

# It starts with a spark

A DISCUSSION EXERCISE FOR ADULTS AND YOUTH

**W**rite down something that you enjoy doing and want to get better at:

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- ✓ What first got you interested in trying it?
- ✓ Starting at No. 1, check all the answers that apply, and add your own thoughts on what motivated you.
- ✓ Then share your thoughts with the group.



## 1. It looked like fun!

- It seemed like something you could probably do.
- It involved peers you wanted to be with.
- Success didn't all depend on you.
- No one would be judging you, so the stakes were low.

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## 2. Someone supported and encouraged you at the start.

- They broke it down into steps.
- They did it with me.
- They praised your small successes.
- They showed you how to do better.

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## 3. The activity had an audience that mattered to you.

- At work or school.
- Among friends or family.
- In a public setting.

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## 4. You had a personal interest in getting good at it.

- To express yourself.
- To grow into who you want to be.
- To feel the pleasure of mastering new challenges.

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Source: *Fires in the Mind: What Kids Can Tell Us About Motivation and Mastery*, by Kathleen Cushman, Jossey-Bass 2010.

# Many interests, many strengths

DISCUSSION PROMPTS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

## FOR YOUTH

**What are you good at that your teachers may not have noticed?** \_\_\_\_\_

**When did you start it, and why?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make some notes about it here:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## FOR TEACHERS

Think about one class of students whom you teach. Next to the following areas of interest, write the names of those students who you notice have strength in that area.

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| <b>Sports and physical challenges</b> ball, double-dutch, acrobatics, martial arts   |  |
| <b>Arts</b> music, dance, visual arts, drama   |  |
| <b>Crafts</b> knitting, sewing, carpentry, cooking, etc.   |  |
| <b>Logic/puzzles/games</b> computer or other games, chess, Rubik's cube, etc.  |  |
| <b>Communication</b> reading, writing, questioning, listening, languages, telling or drawing stories/jokes/comics/cartoons |  |
| <b>Nature, science, gardening, animals</b>   |  |
| <b>Life skills</b> wayfinding, caregiving, service, collaboration, friendship, entrepreneurship, management, politics      |  |

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| <b>If there are students</b> whose strengths you are not sure of, write their names here. | <b>How could you learn</b> more about the strengths, interests, habits, affinities, pastimes, hopes, families, neighborhoods, and cultures of these students? |
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