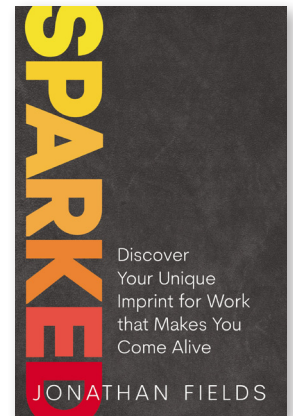


Sparked

Discover Your Unique Imprint for Work
That Makes You Come Alive

by **Jonathan Fields**



Contents

What Should I Do With
My Life?

Page 2

The Maven

Page 2

The Maker

Page 3

The Scientist

Page 4

The Performer

Page 5

The Warrior

Page 6

The Advisor

Page 7

Spark Your Work

Page 8

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We're all born with a certain "imprint" for work that makes us come alive. This is your Sparketype®, your DNA-level driver of work that lets you know, deep down, you're doing what you're here to do. Work that motivates you, fills you with purpose and, fully expressed in a healthy way, becomes a mainline to meaning, flow, performance, and joy. Put another way, it's work that sparks you.

Drawing upon years of research, experimentation, more than 25 million data-points generated by over half a million people, hundreds of deep-dive conversations with luminaries from science to art to industry and well-being, author Jonathan Fields and his team at Spark Endeavors developed the Sparketype imprints and methodology that are the basis of *Sparked*.

Sparked takes you deep into the world of the Sparketypes, revealing an entirely new depth of insights about what makes you come alive in work life, along with what empties you out and trips you up, so you can avoid those life-drains. It's a comprehensive guide to help you discover what you are meant to do and how to get started.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What it means to be Sparked and the 10 Sparketypes.
- The difference between your primary, shadow, and anti-Sparketypes.
- To recognize and avoid what trips up the Sparketypes.
- How the Sparketypes can translate to career success.

What Should I Do With My Life?

When most of us ask, “What am I here to do,” we’re thinking about work. “What is my unique contribution? To my life. To the lives of those around me. To society. Whether it’s the thing I get paid to do, or the thing, once discovered, I can’t not do, simply because it’s the air that breathes me.”

This is a state called “being Sparked.” Being sparked exists at the sweet spot between five domains:

- **Purpose.** Knowing you’re moving toward something you believe in.
- **Engagement.** Excitement, energy, and enthusiasm for the pursuit of that something.
- **Meaningfulness.** The feeling that what you do and who you are matters.
- **Expressed potential.** The sensation of being fully you and not having to hide, bringing all of your potential to the experience, and leaving nothing untapped.
- **Flow.** The blissful experience of getting lost in an activity, losing time, and becoming absorbed in the task.

Sparketypes

Early in life, we begin to exhibit a certain unique imprint or affinity—an intrinsic impulse—for work that makes us come alive. This work gives us the feeling of being Sparked. These imprints not only determine what type of work or effort we’re drawn to (and repelled from), they also tend to come with a host of common behaviors, quirks, and attachments. These imprints are Sparketypes®, which is an easy shorthand for the source code-level driver of work that makes you come alive.

Finding your Sparketype equips you with insight that immediately rings true, a sense of direction, and the freedom to finally lead from a place of truth and potential. How many Sparketypes are there? The quick answer is 10: maven, maker, scientist, essentialist, performer, sage, warrior, advisor, advocate, and nurturer.

We’re all a blend of a number of different Sparketypes, but every person has a distinct Sparketype Profile that is made up of three key components:

- **Your Primary Sparketype.** Think of your Primary Sparketype as the thing that generates the strongest impulse to exert effort for no other reason than the fact that it makes you feel alive.

- **Your Shadow Sparketype.** Your Shadow Sparketype is also a big part of you, sometimes even a close second behind your Primary. It is not, however, your strongest impulse. Think of it as your Primary Sparketype amplifier.
- **Your Anti-Sparketype.** Your Anti-Sparketype is the type of work that is the heaviest lift for you. It takes the most out of you and requires the greatest amount of recovery even if, objectively, it’s not that hard.

When you know your full profile, all three elements, it helps you decide not only what to run toward but also what to run from. The online Sparketype Assessment (Sparketype.com) allows anyone, anywhere to rapidly discover their Sparketype.

