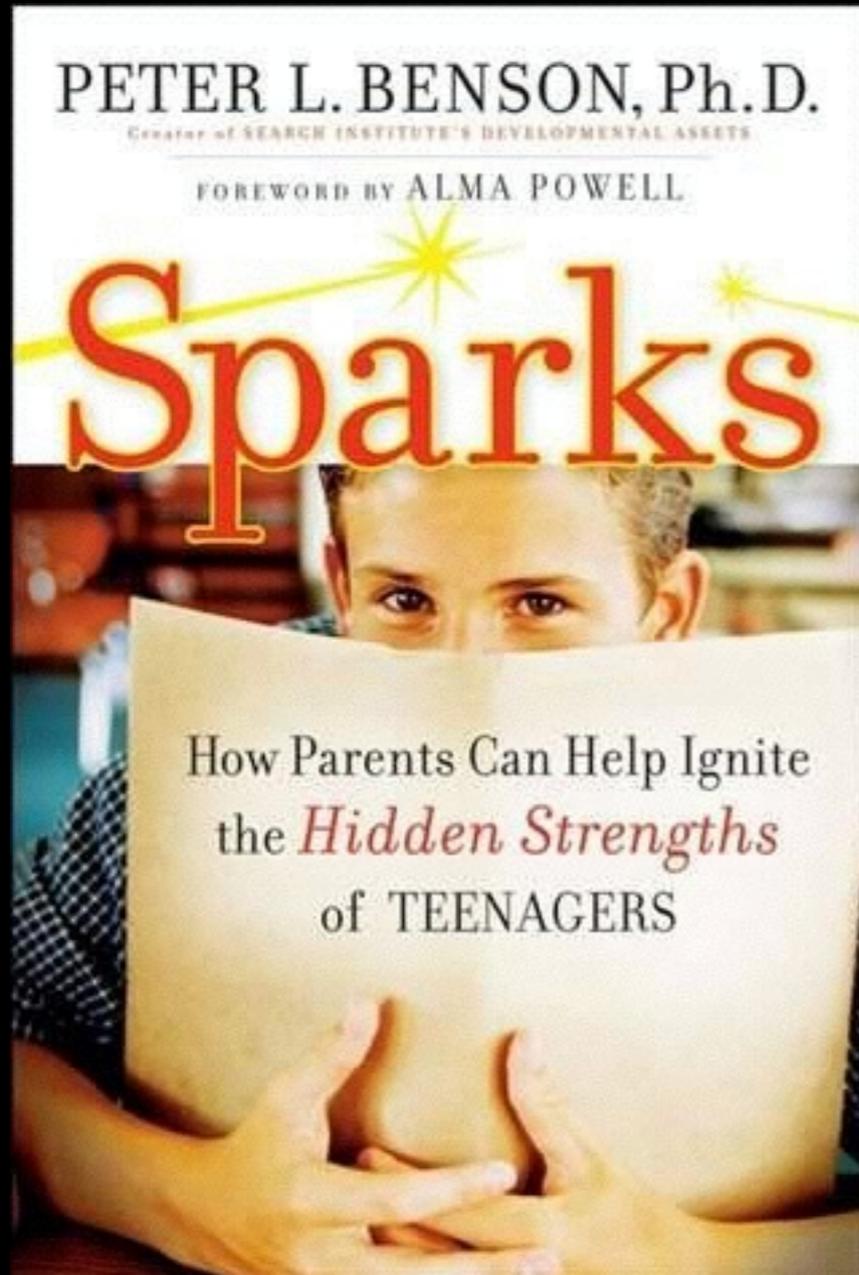


Find Their Spark

Darren Wilson, Guthrie CSD

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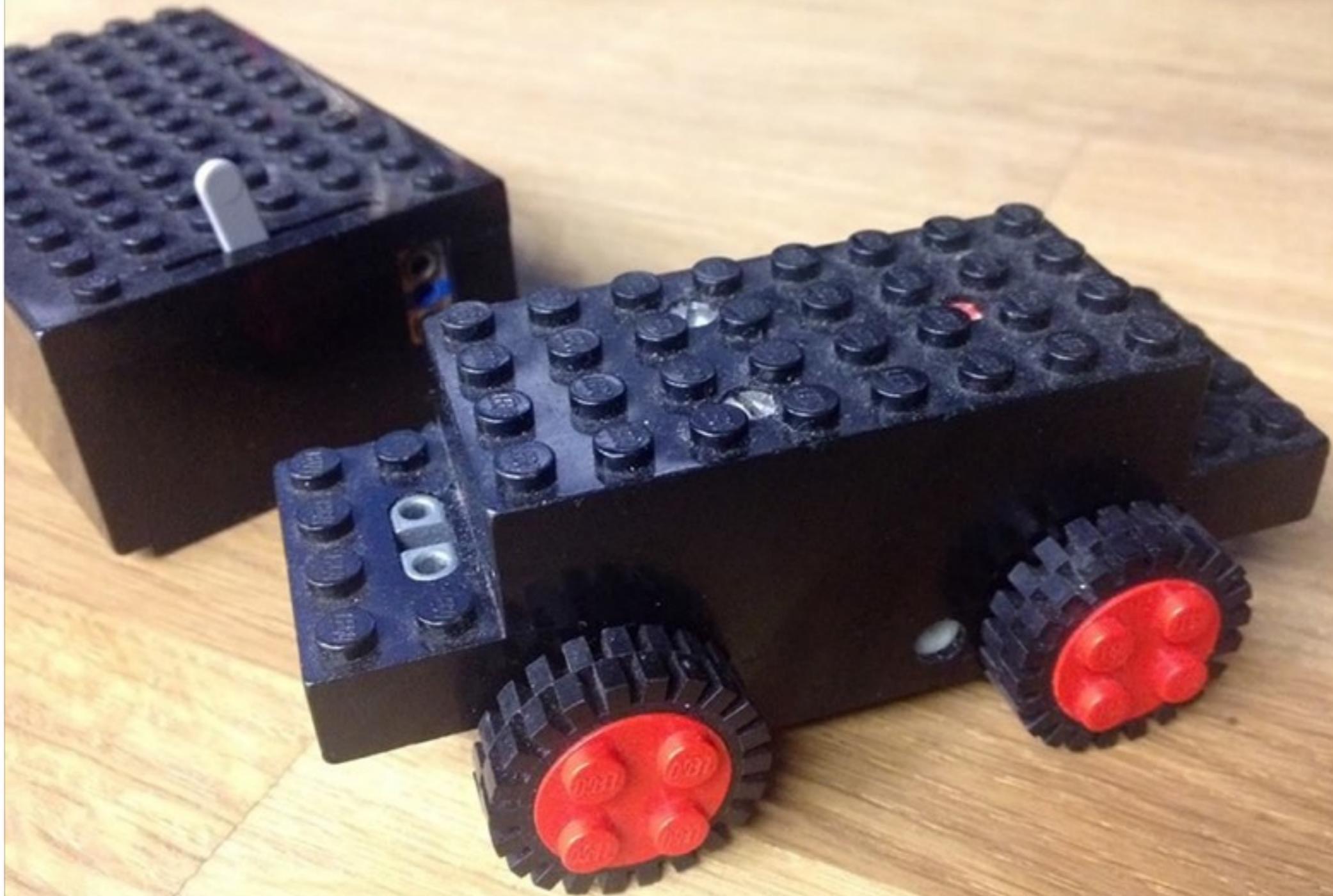
SPARKS

How Parents Can Ignite
the Hidden Strengths
of Teenagers

Peter L. Benson









Spark is a special talent or skill or interest that gives you joy and energy and is an important part of who you are.

When people have a special talent or interest, we sometimes say they have a “spark” in their life. A spark is something they’re passionate about; it really fires them up, gives them joy and energy, and is an important part of who they are. It doesn’t really matter what the spark is, just as long as it gives life purpose, direction, meaning, or focus.

A spark can be a skill, a talent, an interest; but for some, it's a way of being in the world. And when we express it, we're not worried about how good we are or how it looks to others. Just doing it (or being it) is enough.

A spark isn't something
you go outside yourself to find.

It's something deep inside you.

What is your spark?

**Do you know someone else in
your life with a spark?**

Why does spark matter ?

1.

Every teenager has one or more sparks. Sometimes the spark is hidden or dormant, but it is there.

2.

Sparks can change.

A spark at age sixteen may look different from a spark at twelve.

3.

Sparks are not learned.

They originate from inside a person
and are discovered and nourished
through experience.

4.

The hallmark of spark is not happiness or pleasure, but passion.

5.

Every parent and teacher
has the capacity
to be a spark champion.

6.

The better you model a life with sparks, the more likely it is that your child will develop a life with spark at the center.

7.

A person's spark is her unique song.
Remember to hum it back to your
teenager on days when she doesn't
remember it.

What SPARK is not:

a carrot to dangle

a stick to beat down

a reward for later in life

a direct path to a career

A spark is a source of energy and joy. It's a good thing, a useful thing. Whether or not it will have long-term utility at this point in your child's life isn't necessarily important.

"We can't tell students that they can change the world later in life.

We must show them how they are able to right now."

@bentrueblood

As parents, we know when our
children have a spark.
