

# 7 WAYS TO SPOT

A Deep Soul  
At Work

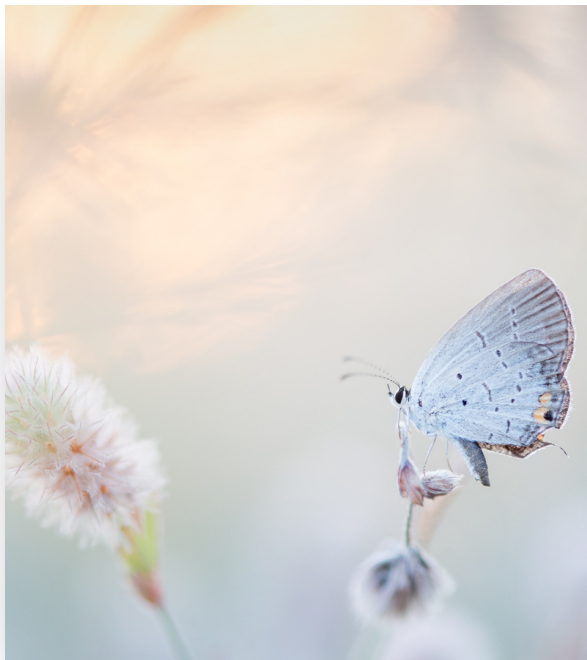
Sparkitivity®

# How To Spot A Deep Soul

Outliers, contrarians, nonconformists . . . these are little-understood thinkers who have what it takes to rethink assumptions and discover truly innovative solutions.

Recent research on the future of organizational innovation by Dr. Clayton Bunyard found that to compete in the future, such individuals will be *required* for effective innovation teams. They are not specialists, but people who have deep knowledge in several areas. Sometimes they are called polymaths or Renaissance men or women.

I call them **deep souls** and they are **key to outsmarting change**.



Identifying and engaging the deep souls in your organization will help your company lead the future. It may even save your job from getting sucked into the black hole of change.

We've created this handy tool with key characteristics and questions to help you spot the deep souls around you. You might even find that you're a deep soul yourself.

# How To Spot A Deep Soul

## Why Deep Soul Spotting is Important

The term deep soul may sound uncommon, but deep souls are common people. They can be found in every occupation from accounting to construction. They work at every level, directing multi-national companies from corner offices or checking out groceries in corner stores.

The most important unifying characteristic of deep souls is that they know how to think differently and they are not afraid to do it. Thinking differently is the key to saving the world and it is a deep soul's superpower.

However, those who think differently are often chastised. Their world-changing ideas (even incremental ones at work) are ridiculed, at least at first.

When deep souls are not understood at work, **potential growth is stunted and needed innovation stalls.**

The more we spot and nurture deep soul characteristics in ourselves and others, the better off will be our organizations, our communities, and our world. Deep souls solve problems in new ways, and there is an abundance of problems we need them to help solve!

# How To Spot A Deep Soul

## 1. Bravely Independent

Because they don't blindly follow the thinking of the crowd, people count on deep souls to figure out new ways to do things or new things that need to be created.

To whom do you go for new perspectives,  
for new ways of looking at things?

In the presence of emotional safety, they will feel comfortable suggesting uncommon ideas. In the absence of such safety, deep souls will still provide independent thoughts but also will caveat them with defensive statements like, "This is just an idea... you can change it" or "I know this idea isn't quite right, but I'm going to throw it out there anyway."

Who has a strong point of view and seems to  
be able to consider any problem in a  
different light?

# How To Spot A Deep Soul

## 2. Meaning Seekers

If you give them a project without instructions, many deep souls embrace the ambiguity of knowing what needs to be done but not how to do it.

Who does NOT constantly come back to you to ask exactly how they should do something?

They seek to know the big picture and purpose behind a task; if they align with this purpose, they will dive deep and deliver. If they aren't able to connect with the meaning, they may do "just enough."

Who goes above and beyond on projects for which they find deep motivation?

