



SPARK

How to Lead Yourself and Others to Greater Success

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Chapter 2: Your Character: The Congruence Between Values and Actions

Exercise 1: Your Character

Exercise 2: Discovering and Developing Mentors

Additional resources available at sparkslead.us

Exercise 1: Your Character

Values are important — not only can they serve as self-fulfilling prophecies, but they're important reference points for us when making difficult decisions. When Sparks live their values, they set a more influential and inspiring example.

The below exercise is designed for you to reflect upon your most important values. Walk through the exercises step by step and then complete the self-reflection questions at the end.

1 Below is a list of commonly held values. Circle 10 that are most important to you. Feel free to add values in the spaces provided.

Achievement	Fast-paced work	Physical challenge
Advancement for promotion	Financial gain	Pleasure
Adventure	Freedom	Public service
Affection (love & caring)	Friendships	Purity
Arts	Having a family	Quality of work you do
Challenging problems	Helping other people	Quality in relationships
Change & variety	Helping society	Recognition (respect from others)
Close relationships	Honesty	Religion
Community	Independence	Reputation
Competence	Influencing others	Responsibility & accountability
Competition	Inner harmony	Security
Cooperation	Integrity	Self-respect
Country	Intellectual status	Serenity
Creativity	Involvement	Sophistication
Decisiveness	Job tranquility	Stability
Democracy	Knowledge	Status
Ecological awareness	Leadership	Supervising others
Economic security	Location	Time freedom
Effectiveness	Loyalty	Truth
Efficiency	Market position	Wealth
Ethical practice	Meaningful work	Wisdom
Excellence	Merit	Work under pressure
Excitement	Money	Work with others
Expertise	Nature	_____
Fame	Personal Growth	_____

2 Now that you have identified your top ten, imagine you are only permitted to have five values. What values would you give up? Cross those five off. Now you can only have four values. Eliminate one more. Finally, bring your list down to your top three values and rank them in priority. You should now have identified the number one value in your life that you care most about.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3 Take a look at the top three values on your list and answer the following questions.

1. What do these values tell you about yourself?

2. How well are you doing at living these values?

3. What is at least one thing you can commit to in order to live and lead more authentically?

4. Who must you enlist to support you in this commitment in order to maximize chances for success?

Exercise 2: Discovering and Developing Mentors

Sparks recognize that no one achieves lasting success on their own. We all want — and can benefit greatly from — mentors who can encourage us to be our best and help us leverage our strengths and confront our blind spots.

Finding these mentors, however, can be difficult. Then, when we have them, it's hard to figure out how to nurture these relationships.

This exercise is designed to get you thinking of who within your network can mentor you and will also give you ideas on how to build these relationships.

1 Discovering Mentors

1. Who, within your network, do you admire and why? (List several individuals. These can include personal and professional connections.)

Name	Why I admire this person

2. Who, among the individuals you listed on the previous page, do you feel would be open to a mentoring relationship — i.e. a relationship where you can learn from their experiences, as well as approach them and ask questions related to challenges or opportunities you're experiencing?

3. What actions are you going to take immediately to approach these individuals to start building your relationship? (Actions can include: Inviting them to coffee/lunch, scheduling a meeting in their office, etc.)

Helpful Hint

When reaching out to a prospective mentor, keep it informal. Here's some text that you can use:

Dear [Name],

We've worked together for [x] years and I've admired how you've developed your career. Would you be interested in grabbing coffee or lunch soon so I can ask you questions about career navigation? I'm sure your insight, along with your experiences, could benefit me greatly. As I grow in my profession, I'd love to learn more from professionals — like yourself — who can share their best practices.

Thank you,
[Your name]

2 Developing Mentors

After you've had a chance to meet with a few prospective mentors, here are a few activities you can engage in to continue to develop the relationships:

- Put a reminder in your calendar every other month to invite your mentor to coffee/lunch so you can stay engaged
- Share any career success you have via email
- If they gave you career guidance, share with them your feedback on how you implemented it
- Send along articles of interest and ask their opinion on it
- When you're faced with a difficult career decision, ask them for their opinion — and when they offer it, take it into consideration
- There's no need to treat mentoring relationships as if you have to form a pact — keep the relationship informal so you don't put pressure on yourself or them

Ultimately, you need to own your mentoring relationships — you can't expect your mentors to own them. You can demonstrate ownership by initiating conversations and sharing news. Keep in mind that your mentors are busy, which is probably why they're so successful. Make the relationship easy for them. Don't overwhelm them with communication — reach out to them when it's appropriate.

Developing mentoring relationships takes time, but they're worth it. Good luck on this endeavor!