

This 15 years old teenager, with a extraordinary high IQ, who will show us the gifted children's specific needs, with her collaborating with her biography, which she named it "THE GIFT".

Most of the references that I have about my life till I was 4 years old come from the stories and anecdotes that my parents tell me.

I seems that I started to walk when I was 10 months old and since one month less they could understand me quite well. My relatives ensure -although I think they exaggerate, that for that they are my relatives- that I was surprisingly awake and my speech was strikingly.

My own memories, although blurry, start at the time of preschool. Like many girls, I cried a lot the first day of school in front of that huge building, with endless and impressive stairs that would become all my world.

I think I was naughty, very naughty, and I loved to tease the nun. What we did in class wasn't difficult at all -for me- but I put all my effort, at least at the beginning, and the results left the teachers pleasantly surprised. I took a lot of their affection and I, even though I was bored, I endured it to please them.

When my nun finally noticed that my exercises were always solved before the others', she decided to take me from time to time for making activities with older girls- although for me they seemed really old, they were only five years old. With that, on the basis of noticing what they explained to them when I was in the smaller girls' table (they were in the same class), one day I arrived home and started reading. I didn't need to think about what I was doing, I didn't need to spell the words. Without me knowing how, I knew how to read like a 8 or 9 years old girl.

Since then, was when I started to stand out from the other girls. They "admired" me because of my drawings or my handcraft, because in the other things I didn't want neither I had the chance to let them know my level.

Sometimes, my tasks enthused my teacher specially, and she always knew which was the best way to reward my effort: she showed it in front of me to the other teachers and I truly appreciated her approbation, because was that approbation what I was looking for. In those moments I felt great. It wasn't presumption, I only aspired to enjoy their appreciation, because then I was convinced that only if I was smart I would get the affection that I was seeking from the older. However, since that moment, the boredom tormented me.

All previous things got worst when I started Primary School. The new teacher wasn't like my beloved previous teachers. She didn't give us her love. She didn't allow me to keep me busy when I finished my exercises, she didn't like that I gave her so much work. Moreover, and on the top, I was a tremendous critical girl. I have always been the terror of little qualified

teachers, and the problems that that generated started with that teacher precisely:

I corrected her mistakes continually, it was like a compensation, something to distract with because I couldn't do anything else. She saw me different, and she used to yell me: "repellent girl!, why couldn't you be like the others?"

Well, till then I didn't think that I could be different, and I didn't know that I should change my behaviour to be "normal". That question was in my head for a while, but my parents convinced me that I wasn't weird, that I shouldn't worry about it.

What didn't end were y problems. Around the middle of the course they made a psychological test to all of us, "this is truly fun" I thought. For once I could show my wit, my imagination or my ability in something fun. Moreover, they encouraged me to do my best.

Well, I did it, and few days after they called my parents for talking with the Psychologist and they made me some individual tests. Actually, I didn't know what was all about. I only noticed that my teacher attacked me even more.

I didn't get her to say "good job!" not even once in the whole year. At the end I stopped putting effort and I lost quality. In the end, why should I work if they wouldn't reward me with not even a smile?

Otherwise, my relationship with my classmates was good. Between them, I wasn't different at all, or at least I tried it. Moreover, I was docile: I let anyone influence and direct me and I was satisfied doing it, because when it was me the one who suggested something, my ideas were taken as strange and I used to end up alone. My parents helped me, they played with me, and the gave me difficult things to do. I loved challenges, which normally, I overcame them.

As I expected, 2<sup>nd</sup> of Primary School gave me new possibilities and new people: I could help the teacher explaining something a classmate who didn't understand, I could go to the blackboard to solve the exercise,... It wasn't that much, but that was better than staying in my place listening for the tenth time the explanation that I already knew from years. The "teacher" couldn't praise my tasks properly, because that demoralized the students that couldn't do that much. All which repeated something that I considered unfair: it was painful to see how my "teacher" praised the others for inferior jobs than mine and I was denied her approbation. I seemed doom to never get what I expected so much.

In that course my parents decided to send me to an English Academy. As they told me, because the Psychologist recommended it, but the problem was to find one that admitted me, being so young. Finally we found one.

All my classmates were older than 11 years old and they didn't behave well with me, the level didn't seem that high for me, but it was difficult for me to understand what they said in class, so, I learned almost all reading the text at home.