Let’s now look at six of the 10 Sparketypes. You’ll learn how each Sparketype is nourished and stifled, what you need to feel fulfilled, where you tend to get tripped up and why, how each type tends to find an outlet, and how that outlet can lead to a career and generate an income.

The Maven

Slogan: “I live to learn.”

Mavens are all about learning. Often on a level that goes beyond curiosity and lands as fascination, even obsession. As a Maven, you’re fueled by a near-primal drive to know more, even if there is no end beyond simply scratching your often misunderstood and sometimes maligned “that is insanely cool, I must know more” itch. The thing that gets you out of bed in the morning is the opportunity to go to sleep knowing more than you did the day before. You view learning as an almost sacred pursuit, one you easily get lost in.

In fact, because the opportunities to learn are often so abundant, internal, and unimpeded, Mavens drop more readily into that blissed-out, time-fugued state of flow than other Sparketypes. They sink into an 800-page biography, follow a Google search about the mating patterns of dinosaurs, or tear through a binge-worthy lineup of documentaries on a Sunday morning only to look up and wonder if it’s time for breakfast . . . at 11:00 p.m.

When working in a way that allows them the resources and control to spend the greatest amount of time immersed in the process of learning, deepening into a broad or narrow fascination, focused on a topic they feel innately drawn to, Mavens feel most alive. They become fully expressed. Sparked.

Own the fact that learning is your work oxygen. Often, this simple acknowledgment creates a shift that leads you to start seeing and creating opportunities.

What Trips You Up

In the early head-spinning days of any pursuit, for Mavens, there is generally a lot to learn, from discrete knowledge about a topic, field, or area of expertise to the culture, mission, and social dynamic of an organization. But here's the strange thing. While those fueled by other Sparketypes may be happiest once the "new information overload dust" settles, Mavens tend not to be. Why? Because Mavens gotta learn.

These experiences often hit a crisis point when, months or years in, Mavens find themselves in a position where there's little left to learn. Or so they think. For Mavens, this is death. They feel trapped.

How do you get Sparked again? Understand you are a Maven. Own the fact that learning is your work oxygen. Often, this simple acknowledgment creates a shift that leads you to start seeing and creating opportunities. Reimagine your current work. What might you do, even if it lies outside the confines of your job, that would unlock the learning gates for you?

Show Me the Money

Mavens often turn to their Shadow Sparketypes as conduits to cash, or as a "funding mechanism" for their Maven impulse. Neil Pasricha is an international best-selling author of books like *The Book of Awesome*, *The Happiness Equation*, *You Are Awesome*, and many others. His books and talks are meticulously crafted, deeply vulnerable, and generous expressions of his Maker Shadow, and also highly effective mechanisms to fund his life and his continued ability to spend inordinate amounts of time learning.

Mavens often function well on teams, where they play the role of domain expert, contributing to the collective efforts of others who then apply that expertise to the creation of a product, service, idea, or outcome that becomes the source of compensation.

The Maker

Slogan: "I make ideas manifest."

Makers gotta make. Creation is your call; it's the thing that gets you out of bed in the morning. You are most alive and engaged when you start with an idea, then turn it into something that exists in the world. Something that reflects the taste, sensibility, and notion of possibility you have in your head, the vision of what could be. And, now . . . it is. Because of you. Even if it's brutally hard, you know you're doing the thing you're here to do.

Makers are very heavily driven and also satisfied by process. When you are working in a way that allows you to spend the greatest amount of time immersed in the process of creation, you feel most alive. When the thing you are making is a true reflection of your vision, your unique ideas, lens, values, and sense of taste, you become Sparked.

When you have control over the resources, steps, decisions, and ultimate vision and are in charge of all of the elements that allow you to work toward that idea you see in your mind's eye and know is possible, you come alive.

What Trips You Up

While certain circumstances allow you to come fully alive, others shut you down. For example, decision by committee, followed by creation by committee, can be the bane of your existence, especially when those involved have different values, visions, and sensibilities. For Makers, with a strong sense of identity tied to a specific idea or ideal of what the process and outcome should look like, being constrained, hindered, or having your vision diluted by the input of others can be incredibly frustrating.

