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Know Your Spark

This activity was created to be used primarily with:

3. Initiative and Self-Direction

Secondary skills include:

2. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
5. Work Ethic
10. Teamwork
11. Big-Picture Thinking
12. Career and Life Management
14. Efficiency and Productivity
20. Professionalism

What causes us to act and what prevents us from taking action? Knowing the answers can trigger action and help us take initiative.

Read the following scenario and rewrite it in terms of your own career path. Think about what the problem is and describe your workplace and personnel. Your teacher can help you write a more detailed scenario.

*You are new to a job (**name your position**), but a special project (**define the project**) has come up that requires all workers to work longer hours and to be extremely productive. Your supervisor/manager/boss has noticed that some workers are not contributing as much as they should.*

Remember, studies have shown that incentivizing with income reward is counter-effective in cognitive careers. Don't believe me? Watch [this video](#) (start at about the 9 minute mark) from Dan Pink on TED Talks.

Let's agree to leave monetary reward out of it for this activity.

Questionnaire

1. What can you do to show initiative? (identify your goals/ideas)

Remember: Goals and ideas without motivation do not produce initiative. Initiative is action. Initiative is implementation. Initiative is leadership.



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2. What is your motivation? (identify what makes you act)

Remember: This is your spark, your drive. Some of it comes naturally, some of it is learned, but like a muscle, it needs to exercise to grow stronger.

3. What is your action plan and your end goal? (identify the steps you need to take to accomplish your goals)

Remember: You must benefit somehow, but it's helpful if the plan benefits others as well. Dream big but be willing to make adjustments.

4. Do you need approval for your plan? If so, who can provide this approval and potential support?

Remember: Some action plans require approval and support and without it, action might stop before it starts. If you need others on your side, how will you convince them?

5. This is a personal question: What stops you from acting on your ideas?

Remember: Fear, contentment with the status quo, over-planning, waiting for the right moment, indecision, self-doubt, distraction and other things can deter you from acting.



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6. How do you overcome your doubts and hesitation to act?

Remember: The greatest intellects, leaders, and inventors in the world have all failed and learned from their mistakes.

7. If money (e.g., salary, bonus, reward) is not a primary incentive to trigger your creative motivation and ambition, what other things might your work offer that would incentivize you to become more productive and innovative?

Remember: You may need to look at Google or other progressive companies to see how they incentivize thinking and productivity.