I don't know what seemed so funny to my classmates when I spoke, which was really harmful for my pride, which is not precisely what I need. The teacher, a English native, that didn't speak Spanish didn't understand my complaints and she laughed with the others. Until one day I finally felt so humiliated that I stopped going to the lessons.

During those years, the relationship with my parents was good. They suggested me things to do, they bought me books and notebooks with problems to entertain myself, which used to be 3 years above the course that corresponded me. I told my parents my problems and asked them all the questions that popped into my head. This situation continued till I was 10 years old.

Advancing in the Primary School, the subjects became more and more boring. They were more theoretical and we made less exercises, limiting my possibilities to entertain myself to nothing. That given, I just started to abstract myself as much as possible in the explanations, meanwhile in class they explained any concepts that were evident for me, I lived an adventure with the protagonists of my books.

Within an hour I travelled with my imagination the most varied places. The nuns and the teachers knew it for sure, but they didn't call my attention because they knew my grades would be fine.

I got used not to do the tedious homework exercises at home. My mind only came down from the clouds once in a month, during the exam, and I got the highest grade. This made that in my report card was quite curious, while my attitude was "bad" and in the gap for "does she do her homework?" was "Never", the column with the knowledge was a long row of "+", which meant A+. Neither my parents nor my teachers achieved to change my behaviour, why should I waste my time and energy in something unnecessary and boring when I could use that time for rescuing the Lost Ark with Indiana Jones? Once I got so much into the book that the nun needed to come and shake me to let me know that they were calling me.

In view of the misuse of my capacities, my parents changed me to another School. I was conscience of my giftedness, and I know that helped to be admitted.

It was a mix school. By then I was in 5<sup>th</sup> of Primary School and I used a very select vocabulary for my age. I liked the precision and I aspired to say exactly what I wanted, determining the most slight tint without using fillers. What I wanted the most was to have friends, and for that I knew that I should behave, express and feel the same as them and that is what I did.

I abandoned my old way of expressing my self for the reduced and stereotypical vocabulary of the ones that I wanted as friends. In class I abandoned my reverie and I started to talk and be naughty, I even tried with all my strength that the teacher did not like me and fell in love with any boy. My efforts, were not in vain, soon I became between they boys "one of them", I appreciated more the boys' loyal friendship than the girls' one. I was the one who got along the best with them and I also had girl friends. Then I felt completely happy, I was the least alike to the prototyped gifted child: naughty, rebel, good at sports,... But happiness didn't last long. Let me explain. Till then my parents had been my confidants, I told them everything and I followed their advices, but when I started to suppress myself more than normally they noticed the change and little by little they started to irritate themselves. What mattered the most for them was my new way of talking. I needed to choose: my parents or my friends. Taking into account that I spent the whole day between the school, where I stayed for lunch, and the academies, where I had used the same technique obtaining the same results, and seeing that I only treated my mum at night and my father only few months a year (he worked abroad), I resolve that my real world developed with the other children. For that reason I decided to keep hiding my real personality in benefit of my social relationships (however I got still good grades). In order to avoid the continuous fights, I created, then, a new personalty for home.

I was a submissive, I learned not to tell my parents what I did at school, knowing that they didn't approve it.

There was only one thing at school in which I liked to put all my effort: writing. We did one essay every week, and it really seemed worth. My texts were sometimes poetic, care and in them my old vocabulary bloomed. But the reaction of my mates when I read these essays was derogatory, the one that is dedicated to the "teachers' pet". They said that it was corny, so I changed to a more vulgar and funny style. Only in few occasions I wrote "my way": writing contests, that weren't read in class. In that I won 2 or 3 provincials awards.

In the middle of the masquerade, hidden somewhere, was my real personality becoming more and more blurry. But what I never wanted was to completely give up what I really liked, sometimes I let my brain to breath thinking about more valuable and difficult things. I liked to ramble about the meaning of life, the shape of the universe, the possibility of a complete emptiness -the nothing- and its supposed properties, and so on.

As I got more confidence in my environment I started to show my abilities in class. I did it specially during the hour of Natural Sciences, which I always loved. I answered all the teacher's questions, until that he himself needed to stop me with a harmful and humiliating comment, one of those that I hate so much and I needed to suffer so many times: "here goes the encyclopedia!, can't you even let the others to try?" If there is something that disgusts me is that somebody compares me with a computer or an encyclopedia. Since that moment I knew that my capacities would be harmful

unless I hide it at least partially.