Healthy, well-aligned, and harmonized collaboration is great, but it often works better when each person has their own "creation domain" within a larger context or project. Or when there is a clear and agreed-upon "lead Maker" who largely sets the vision and approach, then brings in others to make it real.

It's important to choose carefully, negotiate wisely, and be clear about where your line in the creation sand is. Get a clear understanding of what the decision-making process will be for any endeavor before you say yes to it.

Show Me the Money

Makers have a sometimes-complicated relationship with making, service, and money. On the one hand, it's a beautiful thing when you can sell what you make, be compensated on a level that sustains you, and not have to do anything else. On the other, you sometimes feel the pressure of making what you know will sell (or earn an income), rather than what you're called to create. It's always a bit of a dance. There is no universally right answer beyond the balance that makes you feel fully expressed while also comfortably sustained.

Makers may earn their living not by selling what they create but by guiding others in the process of creation. This can be incredibly rewarding, especially when your Shadow is the Sage or Advisor or one of the more service-driven, outwardly satisfied Sparketypes. Your Maker impulse satisfies the desire to turn ideas into things, but the process of doing what you do has value to others, so you share it in the form of anything from a course or class to workshops, mentoring, and more.

The Scientist

Slogan: "I figure things out."

Scientists are all about the pursuit of burning questions, wicked problems, puzzles, riddles, and quandaries. The more involved and complex, the better. You also tend to be very process-driven. Sure, solving the puzzle, finding the solution, or figuring out the answer feels great, especially if it ends up helping others in a way that matters to you.

But it's the hunt, the process of discovery—or what Richard Feynman, Nobel Prize-winning physicist, described as “the pleasure of finding the thing out, the kick in the discovery”—that is equally, if not more, enlivening. You feel a sense of excitement, energy, and purpose not only when you arrive at an answer but through the simple experience of searching for it.

When the question, problem, or puzzle you are pursuing is tied to an area, topic, person, or community you feel some personal connection to, or innate pull toward, even if you have no idea why it feels so compelling, you become even more drawn to the work, and the feeling may well rise to the level of not just a devotion but a calling. In the Scientist's mind, even well-answered questions are ripe for better solutions and answers that are just waiting to be discovered by them.

What Trips You Up

Just like every other Sparketype, Scientists are prone to certain circumstances that hold the potential to trigger them and take them to a dark place. Interestingly enough, the triggers for Scientists are the exact opposite of what triggers so many other Sparketypes.

For example, the air that Scientists breathe is the unknown. It's that place where something's not quite right and there's a better way out there, but what exactly that is, well, it's anyone's guess. Uncertainty is the soil in which they plant their seeds and grow their solutions. It represents possibility.

As they work their Scientist magic, over time, answers start to come, solutions take form, and what was once the great unknown starts to come into focus. A specific, certain answer emerges. While this is the end-state we're taught to spend our lives working toward, Scientists love the process of getting there, and they love the fact that they figured the thing out. But they don't love being there.

If they dwell in it for too long, they get intensely uninterested, frustrated, and maybe even a tad cranky. They lose the ability to come alive and, instead, find themselves trapped in the process and slowly flatlining.

Show Me the Money

In the world of business or work, there are really only two ways to get paid. Deliver a delight or solve a problem. The latter approach is what the vast majority of businesses and jobs center around. Because of this, Scientists tend to find themselves in demand and well paid, especially in domains where the stakes are high and the impact is vast.

That said, when Scientists find themselves innately drawn to a problem, question, or puzzle that is of deep interest to them and maybe even to society, but offers no clear, pre-defined path to income or economic value to others, they may find themselves torn.

In order to resolve this tension, Scientists may find themselves pursuing more of a blended path. They'll earn a living through work that both taps and financially rewards their impulse to solve, albeit in an area that is not of great interest, then unleash that same impulse “on the side” in relation to problems or questions that may not provide meaningful financial compensation but do strongly interest them.

The Performer

Slogan: “I turn moments into magic.”

Performers come alive when animating, enlivening, and energizing—breathing life, emotion, and sensation into an experience, interaction, engagement, moment, role, or pursuit in a way that makes it come alive with energy, emotion, and understanding.

