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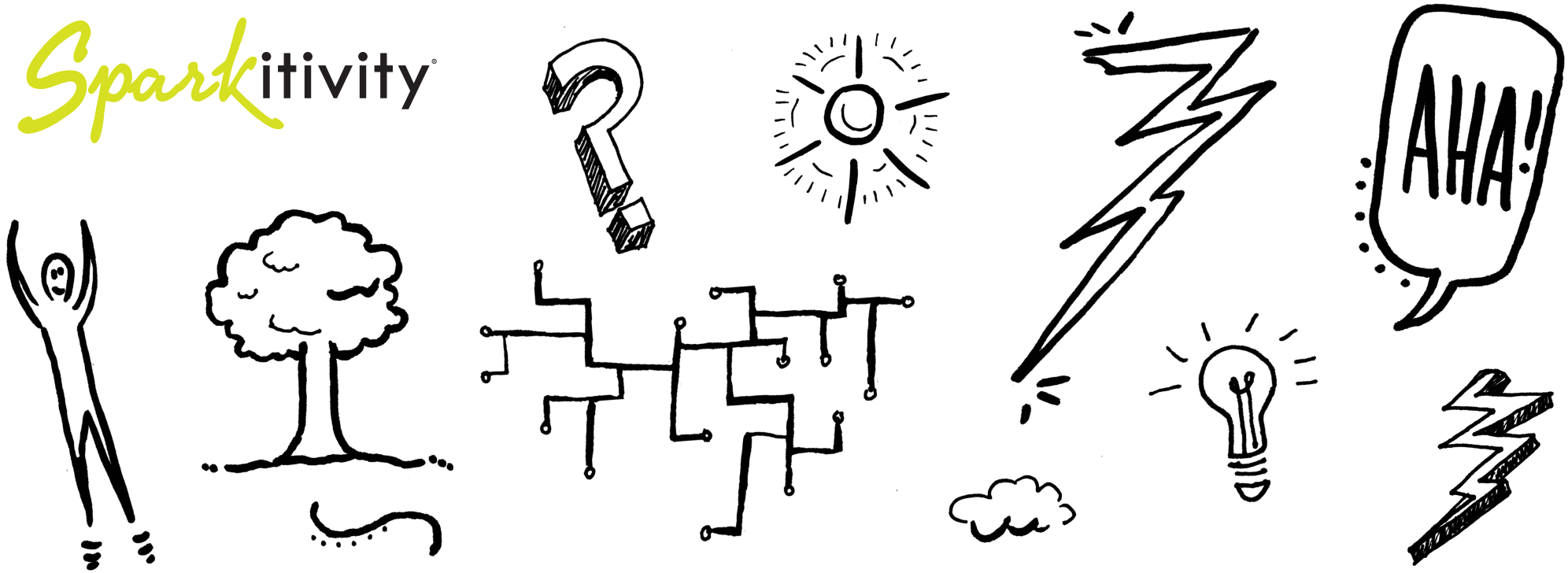
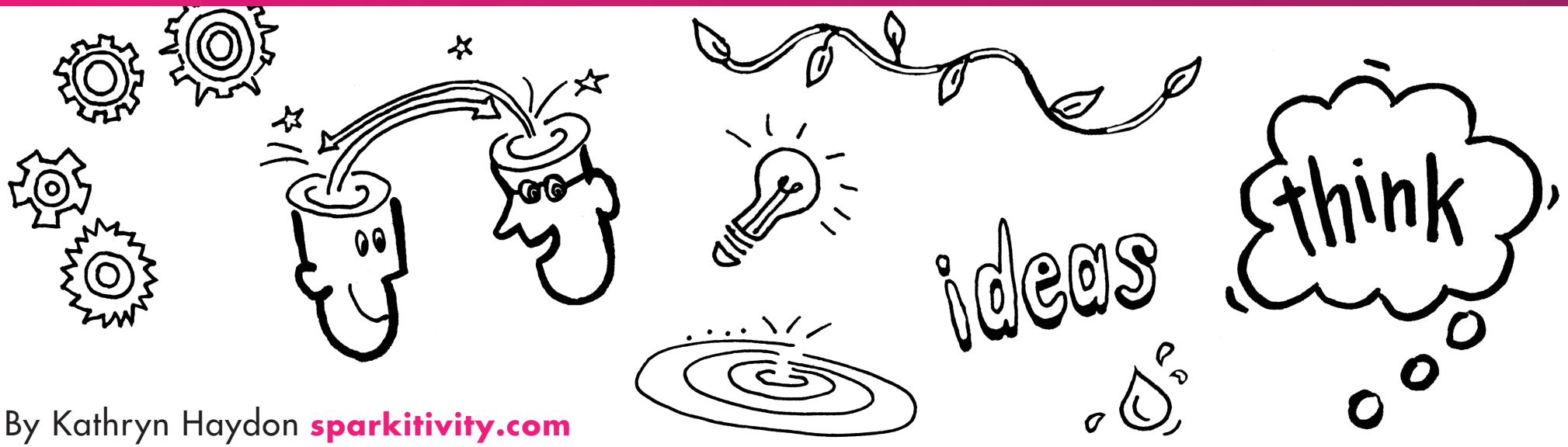


Climate Check Tool



By Kathryn Haydon **sparkitivity.com**

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Sparkitivity Climate Check Tool

The race to innovate is on. The pace is accelerating and the goal posts seem to move daily, hourly.