The total rupture with my parents was accelerated by puberty. When I was twelve I joined to the group of girls that seek to be more independents. My rebellion increased in the scholar "Me": I bothered more in class and my behaviour was like a challenge to the ones that dictated the rules. I started to use some swearwords and I started to use the word "dude" or "lass" like the others.

This attitude gained the approbation of the boys and girls of my year, compensating very well the rejection that could have been generated by my superiority in the academic field. That was one of the best years of my life. I had all the friends that I wanted, I was the most appreciated girl of my class, ... that was the dream of any person of my age, and that made me believe that it was worth sacrificing my different "me".

During Christmas, they emitted on TV a program about gifted children, my mother, very interested, wrote down all the data that they gave and in few days she managed to get in contact with an Association.

In the last three years, especially, I had gone to different psychological cabinets, moreover I did a test in the school. My parents had talked with several professionals that could give them some information about how to treat my case.

Since the moment that I stopped trusting my parents, all the problems I needed to drag them myself, alone. Maybe for any other boy or girl that I had shown them they wouldn't represent the same as for me, due to my pessimist and introvert character. These questions were not at all something that my parents would reproach, but I abstained to tell them because I didn't want to be forced to accept their answer as correct. Moreover, I do not like to be taught or directed: I prefer to be autodidact and think by my own.

These problems were those that I had been thinking about since I was 10 years old, and they had acquired form and consistency in my mind. Looking around I noticed and I notice that I am way more aware than any other child and many adults. And is this conscience and my limited resources for make them fronts what provoke that those problems absorb me like abyss without end.

Seeing the degeneration of the society that surrounds me, the baseness of the human being -including myself-,... looking the problems that hang on a wire over us, and that none else seems to notice or that they prefer to leave them there for the new generations, it despairs me to think that I can't do anything.

My aspiration is to help solving any of these problems, free my children and grandchildren from living under their threat. But, what can a 12 year old girl do against the dangers that the world leaders don't know how to avoid?

I reached the conclusion that if I came to the world with a higher capacity was for Something. But the ignorance of that "Something" and the fear of taking the wrong path sunk me even more. The days that I started to think about it I ended up depress, so I preferred not to do it, too much conscience, responsibility, fear.

I guess that all those questions were the reason for me to face the new course with the aim of confront the course as well as possible. I wanted to study for the first time of my life!

It favoured me that 8th grade was an easy course. Not too theoretical, mostly practical and for understanding: that had always being one of my strengths. Moreover, the level difference with the previous years was notable, and despite my effort, the lack of the habit of studying compensate my grades and they didn't vary with respect to the ones obtained till then.

What did visibly changed was my behaviour in class. There were two persons that attracted and dominated everyone else in class. One girl, the course delegate and other, a boy that due to his rebellion, bad behaviour and bad grades was a kind of idol, the "James Dean" for the class. And it happened that I weren't friend of any of them. The situation that was created around me is difficult to describe because various points not determined influenced.

The antipathy to both leaders, who in a little more than a month convinced to more than the half of the class, even my old friends, that I was a "Stupid proud nerd" with desire to show off.

My grades, the best of the class, although I wouldn't mind if somebody surpassed me.

The abandonment of my aggressiveness towards the teachers, and may other details, negative for the others.

The result of this cocktail, one by one my ex-friends stopped talking to me. They called me "cocky" when I went to the blackboard, even though I tried to imitate the attitude of other people that aroused more sympathy. When I answered something wrong I got a burst of applause and insult from the "public" and, if that was not enough, without didn't get any support from the teachers even when they noticed what was happening.

Due to other reasons that surrounded me at that moment, the situation became harder: in the playground nobody talked to me. They insulted me, they attacked me... They broke my projects, they painted my books and despised me. While my grades were becoming better though the scholar year, the hate from my classmates was increasing, my grades were both the cause of my isolation and my consolation.

My nerves started to resent, I closed myself more and I ended up convincing myself that I was a little monster. I liked the lessons because the

subjects were interesting, but I cried because I needed to go to that daily battle.

During some time I endured the ridicule and the insults trying to be nice and sympathetic, ... for getting even worse contempt. I didn't say anything at home because I feared the reaction from my parents: I thought that it could be worst if they saw me as a betrayer.

