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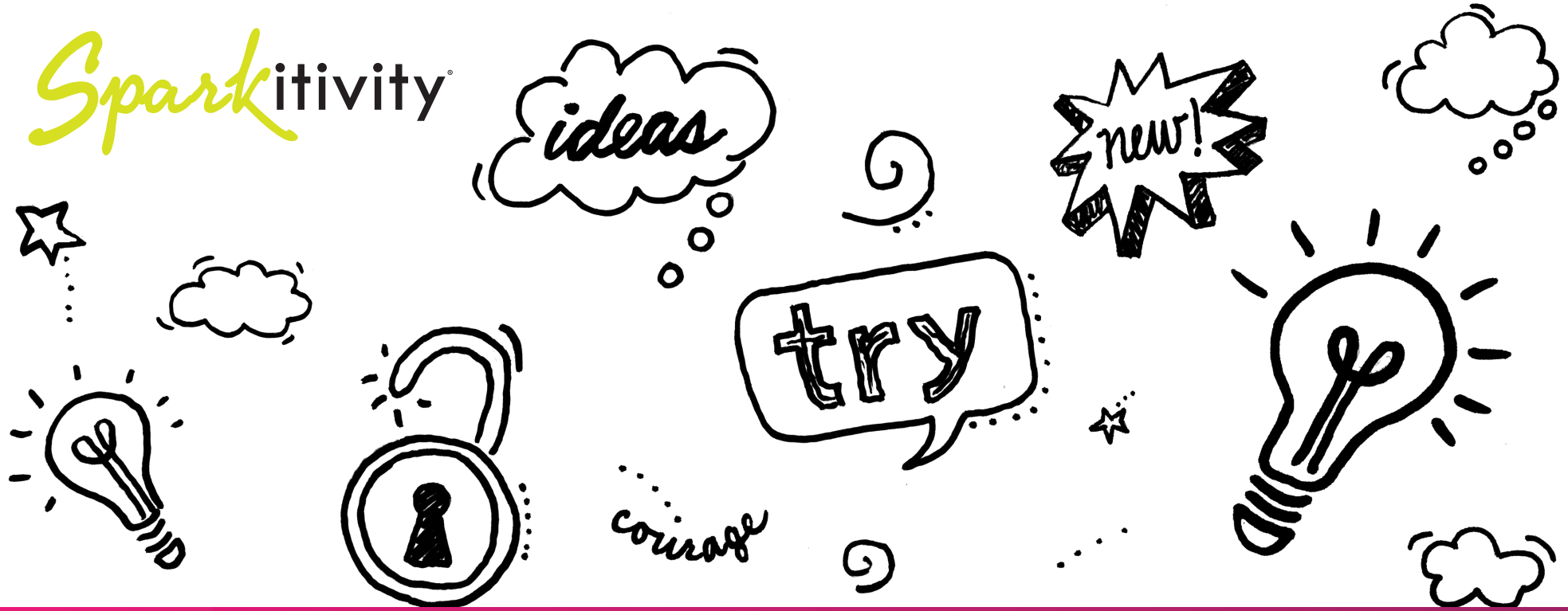
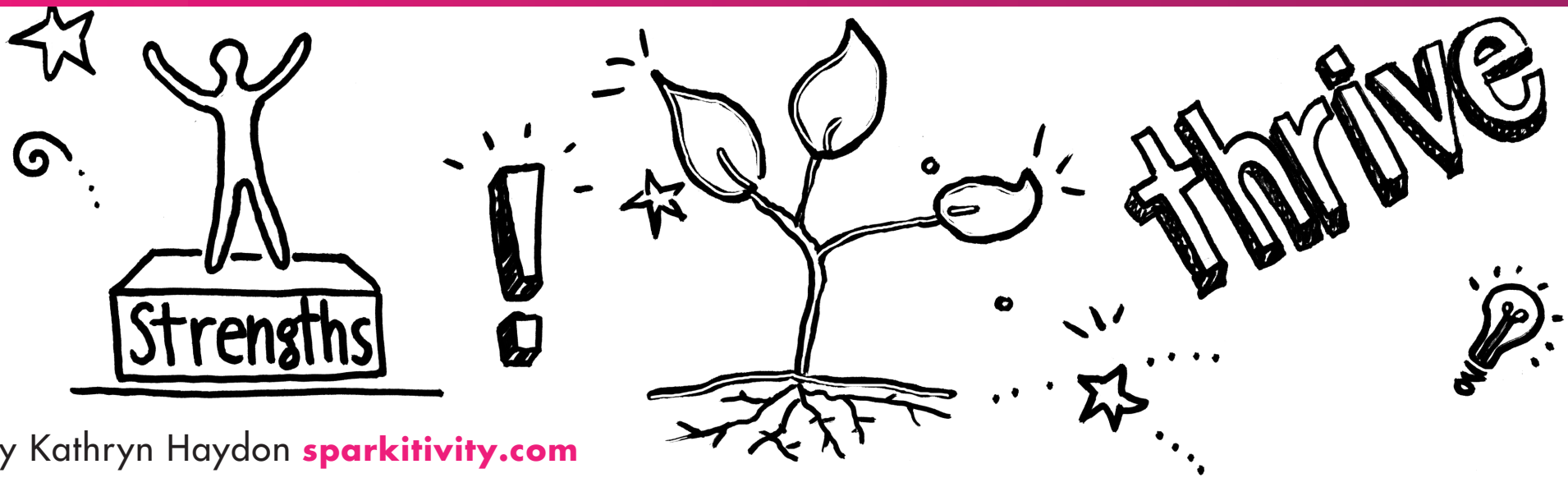