A team's ability to innovate is a function of team members' individual creativity. When leaders facilitate the individual creativity of their teams, people are more engaged and more innovative.

But how well does the climate in your organization support maximum individual creativity?
The answer to this question is a critical factor that underlies the capability to innovate.

Innovative teams function like healthy ecosystems. The people and the way things get done interact in a climate whose tone is set by leadership.

Will your organizational climate sustain innovation in the long-term?

One way to do a gut-check on your team's potential to create innovative change is to use Sparkitivity's ***Climate Check Tool***, based on Göran Ekvall's seven decades of research on creative environments.

Ekvall is the authority on organizational climate research with regard to innovation. He found that creativity thrives under the direction of courageous leaders who value the individual creativity of their team members. Ekvall identified ten dimensions that must be present in a climate to fully support individual creativity.

On the Sparkitivity ***Climate Check tool***, we've included the ten Ekvall dimensions plus one additional: meaning. Recent research has stressed the importance of finding meaning in one's work.

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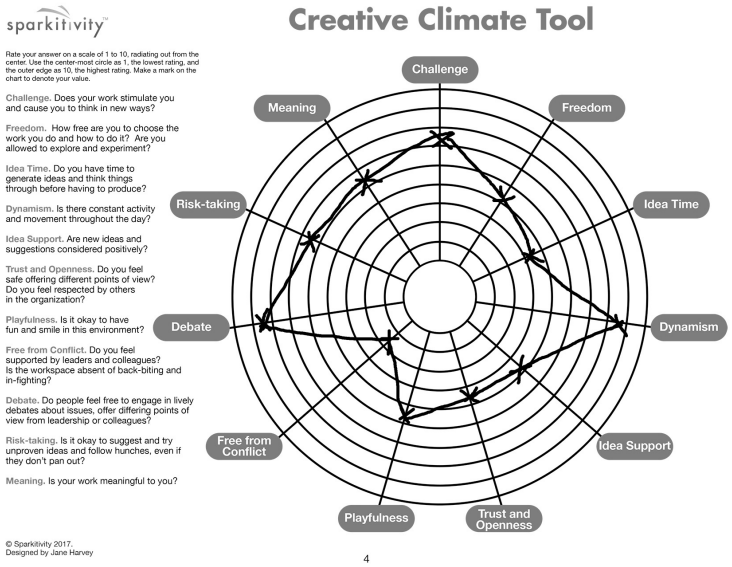
How to use the tool:

Answer the questions for each dimension.

Using the chart on page 4, read the prompts for each dimension and rate your response on a scale of 1 to 10, radiating out from the center. Use the center-most circle as 1, the lowest rating, and the outer edge as 10, the highest rating. Make a mark on the chart to denote your value (e.g., *challenge dimension*: if your work stimulates you and makes you think in new ways all the time, rate it 10. If you never feel challenged, rate it 1.)



After you have rated each dimension, draw a line clockwise connecting each of your marks on the chart. The resulting shape demonstrates visually where your climate strongly supports creativity, and where it could be improved.

After you have completed the tool, print another copy and start a fresh exercise. Take on the perspective of your employee(s) or team members. How might they answer? Viewing climate dimensions through their eyes,

you will gain a sense of how well individual creativity is supported. Does your team or organization have a solid innovation foundation?

How to move forward:
Celebrate the dimensions in which your organization supports creativity!

If there are any dimensions with a weak rating, set aside time to generate ideas for improvement. Ask this question:

> ***In what ways might I be able to improve this dimension for myself and others?***

During the ideation process, be sure not to shut down emerging thoughts with criticism. Let ideas flow first. Write them down even if they seem unlikely or wacky. You never know how one idea might lead to another. Think honestly about what might be needed to create change. Try to come up with at least 10-15 ideas.

Next, choose one idea that is easiest to implement *tomorrow*. It takes practice and perseverance to spearhead a climate shift, but jumping in and getting started sends a signal that work life can be improved.

Want to go further in building a climate of innovation?
Contact Kathryn Haydon at Sparkitivity: inspired@sparkitivity.com or 805-798-1041. Kathryn delivers keynotes and leads corporate workshops to help draw out employee creativity, setting the stage for renewed creative vigor and sustained innovation.

Sources:

Göran Ekvall. “Creative Climate.” In *Encyclopedia of Creativity* Volume *I, A-H,* edited by Mark A. Runco and Steven R. Pritzker, 403-412. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1999.

Scott G. Isaksen, Kenneth J. Lauer, and Göran Ekvall. “Situational Outlook Questionnaire: A Measure of the Climate for Creativity and Change.” *Psychological Reports* 85 (1999): 665-674.