When they saw me crying, I invented some excuse and I didn't give more importance to the situation. My mother noticed something but I always denied her suspicions. Finally, one week before the Christmas vacations, a pain in my stomach made me go to the specialist, who diagnosed a bleeding ulcer due to the nervous tension. After that I had not choice but telling everything to my mum. She gave me some advices and the course started with less tension (in part because I wasn't there and because my grades weren't showed). But soon everything was back to its previous state. The next evaluation, after we got the results, it was as bad as before: I had to endure the whispers of my classmates in class, I had to stand that they broke me the books or the pencils and they threw away my belongings. I was on the verge of depression, so my mother decided to visit my tutor. Even though he knew what was happening, he didn't show any intentions to defend me. He actually didn't appreciate me that much: the delegate was his favourite student, and... he looked at me as bas as his disciples. However, my mother went to explain my state and he promised to help me and have a meeting with me. It was a big relief to hear him saying: "Don't exaggerate!" "They don't bother you that much! Moreover, what happens is that you want to show off and draw attention. That way is not a surprise that they mess with you...." That was his help. Which caused that I despaired even more; until then, I though that I could count on the sympathy from the teachers, but I was so weird and unfriendly, so "monster" that not even them wanted me.

So, regarding that I couldn't continue like that, my parents looked for another school, without letting anyone from my school to know it. In the forth evaluation they made us a psychological test. I didn't put that much effort, I did it mostly as an entertainment, but the result was the highest in the course. There was also a section for the relationships in class; everyone knew that my class was the worst in fellowship, and I was the one who got the highest rejection level, almost the maximum, although I was the one who got closer to the reality because I foresaw the result.

Coinciding this test with a letter from the Association asking about my situation, was spread among my classmates the rumour that I was gifted and that I wanted to go to a special school. What I lacked!. To the hate faces were added the astonishment ones, curiosity and spite and I needed to denied the rumour with a resounding: "Me? Gifted? What are you saying! A gifted children school? And what would I do between those machines?.

Because, of course, that is how we are considered: machines. And in my situation I couldn't afford that such a new destroyed even more my

mistreated prestige.

The last days of the scholar year became more bearable, till then I, because everyone avoided me, spent the breaks in a far corner of the playground reading. I had read three whole book collections from the library. But three girls from my year came to me and started to talk with me till I abandoned my books and it became me the one who looked for them at the end of the class.

Once summer arrived with the summer vacations we started hanging out together and we became good friends. But I couldn't forget what happened: I was crushed. It was a real trauma. Due to that, all my security was lost. Even though I didn't show anything, I always had the sensation that I was just a "load" for my friends. I feared that they rejected me, I tried to be nice, and with that I got a nervous tension that almost in all the occasions I needed to come back home soon with stomach pain and vomiting. That didn't improve even taking a tranquillizer, on the contrary: As the next course was approaching the terror increased.

They admitted me in the new school but I was already afraid from all the kids. I thought they would also despise me and I wouldn't know how to confront them. I was very timid and I didn't want to go back to school. Moreover, to support my conviction that I would never fit well among "normal" children it was added declarations from the Director from my old school when I went to pick my scholar book and other documents. To my mum's question asking if he knew the reason why I was leaving his school, he said that he suspect to be due to the rejection that I got in class. He claimed that I shouldn't take it to heart, that in the new school it would be better; he also claimed that the reaction from the boys and girls was logical, for him what happened is that I drew to much attention, and the solution for my problems was not do as much as I used to do, but make less effort and try to not stand out that much.

My mother almost "twisted his neck" right away, because the director of the "best" school of the city was suggesting me to do what she had been prohibiting me since I was six years old.

In view of all those problems, my mother convinced me to go to a psychologist consult, so I went there to gain some self confidence and social abilities, however, finding in the query boys and girls with true psychological problems (Down syndrome, dyslexia, etc.) I felt uncomfortable. There wasn't any psychological cabinet specialized in gifted children in the whole city, so I didn't want to go back. But knowing that I knew all social abilities, I had restore part of my security.

I felt more natural and loose with my friends, we understood perfectly each other and the separation (two out the four of us changed school) didn't affect our relationship. Even nowadays we are inseparable. They know that I am intelligent although I have never told them that I am a gifted child, I will never risk to tell them. Anyway, among them I don't need to suppress myself

that much: they accepts me the way I am, and if my first friends failed me, I think I would sink again.

In the new school I didn't know anyone so I needed to start from a scratch. I behave bad enough the first evaluation so everyone could think about me without mistrust. With my behaviour nobody could call me "teacher's pet", and I even got bad grades (only two A and B the others). That way, in the first evaluation I gained the sympathy of my 1<sup>st</sup> year of high school and I continued being friend of the class.

