concepts. We also support developing your own forms to record data concerning the gifts. The form itself provides identification, not implementation. Implementation takes place in the everyday activities at school, in extra activities, and at home. It is an open acknowledgment of the gifts of the child with opportunities to allow those gifts to prosper.

You've often heard teachers say, "I understand the concept, but how do I make it work in my classroom?" Well, the "Application of Gifts" form is provided for teachers to help think through ways to incorporate opportunities to refine a gift in the classroom. Parents working with teachers can refer to this tool to gain ideas of what can be done at home to support the child's gifts.

### ***Power Step One - Understanding the Concept***

Use class time that will not interfere with regular work to generate the concept that all in the class have gifts. For those who have homerooms or advisor base times, this would be an ideal time to review what could be a gift and how to recognize it.

There are other times that this could be done; such as, at the end of class when work is done and time remains, just before vacations when excitement is high and work is done, and part of classroom celebrations, parties, or other motivation enhancing classroom activities. This introductory time would also lend itself to discovery time--step two.

When thinking about making final determinations of the gifts of students, it is best to select a time of the year when a teacher has gained some personal knowledge of his/her students. This would probably be a couple months into the year--what month depends on the school (year round schools and others with special scheduling due to classroom shortages). For traditional scheduling, December has its obvious advantage of being the