Creative Strengths Spotter



By Kathryn Haydon **sparkitivity.com**

Sparkitivity's Creative Strengths Spotter

Thank you for connecting! At Sparkitivity, we are all about creative strengths. Why?

Because identifying creative strengths is the first step to unlocking your problem solving potential.

In a world with excessive focus on fixing weaknesses, looking at strengths creates a distinct advantage.

A strengths mindset lays the foundation that helps children and adults build on what they have.

It allows them to gain self-knowledge. Self-knowledge gives them confidence. Confidence gives them courage to try new things and think up new ideas.

People who use their creative strengths are happier and more engaged. As they leverage their creative thinking superpowers, they can solve problems and adapt to continual change.

We designed the **Creative Strengths Spotter**, based on Dr. Gary Davis's extensive research of creative characteristics, to help you set yourself and your students up for a life of deep thinking and creative freedom.

Here's how to use it. Use this tool for yourself first, and then do it with or for your kids or students.

STEP 1

First, think about how you, your child, or your student spends free time, when (s)he lights up, and how you might describe his/her personality. (Enlist parents' help, or even give this Creative Strengths Spotter workbook to them to complete at the beginning of the year.)

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On one of the t-shirt pages, choose all of the t-shirts that represent characteristics that your student expresses. Use the Creative Strengths Key for guidance.

Once you've given yourself time to select as many t-shirt characteristics as you'd like, think about which three are most intensely expressed by this student.

Select one of the three as the top strength expressed by the student.

For the top strength, ask:

"In what ways is this strength expressed at home, school, or in other settings?"

STEP 2

Now ask:

"What might be all of the new ways this student could use this strength at home, school, or in other settings?"

Try to list at least five answers for the question in Step 2. Think about how you might leverage these strengths to help the student overcome challenges. Review the lists and consider which is in your power to implement most easily. Choose one idea and take action on it today.

After you have completed the tool, make another copy and start it fresh together with the student (from about age 7 and up). Then discuss plans for getting started on new ways to use the strengths you both identify.

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The Creative Strengths Spotter gives you the opportunity to dip your toes into the transformative power of creativity that hundreds of Sparkitivity clients have experienced. It's an introduction to the science of how to nurture and develop creative strengths. This is just the beginning and can help you develop a classroom culture that nurtures creativity and extends to your students' family life.

CREATIVE STRENGTH COUNTERFEITS

When creative strengths remain unidentified, misunderstood, or don't have channels for expression, they can atrophy like unused muscles. When this happens, what would otherwise be useful creative strengths can look like behavior or learning problems. Sometimes it is easier to identify a strength by seeing its counterfeit.

For example, a child who seems disengaged in class may actually be using a rich imagination to daydream. If we can identify this imagination strength, we can work to engage it so it can be applied productively.

At the end of each creative strength description, you'll find a note that says, "If left unsupported, this creative strength may present as _____." If you can't see a particular student's creative strength, see if you can identify its counterfeit and then work to find avenues to reawaken it as a strength!

If you'd like to learn more:

Jane Harvey and I created a fun, quick-start guide to the science of creativity to support your efforts. We know you are busy, so we distilled decades of research and best practices into a thin book you can even read sideways. *Creativity for Everybody* gives you a fast and rich understanding of your creative thinking superpowers. Each creativity topic is anchored to evidence in the research section of the book.

