

DISCOVER YOUR CHILD'S NATURAL GIFTS!

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The greatest gift we can give our children is to help them discover their natural talents so they can do what they love and never have to work another day in their lives. We've all heard the stories about the exceptionally talented 4-year old pianist or the 10-year old star athlete and we wonder how these children ended up so fabulously gifted. Was it something in their background, their genes or are they the result of zealous parents?

The new brain science is providing answers to some of these questions. Using advanced technology that allows us to see inside the brain while it's performing a task, we are beginning to understand how the brain works and what makes us unique as individuals.

Science tells us we can divide the cortical brain (also known as our "grey matter") into four sections, namely the frontal left, frontal right, basal left and basal right, each section specializing in certain types of thinking. One quadrant will have less electrical resistance which means that we think quickly and easily using this particular part of our brain. This diminished electrical resistance is the result of the differing make up of the chemical bath that our brain cells live in. We need to use all quadrants to function successfully in life, however, our preferred type of thinking is more energy efficient and we feel good when we are using that area. Let's take a look at the different quadrants.

The frontal left section of the brain specializes in our analytical abilities. The preferred style of thinking is based on facts and logic with a decisive nature. The frontal right section specializes in new ideas and concepts. This person has a creative, visionary nature. The basal right section specializes in feelings and harmonious relationships. These people have a very warm, inclusive nature. Finally, the basal left section specializes in organizational, step-by-step procedures. Basal left people are very orderly and prefer to follow rules to the letter.

Natural preferences comprise one layer of what makes us uniquely "us". Another layer consists of our introversion and extraversion set points. This refers to the level of stimulation we need to function at our best. For example, in the morning an extremely introverted person is already internally awake when they physically wake up. They likely prefer to sit quietly and read while eating their breakfast in a peaceful environment and don't require additional stimulation.

On the other end of the scale is the extremely extraverted person. These folks prefer to hit the snooze button several times in the morning trying to sneak a few more minutes of sleep. However, once they are up and out of bed, they will whip open the curtains, turn on the stereo and the television and have a conversation with the nearest person because their brains require a lot more external stimulation in order to function optimally. As students, they likely prefer to study with the stereo blasting.

You can imagine the clash that occurs when these two extremes are in each other's space! Fortunately, nature always provides a balance and only about 30% of the population falls into the "extreme" designations. The remaining 70% of us have a great deal of flexibility regarding our preferred environments depending on the type of task we are working on.

Misunderstandings can be avoided if we realize that we're all unique in our abilities and our preferred environments. Introverted students may prefer to have one or two close friends and seek quiet environments. These students like to study, play by the rules and generally enjoy the traditional school system.

More extraverted students prefer a lot of action happening around them. They find it hard to sit still in a quiet classroom and prefer hands-on learning rather than reading and writing. They are easily bored but it's boredom based on a lack of activity rather than on the subject at hand.

For example, Samantha was struggling with her son, Charlie, who didn't seem interested in family activities. While his older brothers were out playing competitive sports, Charlie preferred to read and to keep to himself. She was deeply worried that something was troubling Charlie. When she took a course on "thinking styles" she understood that while the rest of the family was made up of extraverted frontal rights, Charlie was a slightly introverted basal left. Samantha shared with the family what she learned about individual thinking styles and natural talents. Their understanding created harmony and respect within the entire family and Charlie no longer felt ashamed for being different.

As a parent, you know your child the best. Using this brain science information, spend some time watching your child and note the things they like or don't like. Watch how they handle different situations and see how they fit into a particular area of giftedness.

Positive parenting gives your child a variety of experiences so they can determine what fits them the best. If your child tries something and doesn't like it, it's okay to move on to something that fits them a little better. We need to respect our children's right to grow into areas that suit them and not try to fit them into our own preferred areas.

The latest brain science tells us our children are each gifted in their own special way. This knowledge is especially important as our children work their way through school and onto career planning. We can nurture our children's giftedness by identifying and encouraging their natural talents.

As a parent, one of the best ways for you to help your children thrive – once you have learned about thinking styles – is for you and all adults working with children (teachers, etc.) to understand their own preferences and to manage their own pattern with a minimum of falsification of type. Living true to type and modeling that type of healthy self-awareness is the best example we can give our children.

To find out more about Mindful Parenting: 21st Century Parenting Secrets, Eastpark Educational Opportunities Council is offering an evening workshop on Tuesday, March 20 at 7 PM. Please call 753-2822 to register.

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*Fueled by a desire to help people reach their full potential, Desiree Bauer traveled to the United States to study under both the Hermann International Group and Dr. Katherine Benziger, two of America's foremost authorities on thinking styles and their impact on individual success, health and wellness. Through educational workshops, Desiree teaches her clients how to achieve their personal and professional goals by identifying and maximizing their natural strengths. She can be reached at (403) 356-1598 or visit her website: [www.2020mindsight.com](http://www.2020mindsight.com). ©2007*