

# SPARKS IDEAS

*A Spark is more than just a passing interest or a talent. It's what you're passionate about. It's what unleashes your energy and joy, gives your life purpose and focus, and allows you to make your own unique contribution to the world.*

Everyone has, or can have, a spark, or two or three. You recently filled out a questionnaire about sparks; do you remember what you said there about your sparks?

Whether you know any of your sparks now or not, it's definitely worthwhile to explore identify, and develop one, or two, or three.

*Why?*

Because new studies from Search Institute, in Minneapolis, MN, show that teenagers who know and develop at least one spark and have three or more caring adults who help them with their spark are likely to have some great advantages and benefits:

- Higher grades in school
- Better social skills
- Better physical health
- Better school attendance rates
- More likely to volunteer to help others

- More likely to care for the earth and its resources
- More likely to have a sense of purpose
- More likely to say they are "on the road to a hopeful future"

Those are all good things to have, and things that can lead you to success in school and in the future.

But that's not all. Teenagers who have a spark and the "spark champions" who help you develop it also are:

- Less likely to experience depression
- Less likely to engage in acts of violence toward others.

So, more good stuff. Now let's get to the exploring! On the other side of this sheet is a listing of many categories of sparks. Your goal is to read through them, choose up to three categories, and then name three individual sparks (you could have more than one spark in a category). These can be sparks you have already discovered and are working on, or they can be sparks that you are interested in exploring or trying, or a mix of both.

**Sparks Categories** *(with just a few examples for each; there are many more sparks in each category)*

Music: Instrumental <i>(guitar, piano, tuba...)</i>	Nature, Ecology, Environment <i>(protecting wildlife...)</i>
Music: Conducting/Directing <i>(leading an orchestra...)</i>	Animals <i>(raising, training)</i>
Music: Composition <i>(writing song lyrics...)</i>	Computers <i>(web page design...)</i>
Music: Performance <i>(choir, playing in band...)</i>	Comedy <i>(telling jokes, improv...)</i>
Visual Art <i>(painting, drawing...)</i>	Speech <i>(debate, news anchor...)</i>
Writing <i>(poetry, stories, plays...)</i>	Spirituality <i>(studying sacred books...)</i>
Dance/Movement <i>(ballet, modern, karate...)</i>	Drama, Theater <i>(acting, directing...)</i>
Other Creative Arts <i>(cooking, fashion...)</i>	Photography/Film <i>(video, animation...)</i>
Building & Design <i>(architecture, drafting...)</i>	Living in a Specific Way <i>(with joy, caring...)</i>
Leadership <i>(student government...)</i>	Reading <i>(novels, biographies...)</i>
Entrepreneurship <i>(starting a business...)</i>	Advocacy <i>(for children, justice...)</i>
Sports/Athletics <i>(soccer, swimming...)</i>	Family <i>(ancestors, being...)</i>
Learning <i>(math, science, history...)</i>	Outdoor Life <i>(fishing, camping...)</i>
Teaching/Coaching <i>(a sport, a language...)</i>	Journalism <i>(radio and TV production...)</i>
Relationships <i>(being supportive...)</i>	Mechanical, Engineering <i>(electronics, repair...)</i>
Serving, Helping, Volunteering <i>(tutoring, counseling...)</i>	Solving Social Problems <i>(poverty, homelessness...)</i>

Spark Category	Specific Spark
<i>Example: Leadership</i>	<i>Example: Motivating a group of people</i>
<i>Example: Other Creative Arts</i>	<i>Example: Designing my own clothes</i>

## Tally Sheet for Spark Categories

Music: Instrumental	Nature, Ecology, Environment
Music: Conducting/Directing	Animals
Music: Composition	Computers
Music: Performance	Comedy
Visual Art	Speech
Writing	Spirituality
Dance/Movement	Drama, Theater
Other Creative Arts	Photography/Film
Building & Design	Living in a Specific Way
Leadership	Reading
Entrepreneurship	Advocacy
Sports/Athletics	Family
Learning	Outdoor Life
Teaching/Coaching	Journalism
Relationships	Mechanical, Engineering
Serving, Helping, Volunteering	Solving Social Problems