

# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## Faith Today



By David Gibson  
NC News Service

John loved to read science-fiction books at home. And he thoroughly enjoyed the correspondence course he took in art through a big-city museum; it put his mind and his strong powers of observation to good use, he felt.

But John's grades in the local high school were only so so, as was his interest in what went on in the school's classrooms.

At times John's parents became concerned about the time he spent alone in his room, reading and drawing. What they regarded as John's tendency to get lost in his own thoughts was a source of some apprehension to them.

Like John, Vickie also had strong powers of observation. From an early age, her parents realized Vickie could remember better than they a complicated route from one point to another. Vickie always recalled the little details of events that happened long ago. And Vickie came to be relied on to find things lost around the house, since if she had ever seen them, she almost always recalled where they were.

Vickie's parents took what steps they could to build on her abilities. The special way her mind worked surprised Vickie's parents; but they never worried about this.

John, by the way, grew up to become an excellent husband, parent and teacher. It seems his parents had less cause for apprehension than they suspected.

The stories of John and Vickie help to illustrate a point. They

## The mind's eye

were youngsters who put their human thinking center — the mind — to use in special ways. But while Vickie's parents delighted in her unique memory, John's parents were sometimes perplexed by their son.

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What do we know about this delightful, but perplexing, reality known as the human mind?

•The mind, they say, can get boggled, as in: "It boggles the mind!"

•The mind is sometimes said to lack the proper dimensions, as in: "He's very narrow minded."

•Then, of course, the mind doesn't stay put, as in: "Her mind wanders."

•Some minds live in high places called ivory towers, while others, kept idle, are called the devil's workshop.

•Some minds are aloof from reality, as in: "It's all in your mind."

•Other minds, attentive to life's complex realities, find that what has been thought through may need to be re-thought, and that an adventure of the mind can leave a person confused.

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But lest the human mind get a bum rap, let's consider some more that is known about it.

•The mind is asked to learn from the past and to help people lay plans for the future.

•In an age when people say they see little connection between life at work and life at home, the mind is called into action to help discover the links that make life whole.

•The mind is given hard labor when it comes to discernment — the need to distinguish good from bad or better from worse in a complex world.

•Quite amazing, the human mind can ask the big questions that begin with the three-letter

word "why": Why do children die? Why is there injustice in the world?

•Just as wonderful, the mind can ask "how": How can marriages grow better? How can people prevent a nuclear holocaust?

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The human mind tells us a lot about ourselves. I think it points toward the mystery within us. Is it part of our mystery that the mind can be put to use in such contrary ways?

•The mind can function in an isolated way without regard for other people; it can work without much feeling. But the mind's-eye can see into another's heart, paving the way to compassion.

•A person whose mind is filled with knowledge may become arrogant. But knowledgeable people may be the most humble, knowing they've barely scratched the surface of things.

•There is such a thing as a closed mind, I suppose. Still, that's a mind that could have enriched its owner, opening out onto the world of human interests — and helping to make life more interesting.

•Finally, the human mind can turn away from faith, refusing that kind of trust in anything or anyone else. But — and this too must be part of the mystery of human life — the same mind, touched by God, can discover little by little that the life of faith is able to become an intriguing adventure.

(Gibson is editor of Faith Today.)

The amazing human mind. It can be put to use in quite different ways, writes David Gibson. The mind's versatility can at times be perplexing. And that adds to the mystery and the splendor of the human person.