

SPARK

Chapter 1 Exercises:

CONFRONTING THE MYTHS OF LEADERSHIP

1



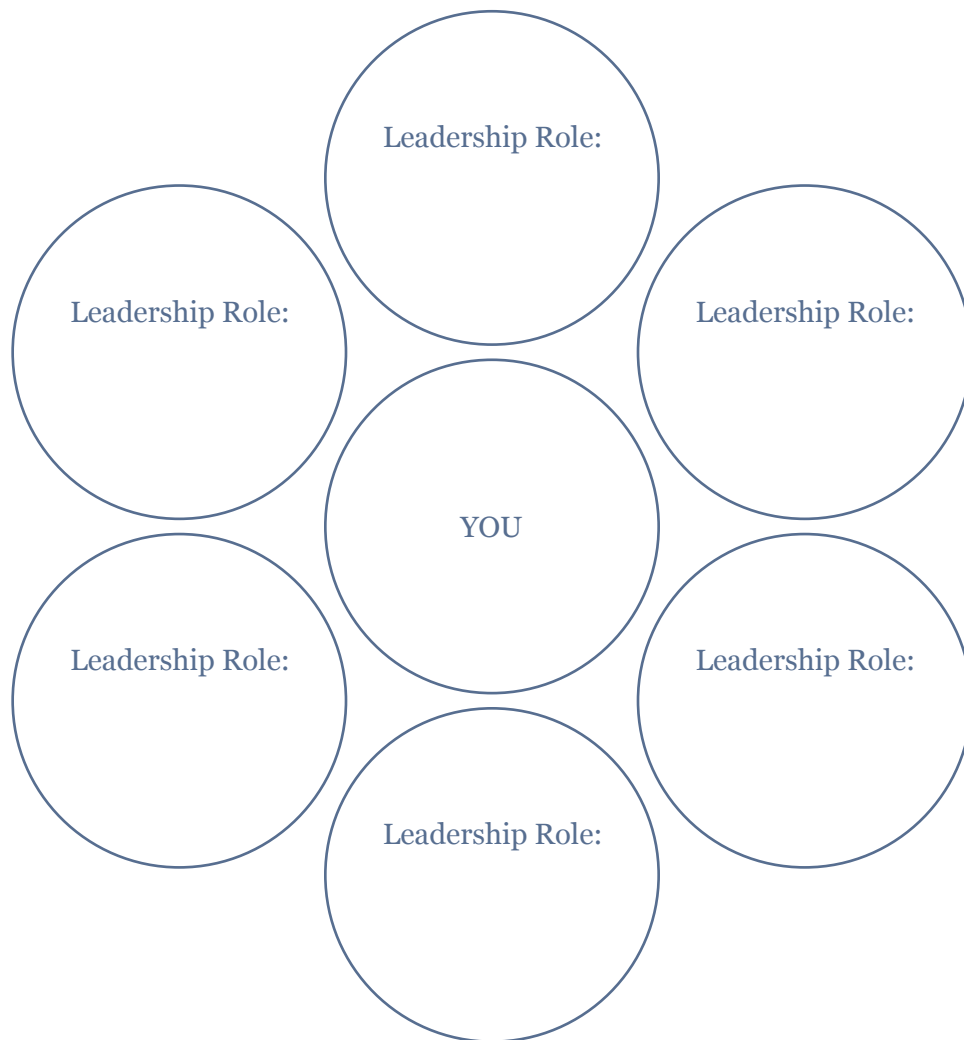
EXERCISE 1: CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

To be a Spark you need to recognize that there are decisions you can make each day that will allow you to build influence with others and provide an inspiring example.

Next, you need to develop awareness around who looks to you for leadership and how you can better meet the needs of those around you.

These individuals can include friends, family members, colleagues, managers and direct reports. At the end of the exercise, spend time thinking about three actions you can take to be a better leader in all your relationships.

- 1 Identify key relationships in your life.



2 Identify three actions you can take to be a stronger leader in all of these relationships.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

EXERCISE EXAMPLE



1. *I need to spend more time being intentional with how I engage in all of these roles and relationships.*
2. *I need to be less rushed when interacting with all of those who look to me for leadership.*
3. *I should spend time asking those among my circle of influence how well I'm doing as a leader.*

EXERCISE 2: SELF-AWARENESS

To be a Spark you need to become a better expert on you. What are your strengths as a leader? What are some of your self-defeating behaviors that limit you as a Spark? As you expand your self-awareness, you're able to understand how to leverage your talents and what opportunities you need to take advantage of to further your development.

- ① Review this list of words that describe commonly held leadership strengths. Circle no more than five that you feel best describe you.

Confident	In-Touch	Articulate
Dependable	Tactful	Efficient
Effective	Empathetic	Goal Oriented
Enthusiastic	Compassionate	Tenacious
Good Judgment	Loyal	Strong Communicator
Trustworthy	Honest	Prepared
Fair	Encouraging	Good Listener
Competent	Supportive	Risk-Taker
Initiative-taking	Caring	
Integrity	Assertive	

- ② Next, review the list of commonly held self-defeating behaviors. Circle no more than five that you feel can describe you.

Procrastinating	Unforgiving	Thinking You're Indispensable
Panicking	Sets Low Expectations	Worrying What Others Think
Can't Confront	Typecasting	Can't Take Criticism Well
Defensiveness	Guilt	Don't Want to Learn New Things
Don't Delegate	Impulsive	Risk-averse
Out of Touch	Too Blunt	Seeks Affirmation
Talks Over Others	Wastes Time	Being Unprepared
Bitter	Makes Excuses	
Fear of Failure	Easily Frustrated	
Quits Too Soon	Afraid to Hurt People's Feelings	
Complacency		

3 Answer these questions to help build upon your self-awareness.

1. If you had to choose one strength that you feel best defines you, what is it and why?

2. How can you better leverage this strength?

3. If you had to choose one self-defeating behavior that you'd like to improve upon the most, what would it be and why?

4. How can you consciously improve upon this self-defeating behavior?

5. What did you learn about yourself in this exercise? How can you apply this going forward?

EXERCISE 3: LEADER DISCUSSION

If you feel your team could benefit from an informal leadership discussion, be the Spark who initiates the conversation. Start by inviting your team/colleagues to coffee or lunch by sharing with them that you're reading a book on leadership and you'd like to discuss some of what you're learning. Plan at least 45–60 minutes for the event and gather 4–6 individuals for your conversation.

When you get your group together, use the following questions to spark a dialogue on leadership. Be sure, too, when you finish the discussion to ask what else you all should be doing to further your understanding of leadership. (Note: check out **SPARK**'s book club outline, which could be a natural next step.)

- 1 When you think of the most significant leaders in your life, who were they and what impact did they make on you?
- 2 What are some of the behaviors they demonstrated to inspire you?
- 3 Did the leaders who inspire you typically hold a title over you — or some sort of positional authority?
- 4 Do you consider yourself a leader — why or why not?
- 5 In the book **SPARK**, the authors share that a leader is someone who influences outcomes and inspires others, and that leadership is about behavior — not title. Does this definition of leadership resonate with you — why or why not?
- 6 By definition, you can be a manager and not a leader — and a leader without being a manager. Can you recall a time when you had to lead, but had no positional authority? Describe the circumstance.
- 7 Complete this sentence: To be an effective leader, someone must....
- 8 If you'd like to continue exploring this topic of leadership further, what ideas do you have to continue the momentum?