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Creative Climate Tool

Rate your answer on a scale of 1 to 10, radiating out from the center. Use the center-most circle as 1, the lowest rating, and the outer edge as 10, the highest rating. Make a mark on the chart to denote your value.

Challenge. Does your work stimulate you and cause you to think in new ways?

Freedom. How free are you to choose the work you do and how to do it? Are you allowed to explore and experiment?

Idea Time. Do you have time to generate ideas and think things through before having to produce?

Dynamism. Is there constant activity and movement throughout the day?

Idea Support. Are new ideas and suggestions considered positively?

Trust and Openness. Do you feel safe offering different points of view? Do you feel respected by others in the organization?

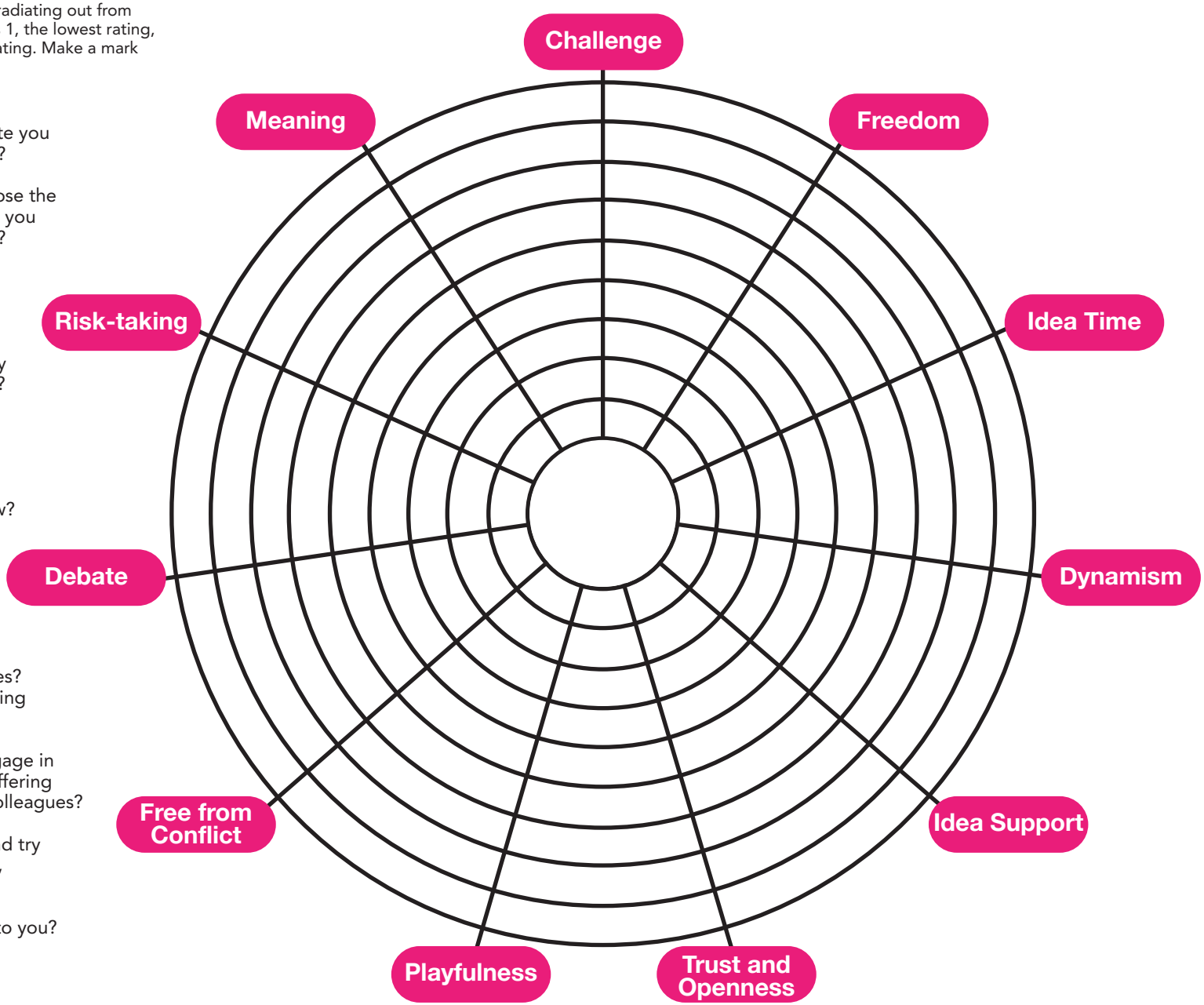
Playfulness. Is it okay to have fun and smile in this environment?

Free from Conflict. Do you feel supported by leaders and colleagues? Is the workspace absent of back-biting and in-fighting?

Debate. Do people feel free to engage in lively debates about issues, offer differing points of view from leadership or colleagues?

Risk-taking. Is it okay to suggest and try unproven ideas and follow hunches, even if they don't pan out?

Meaning. Is your work meaningful to you?



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