Performers are among the rarest and most misunderstood Sparketypes. Many bounce between feelings of shame when they go full-on Performer and repression when they stifle this impulse that family, friends, colleagues, and society in certain domains exalt and revere, yet in others, disdain and even punish. It is also one of the most misdirected Sparketypes, in no small part because it is so often artificially constrained by the notion that it can only be expressed in the world of the performing arts.

Like all other Sparketypes, Performers tend to most fully access the feeling of being Sparked when the thing they are breathing life into is also a true reflection of a strong interest, vision, values, and a sense of taste.

What Trips You Up

On occasion, when people discover their Sparketype is the Performer, they’ll share how they dislike the term “Performer.” Performer, they’ve come to feel, is about being “a fake.” Even worse, it’s about playing up the drama to bring unwarranted attention to yourself. It’s about wanting undue attention and praise.

But the most effective Performers are not actually the ones who dial up the drama for the sole purpose of ego gratification, attention, and reaction or those who put on a facade. Rather, they’re the ones who dial up the authenticity, integrity, trust, and craft in order to enliven an experience, moment, or interaction in a way that opens others to emotion, trust, connection, transference—and, at times, understanding, transcendence, even revelation. The intention is for the experience to land more as a gift that invites, connects, and elevates than a demand for adulation or adoration.

Show Me the Money

The work of the Performer, like the work of so many of the Sparketypes, tends to have what most would consider a conventional outlet and then a universe of nonconventional ones. The interesting thing here is that, while most of the other Sparketypes find the easiest path to a comfortable living when pursued along those more conventional paths,

for the vast majority of Performers, it’s the opposite.

The vast majority of Performers who pursue their impulse in the most conventional way, often performing arts, struggle to earn a comfortable, full-time living.

That said, all is not lost, because the impulse and skills of the Performer are incredibly valuable, in demand, and often very well compensated when they find an outlet in the exponentially larger array of nonconventional opportunities. Performers in business-development or sales roles can create and enliven an interaction or presentation in a way that leads to exceptional outcomes and substantial compensation.

Speakers, facilitators, leaders in hospitality, recreation, and beyond find countless opportunities to bring the impulse to their work in a way that makes them come alive and translates into revenue. This impulse and skill, in fact, is both rare and incredibly differentiating in the world of business.

Performers are among the rarest and most misunderstood Sparketypes.

The Sage

Slogan: “I awaken insight.”

For Sages, illumination is your call. You live to share insights, ideas, knowledge, and experiences with others in a way that leaves them in some way better, wiser, and more equipped to experience life differently—and maybe sparks something in them that makes them want to learn more.

While there is definitely a process-fulfilled side to the work that makes you come alive, you tend more often to find your fullest expression and get your greatest reward when focused on the impact you have on those you seek to help illuminate and elevate. It’s rarely enough to just know your topic well or have command over your craft. You can’t just stand in front of a room, or write a book,

give a talk, or produce a podcast and feel like you've done what you came to do. Sages want to know what you share actually lands in a way that is understood, integrated, and embodied.

When the body of knowledge you are teaching and the people you seek to impact are a reflection of topics and communities, visions, interests, ideas, values, and process that you feel intrinsically called to, you become Sparked.

What Trips You Up

Because Sages tend to be more externally service-focused, they can find themselves “over-giving” and becoming physically, psychologically, and emotionally depleted. The risk rises when the system you work within is demanding or all-consuming. It also requires you to devote great amounts of time to both the process of teaching and managing many outside factors, which tend to compound the experience of depletion.

If you are a Sage, be aware of this potential drain on your ability to give. Commit to filling your tank along the way, if not in the name of taking care of yourself, then in the name of being as effective as possible in your ability to illuminate. If you've done all you can to optimize your well-being and the circumstances under which you teach and still are left empty, you may want to explore a different approach to expressing your Sage call.

Show Me the Money

The skills and abilities of the Sage—the desire and capacity to illuminate, to turn the lights of awareness, understanding, and insight on—are forever in need in a vast array of industries, organizations, and fields. Salespeople who are great at illuminating features, benefits, points of differentiation, and reasons why the thing they're offering is exactly what is needed tend to generate high levels of sales, be well compensated, and are also appreciated by customers and clients who get their problems solved and often leave with deeper insights.