Finally, in the middle of the school year, my mother suggested me softly to go to a group for gifted children. Against what she was expecting, I liked the idea. She was right that I didn't like to remember that I was a gifted student, but also that kind of course was something that I had been always looking for. This was on Saturday mornings at Valladolid. So the next Saturday we took the bus and went there.

The program included Studying Techniques, Concentration and Attention, Wit Challenges, Creativity, Professional Orientation, Teamwork, Tutoring and individual psychological help, and so on. Another important part was that in you free time you could meet other people like you. They also made excursions to encourage the physical aspect and cultural visits.

I went there several Saturdays but I noticed that it took away a lot of study time so I needed to leave it. Actually, in some aspects, such as Studying techniques, I didn't need orientation: I knew how I needed to do it and if I did it in a different way, I was aware of it and voluntary. That is why I didn't like that they tried to carry me through the "good path". But on the other hand it was sad to abandon my group just when it started to work well and we knew each other. We even named the group with the name that I had suggested "Nemesis". The group, even though I wasn't there for long, showed me that I wasn't a "weirdo", none of us was it.

The fact that we are gifted doesn't imply that we make genius things or something special. For us to be able to do them we need help and stimuli since we are children: in the school, at home... If no one helps us our capacity will always be potential, it will never be used nor bloom or reflect exceptional results.

At school, my boredom was still high. Only in Drawing I used to do something and I wasn't bored. Moreover, fights because I was distracted or talking and I even got one teacher upset because I corrected his huge mistakes. It seemed that I was the only one in class that wasn't willing to memorize that the aerophagy was a lungs sickness, and this detail or similar ones took away 6 or 7 A that I deserved the whole year.

But after last year, this didn't seem big deal in exchange of everyone else appreciation.

The scholar year has finished without troubles with the other students. I recovered my security and I have friends again, although the aftermath of what happened are still there. However, I want to deal with them alone and I don't want to go to a psychologist again.

I went again to Valladolid, not that long ago, and I had the opportunity to see the activities of the younger gifted students. Truly, it is sad that what they could become can be lost, that they feel different, that they have so many problems and nobody knows it. It is a pity that there are so many other in the same conditions and that they aren't getting any help. It is a pity to think that one day they could suffer as much as I did and others like me. It makes me angry that those timid girls that are unnoticed, who their own personal traumas that attack them without saying anything, without their personality allowing them to rebel. You see, I was lucky. I was always like a boy, and I did not resigning completely, which made that people discovered my giftedness. Because I was naughty, my good grades were dissimulated (nowadays having good grades is despicable among the students), and still had a bad time, even with external help.

But imagine other several little girls like I, that still see themselves obligated to suppress more their nature,... it is horrible. Now, I have 15 years old but I am more like a chameleon: my ideas, my reasoning, and my performance depends on the environment around me. Fearing the rejection I have never dared to discuss with someone important things, or to make something that they might not like, but what I just do and give to each one is exactly what they want me to do and give. I convince each one that I agree with them.

The bad thing is that I don't know how to be "myself" any more. I am not capable of externalize my ideas, I lost my true way of talking, I have converted myself in the "average person" there where I go. The one who says that being gifted is a "gift", doesn't know how wrong is. Moreover, they hang all the responsibilities on the gifted student; everyone thinks that our state is marvellous, that we are happy, then they mortify us, but after that they require us to make something genius, even though they are mentally mistreating us, they don't accept that we make any mistake. The sentence "how you, so intelligent, talk in class?" has been following me all my life, in mouth of those who don't inmutate in front of my isolation, even the teachers, adults with more judgement capacity, think about the typical gifted child as a silent computer and not a human.

It isn't a "gift" to torment yourself since you are little with the world problems. There are some things that the kids shouldn't know so they can be happy, but the gifted ones we discover them very early.

It isn't funny to be constantly afraid of disappointing someone, not being able to give what is expected from you.

It isn't good to feel yourself different, noticing that they are treating you as you were a weird specimen.

It isn't pleasant to need to hide who you are in order to live in society.

All of that isn't nice, neither fair, and that is the reason why I accepted to write these memories. I hope that with them the people could understand that being too intelligent is a load for us: they need to know that we are not proud of it, we didn't ask for it, and for coping with it and take advantage of all the possibilities, we need the help from those who surround us.

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