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## 3. Deep Divers

Deep souls are sometimes treated differently, encouraged to go “do their thing” because when they do they usually come up with something brilliant.

Who has executive protection to not conform to typical processes or protocol—yet still delivers exceptional results?

They may take longer to complete a task because they are going deep and making uncommon connections.

Who annoys people by taking a circuitous route to problem solve, yet is forgiven when the result is excellent?

Sometimes deep souls will make several attempts at brilliant ideas before settling on one. You'll often see them testing prototypical ideas casually before making a formal presentation. They're watching to see how others react first.

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## 4. Knowledge Questers

Deep souls are avid learners who tend to prefer self-directed learning. They are constantly pursuing new knowledge—reading, tinkering, experimenting, talking to experts. They may or may not have enjoyed their formal education, but they love to learn by following their questions and curiosities.

Who is always curious to learn more?

Frequently they bite off more than they can chew and get themselves behind schedule. That's because they tend to prefer learning new things over rote actions. They also may dive deep into one topic, learn all they can, switch to another topic, and repeat.

Who seems to know something about a lot of topics, or a lot about several topics?

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## 5. Learn by Making

Deep souls may be heard saying, "If you let me do it a different way, I can get it done better." Though a unique approach might irritate rule-followers or feel threatening to established norms, the results are often improved process or product.

Who doesn't follow directions and finds a better way, or tries to follow directions and still finds a better way?

Deep souls are repelled by admonitions to "just get it done."

They have a consistent desire to use their full thinking capacity rather than to check things off a list. They may even make seemingly simple tasks more complex to achieve this.

Who has a hard time with rote tasks but shines when difficult problems need to be solved?



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## 6. Intuitively Sensitive

Some deep soul thinkers seem to see straight through you.

Who in your work environment seems to read your mood like a book, even though you've got a great poker face?

They can have an uncanny ability to foresee the importance of developing situations that others dismiss. Sometimes it can take years for such issues to attract the needed level of attention, and then it may be too late.

Who on your team seems too obsessed with or worried about things—until they end up being important?

Deep souls may seem well-balanced 99% of the time, but can become aggrieved by the unjust treatment of others.

Who becomes incensed at unfairness, even in seemingly banal situations?

# How To Spot A Deep Soul

## 7. Crave Authentic Understanding

Deep souls are essential to the future *because* of their non-conformity. Living outside the norm allows them to see with a fresh perspective. The downside is that they often go through life feeling like others don't understand them. Mostly, they are right. They *aren't* understood.

It can be life-changing when deep souls encounter a friend, mentor, co-worker, teacher, or parent who does understand them or even tries to understand them or simply acknowledges that they might have something important to offer. Belonging requires more conformity than most deep souls are able to muster with most groups, yet they are saved if they belong even to one.

Who is a deep soul that you can spot and support with your understanding?

# HELP US FIND DEEP SOULS!

The key asset of deep souls is their ability to think differently. Unique thinking is essential to the future of your company and, incidentally, to the world. We need deep soul thinkers to find the ideas and solutions necessary to outsmart change.

However, having worked with at least hundreds of deep souls, we believe that they are some of the most marginalized types of thinkers. When deep souls are not understood at work, potential growth is stunted and needed innovation stalls.

Sparkitivity is conducting research to help support deep soul thinking at work. When we make work a better place for deep souls, it benefits everybody.

Are you a deep soul? Or, will you help us connect with the deep souls you know? Please access and share the survey link below.

[Take The Survey.](#)



For additional resources and to keep updated on our research, please sign up for our deep soul email list here:

<https://sparkitivity.com/deepsouls/>

# About Kathryn Haydon

Kathryn Haydon, creativity and innovation expert, founded Sparkitivity to deliver training, workshops, and keynotes to help you become more innovative and effective at work.



## Let's Work Together

### **Deep Soul Think Session**

Do you want to prove that what is meaningful to you in work and in life is valuable to the world, even though it's not what people expect?  
Do you experience life differently from others?

On this call, we will explore and find insights into the questions that are important to you.  
You can ask Kathryn whatever you'd like.

[Learn More](#)