Sages in positions of leadership and management often tap their impulse not just to inspire and motivate but also transfer insight, information, and turn the light of understanding on, cultivating knowledge, autonomy, and competence, along with a greater capacity to deliver outcomes more independently. This often leads to a bump in performance, engagement, and retention that is reflected in opportunity, demand, and compensation.

The Warrior

Slogan: “I gather and lead people.”

There is, and has always been, something inside Warriors that yearns to gather people, organize them, harness their collective energy, assume responsibility, make decisions, and lead them on some form of meaningful, fun, or challenging (sometimes all three) quest, experience, mission, or adventure. For you, it's not just a skill, position, or title as a leader or community organizer; it is a DNA-deep impulse. It is the work you're here to do, even when it's personal, social, and fun.

You might express this through a deeper connection to a specific industry, field, group, or community. It might find an outlet at home, with friends or family. Some Warriors become attached to a particular area of focus, mission, or pursuit for long windows of time. Maybe you lead a faculty of teachers to raise graduation rates, or a team to invent and launch a new product, service, or company.

A certain fierce devotion to people and path must be present in order to do the deeply rewarding, yet sometimes difficult, work of gathering and leading. That ferocity is, in fact, where the moniker Warrior comes from. It's not about dominance, force, or pecking order but, rather, a willingness to stand in a place of enduring conviction and support, even when things get hard—which, when the stakes rise, they often do.

What Trips You Up

Confidence is generally a good thing, but for Warriors, it can be a double-edged sword. Warriors tend to believe they're right. A lot. This can show up constructively as strength and conviction in the face of challenge.

When you are right and are willing to hold the vision long enough for the efforts of those you lead to prove its potential, the impact can be transformative. Problem is, that same instinct can easily tip from good intentions to ego preservation, from possibility into delusion. It can show up destructively as an arrogant and dogged attachment to a wrong point of view or belief in potential, even long after the assumptions and vision that launched the endeavor have been disproven.

The difference between these two expressions of decisiveness often comes down to those two Warriorship touchstones, openness and vulnerability. Stay perpetually open to and in search of the truth, allow yourself the grace to be wrong, and accept the invitation to change course. Own decisions and all that comes with them. You and those you sought to lead may not arrive at the place you

Viewed as trusted guides and catalysts who accelerate outcomes and add value, often in measurable ways, capable Advisors tend to be highly sought after.

hoped, but at least you'll land in the place you are with your dignity and their trust intact.

Show Me the Money

Warriors in conventional roles and industries are often highly sought after and exceptionally well paid. They are viewed as the ones who make things happen and often sustain their efforts even in the face of hardship. They are in demand because of their skills and clarity of purpose but also because they gather and lead, not just because it's their job but because it's a pure expression of who they are and what they do. The very existence of that primal impulse often sustains them where others who are fueled more by obligation and skill fall down or step away.

In business, this can lead to roles in management and leadership. They are easily able to rise up the rungs of the leadership-centric, aspirational ladder so many want to climb, finding new opportunities and higher value and compensation along the way. While this impulse and skill set is deeply valued in nearly every domain, industry, and pursuit, it may not be as well compensated in non-business areas.

The Advisor

Slogan: "I guide to grow."

For the Advisor, the work of coaching, mentoring, and advising fills you like nothing else. You're the person who swoops in, develops sustained, personal relationships, most often with individuals or small groups, cultivates trust and confidence, and creates the safety needed to guide people in a hands-on, engaging way toward a desired end.

It's all about wisdom, trust, confidence, curiosity, presence, and guidance. Whoever you work with, their win is your win.

While you see yourself as someone who is wise and skilled, for you, it's less about illumination or teaching a particular body of knowledge the way a Sage might be drawn to do, and more about the interactive experience of walking people through a process of problem-solving, application, achievement, and, ultimately, growth.

It's also not just about the outcome. The aspiration is not just to get them to the place they yearn to be. More important is the depth of connection, the nature of the relationship between you and your advisees, the joy of the trust that you cultivate, and knowledge that you're making a genuine difference. For many advisors, it is also about helping others develop their own inner trust, competence, confidence, and self-reliance so that, when the time is right, you can step away and watch them soar.