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Personalized support:

At Sparkitivity, we are dedicated to helping unlock potential to set adults and children up for a full, happy life in a fast-paced world. For over two decades, our personalized support has helped meet the specific needs of hundreds of students, teachers, and leaders. Want to better understand your square-peg students and how to engage them in learning? Want to better understand yourself and how you can maximize your potential and satisfaction at work and in life? Email us at inspired@sparkitivity.com or call 805-798-1041 for professional development, consulting, and keynote offerings. You can see a selection of current offerings on our website as well: https://sparkitivity.com/training/

I look forward to supporting your creative strength spotting journey!

All the best,

Kathryn Haydon
Founder, Author, Speaker

P.S. We'd love your feedback on how the Sparkitivity Creative Strengths Spotter helped you.
Send us your thoughts => inspired@sparkitivity.com

Reference for Strengths: Davis, Gary. *Creativity is Forever*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 2004.

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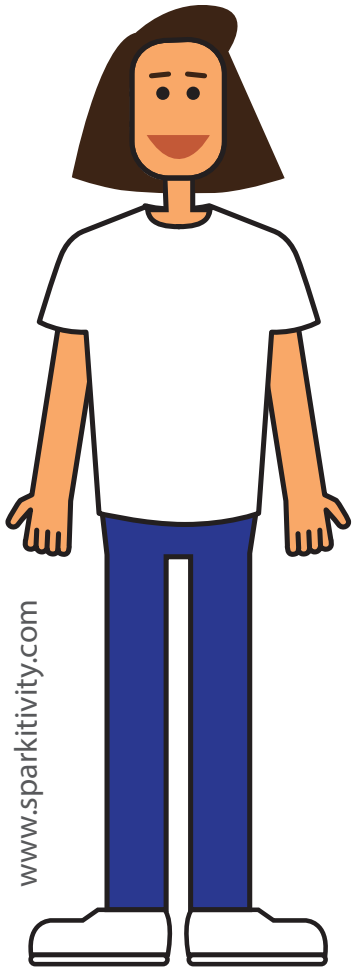
Creative Personality Traits



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I am AWARE that I am CREATIVE

I am ORIGINAL

I am INDEPENDENT

I am a RISK-TAKER

I am ENERGETIC

I am CURIOUS

I have a SENSE OF HUMOR

I am IMAGINATIVE

I like COMPLEXITY and AMBIGUITY

I am EXPRESSIVE

I am OPEN-MINDED

I am THOROUGH

I NEED ALONE TIME

I am PERCEPTIVE

I am SENSITIVE

I am EMPATHIC and ALTRUISTIC

Adapted from Davis, Gary. Creativity is forever. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 2004).

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Designed by Jane Harvey

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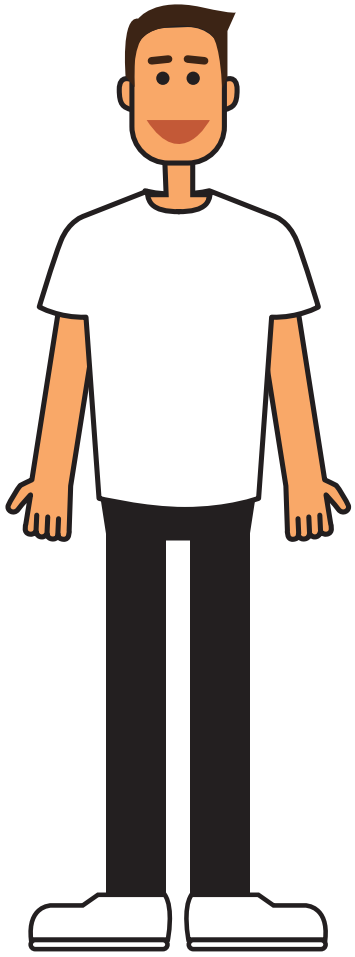
Creative Personality Traits



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Creative Strengths Key

AWARE OF CREATIVENESS: You value original ideas. You like coming up with new ideas and solving problems. Those with this strength may feel very different from others.

ORIGINAL: You like some or all of these: imagining, asking "What if . . .?", doing things your own way, having lots of ideas, inventing, using metaphors, using imagery, being unique. If left unsupported, this strength may leave you feeling weird, like an outcast.

