Chapter 2 Exercises:

Your Character: The Congruence Between Values and Actions
Exercise 1: Your Character

Values are important — not only can they serve as self-fulfilling prophecies, but they’re important reference points for us when making difficult decisions. When Sparks live their values, they set a more influential and inspiring example.

The below exercise is designed for you to reflect upon your most important values. Walk through the exercises step by step and then complete the self-reflection questions at the end.

Below is a list of commonly held values. Circle 10 that are most important to you. Feel free to add values in the spaces provided.

Achievement
Advancement for promotion
Adventure
Affection (love & caring)
Arts
Challenging problems
Change & variety
Close relationships
Community
Competence
Competition
Cooperation
Country
Creativity
Decisiveness
Democracy
Ecological awareness
Economic security
Effectiveness
Efficiency
Ethical practice
Excellence
Excitement
Expertise
Fame
Fast-paced work
Financial gain
Freedom
Friendships
Having a family
Helping other people
Helping society
Honesty
Independence
Influencing others
Inner harmony
Integrity
Intellectual status
Involvement
Job tranquility
Knowledge
Leadership
Location
Loyalty
Market position
Meaningful work
Merit
Money
Nature
Personal Growth
Physical challenge
Pleasure
Public service
Purity
Quality of work you do
Quality in relationships
Recognition (respect from others)
Religion
Reputation
Responsibility & accountability
Security
Self-respect
Serenity
Sophistication
Stability
Status
Supervising others
Time freedom
Truth
Wealth
Wisdom
Work under pressure
Work with others
__________________________
__________________________
Now that you have identified your top ten, imagine you are only permitted to have five values. What values would you give up? Cross those five off. Now you can only have four values. Eliminate one more. Finally, bring your list down to your top three values and rank them in priority. You should now have identified the number one value in your life that you care most about.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

Take a look at the top three values on your list and answer the following questions.

1. What do these values tell you about yourself?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. How well are you doing at living these values?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. What is at least one thing you can commit to in order to live and lead more authentically?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. Who must you enlist to support you in this commitment in order to maximize chances for success?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
**Exercise 2: Discovering and Developing Mentors**

Sparks recognize that no one achieves lasting success on their own. We all want — and can benefit greatly from — mentors who can encourage us to be our best and help us leverage our strengths and confront our blind spots.

Finding these mentors, however, can be difficult. Then, when we have them, it’s hard to figure out how to nurture these relationships.

This exercise is designed to get you thinking of who within your network can mentor you and will also give you ideas on how to build these relationships.

1. **Discovering Mentors**

   1. Who, within your network, do you admire and why? (List several individuals. These can include personal and professional connections.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Why I admire this person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Who, among the individuals you listed on the previous page, do you feel would be open to a mentoring relationship — i.e. a relationship where you can learn from their experiences, as well as approach them and ask questions related to challenges or opportunities you’re experiencing?

3. What actions are you going to take immediately to approach these individuals to start building your relationship? (Actions can include: Inviting them to coffee/lunch, scheduling a meeting in their office, etc.)

Helpful Hint

When reaching out to a prospective mentor, keep it informal. Here’s some text that you can use:

Dear [Name],

We’ve worked together for [x] years and I’ve admired how you’ve developed your career. Would you be interested in grabbing coffee or lunch soon so I can ask you questions about career navigation? I’m sure your insight, along with your experiences, could benefit me greatly. As I grow in my profession, I’d love to learn more from professionals — like yourself — who can share their best practices.

Thank you,

[Your name]
DEVELOPING MENTORS

After you’ve had a chance to meet with a few prospective mentors, here are a few activities you can engage in to continue to develop the relationships:

- Put a reminder in your calendar every other month to invite your mentor to coffee/lunch so you can stay engaged
- Share any career success you have via email
- If they gave you career guidance, share with them your feedback on how you implemented it
- Send along articles of interest and ask their opinion on it
- When you’re faced with a difficult career decision, ask them for their opinion — and when they offer it, take it into consideration
- There’s no need to treat mentoring relationships as if you have to form a pact — keep the relationship informal so you don’t put pressure on yourself or them

Ultimately, you need to own your mentoring relationships — you can’t expect your mentors to own them. You can demonstrate ownership by initiating conversations and sharing news. Keep in mind that your mentors are busy, which is probably why they’re so successful. Make the relationship easy for them. Don’t overwhelm them with communication — reach out to them when it’s appropriate.

Developing mentoring relationships takes time, but they’re worth it. Good luck on this endeavor!