What Trips You Up

Advisors often become deeply attached to those they advise. To the extent this helps provide the insight necessary to be more effective advisors, that's not a bad thing. But without proper boundaries, it can lead to a level of clouded vision, emotional empathy, or transference that diminishes the objectivity needed to do the work you're there to do.

There will always come a time in the Advisor/advisee relationship where the Advisor needs to have a tough conversation in order to effectively do the work they've been tasked to do. The closer you are, the harder the hard conversations become and the greater the risk of ineffective or even harmful guidance that, inevitably, leads to the demise of the relationship.

Whenever possible in a professional setting, establish clear boundaries, be explicit, and even write them out and have all parties agree to abide by them. Expectation setting is critical and gives you both the authority and permission to identify and address boundary crossings if and when they happen.

Show Me the Money

Viewed as trusted guides and catalysts who accelerate outcomes and add value, often in measurable ways, capable Advisors tend to be highly sought after. Everyone wants them by their side or in their organizations. That does not, however, always translate into high-level compensation.

In domains like business, competitive sport, and entertainment, the monetary rewards can be extraordinary, whether in a leadership role in an organization, consulting, coaching, or serving as an outside advisor. The same mix of

insight and advisory ability is equally necessary everywhere from the nonprofit world to middle schools, to clergy, social work, or other domains where the rewards tend toward some blend of “livable” wage, along with the satisfaction of knowing you’re doing the thing you’re here to do and making a difference in the lives of people you truly care about.

Spark Your Work: Putting Your Sparketype to Work

What does the Sparketype actually look like in the real world? How do you Spark your current work to make it feel a lot better? How do you find something different that is more likely to make you come alive?

Let’s explore briefly the three Activation Keys. One is about getting expressive, one is about getting imaginative, and one is about getting expansive. Together, they’re the Activation Trifecta.

Express. This involves creating a living inventory of the specific ways you’ve expressed your Sparketype in the past. This will give you strong hints at what you might want to look for, do more of, and shy away from in the future. For example, if you think about the categories of paid work, leisure/fun/craft, roles you’ve played, and classes or courses of study, you can ask this question:

“What three experiences/roles/jobs, under each category, made me feel most alive, most myself, like I was at my best most often, where I felt a genuine sense of purpose, like it mattered and I mattered, where I lost time because I was so engaged, when I felt most energized and excited, fully expressed, like I was accessing my true potential?”

Reimagine. Turns out, once you discover your Sparketype, then understand how to express it in work and life, it’s not unusual to realize you’re not doing many of the things that make you come alive. But do not make big, likely painful, changes out of the gate. Do not blow up your career, business, or life in the name of getting all the “emptying” stuff out of your life and chasing all the “good, Sparky stuff.”

Consider a different first step. Instead of blowing up what lies outside, break open what lies within you. Before burning down your so-called malignant work experiences, first hit pause and take the time to look inside.

Expand. Your final exploration focuses on how you define work. It’s about the possibility of expanding your understanding of what actually counts as work, bigger picture, in the name of broadening your options for becoming Sparked through a vastly larger set of life experiences. This can be especially helpful when the thing you call your “job,” even reimaged, redefined, and optimized, doesn’t quite get you there.

This can be a great time to explore expanding your definition of work beyond simply what you get paid to do, and looking at a blend of paid full-time or part-time and non-paid experiences that, together, may well hold the potential to let you come alive.

Whether you do it as your living, on the side, or as an ingredient in some blend, your Sparketype is not just about coming alive; it’s about coming home.

This is bigger than us. It’s time for a reclamation of work as a source of meaning, energy, purpose, joy, and potential. Together we can spark the world! One lit-up human at a time.



Jonathan Fields is a dad, husband, award-winning author, executive producer, and host of one of the top-ranked podcasts in the world, Good Life Project®, which has been featured everywhere from the *Wall Street Journal* to *Oprah Magazine* and even Apple’s iconic annual product event. He is also the founder of a number of wellness companies. His current focus is on being founder and CEO of Spark Endeavors and lead architect behind the Sparketypes®.

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