INDEPENDENT: You are a free spirit, do not fear being different, like thinking individually, question what others say, are strong-willed, are self-confident, like to set your own rules, and sometimes need to keep your distance from "what everyone else is doing." You believe in your ideas. If left unsupported, this strength may present as defiance or negative non-conforming behavior.

RISK TAKER: You are some or all of these: courageous, not afraid to try something new, reject limits that others try to impose on you, optimistic, do not mind the consequences of being different. If left unsupported or misunderstood, this strength may present as impulsivity or a tendency to make careless mistakes.

ENERGETIC: You are some or all of these: adventurous, ambitious, hard working, can concentrate deeply on something you are interested in, can be impulsive or spontaneous. You find joy in doing work that you love. On the positive side, people might call you active, alert, enthusiastic, or expressive. If this strength is misunderstood or left unsupported they may say you are hyperactive or overactive.

SENSE OF HUMOR: You are playful. You like to hear or invent puns and jokes that make people laugh or groan. You like playing with ideas. If this strength is misunderstood or left unsupported, people might think you are merely being disruptive or childish.

CURIOUS: You ask a lot of questions, including "Why?" You like doing experiments and taking things apart. You are interested in a lot of things. You might get distracted by a new idea or exploration. If this strength is misunderstood or not supported, people might think you are just distracted or off-topic.

IMAGINATIVE: Sometimes you can't remember what happened in real life versus what took place in your imagination. You love daydreaming and sometimes get lost in your thoughts. You like new ideas and can envision big ideas for the future. You might be attracted to mystical, metaphysical, or spiritual ideas. If this strength is not fully understood or supported, others might think you are an airhead, a space cadet, or simply disengaged.

ATTRACTED TO COMPLEXITY, AMBIGUITY: You are a complex person. You like to learn about concepts that are not easy, that have a lot to explore and understand. You may enjoy investigating mysteries—in history, in science, in

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real life, or in fiction. You're not uncomfortable if all the facts don't line up right away, and you don't need there to be one right answer. It is likely that you resist rote work and/or want to take your time to find meaning in a task. If others don't understand or support this strength, they might call you "slow."

EXPRESSIVE: You are an expressive person—either when you are talking or through interests such as art, writing, music, dance, theater. You love seeing beauty in nature, or beauty that is man-made. You like design and aesthetics. If you don't have productive avenues for self-expression, you might shut down or feel irritable and dark.

OPEN-MINDED: You are open to new experiences, to trying new things, and to new ideas. You like to listen to various viewpoints on topics and are open to spontaneity. If people don't understand or support this strength, they might think you are indecisive or unfocused.

THOROUGH: When you are doing something that you love, you are committed to your work. You like to do it as well as you can. You are organized and strive for perfection. If people don't understand your strength, they might perceive you as slow or self-conscious.

NEEDS ALONE TIME: You like people, but also need time to be by yourself to think your own thoughts, daydream, reflect on your experiences, and re-energize. You may prefer being with one other person to being in a big group. If you don't get enough alone time, you might feel irritated or stressed. If other people don't understand your need for alone time, they might think you are antisocial or uncomfortable in social situations.

PERCEPTIVE: You are good at observing the many details and emotions of life. You are intuitive, which means you have a sense about things. You like to "go with your gut," or get a feel for what you should do or say. You are good at finding the problem to solve, and sensitive to other people's needs and frustrations. You have many insights, and are good at finding patterns and making connections. Some might call you highly sensitive. If this strength is misunderstood or doesn't have productive outlets, you might feel overwhelmed or anxious.

SENSITIVE: You experience deep emotions, whether positive or negative. You like to express your feelings, or understand how other people feel. Sometimes you may appear withdrawn, moody, or impulsive because of how deeply you experience life. People might call you "too sensitive," but if you realize you have this strength you can turn it into a superpower!

EMPATHIC and ALTRUISTIC: You like to help others, or help the world be a better place. You have a sense of empathy and can "feel" what others are feeling. You like to ponder philosophical issues. You are honest and have courage to stand up for your beliefs. If this strength of yours is not understood by you or others, you might feel overwhelmed or anxious.

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Top 3 Creative Strengths

1.

2.

3.

"In what ways is this strength expressed at home, at school, at work, or in other settings?"

Top Strength _____

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

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"In what ways does this strength present as an annoyance or issue if it's not supported?

Top Strength: _____

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

"What might be all of the new ways to use this strength at home, at work, or at school?"

Top Strength: _____

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Circle two new ways to apply your strengths. Choose the ones that will be easiest and most fun to implement and start today!

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