You can tell by looking in their
eyes. You can feel the energy,
the electricity.



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Talking about spark, then, is a great way to launch those spiritual conversations you haven't yet gotten around to. These spiritual conversations include topics like these:

Who are you?

Why are you here?

What are your special gifts?

Where do they come from?

How does your life matter?

How will you make the world a better place?

**Let's talk about
spark champions...**

Every child needs spark champions who:

Affirm the spark

Encourage its expression

Model the spark

Provide opportunities to express it

Run interference and help eliminate obstacles

Relationships are the oxygen of human development, but most teenagers lack these kinds of relationships with adults.

Clayton Christensen

We invest in what pays back
with the most immediate
and tangible payoffs.

“How long do we risk putting off what we should be teaching them to build back creativity and curiosity in our students?”

The Thriving Formula

SPARK + 3 champions + opportunity

We want them to see themselves as persons of worth, having value to the world. You and I know, as adults, what a precious gift this perception is to a person.

Is my life one of possibility and potential, or is my life destined to be one of drudgery and getting by?

**What does spark looks like
in my classroom?**

Every teenager has a spark—
something inside that is good,
beautiful, and useful to the world.
Sparks illuminate a young person's
life and give it energy and purpose.

pole vaulting / playing football / weight lifting
being around people to make their day better
doing crafts / playing baseball / building things
helping other people / playing video games
helping others / working with animals / roping
photography / calling in predators
going to youth rallies and doing bible studies
being a cowboy / welding things
taking care of animals / fishing / volunteering
helping people through hard times
playing the guitar / playing the piano
doing creative things on the computer / reading

This energy has a push and a pull. The push is the named and affirmed spark. The pull is the vision of what one can be.

**“What would happen
if we studied what was right
with people?”**

- Don Clifton

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STRENGTHS FINDER **2.0**

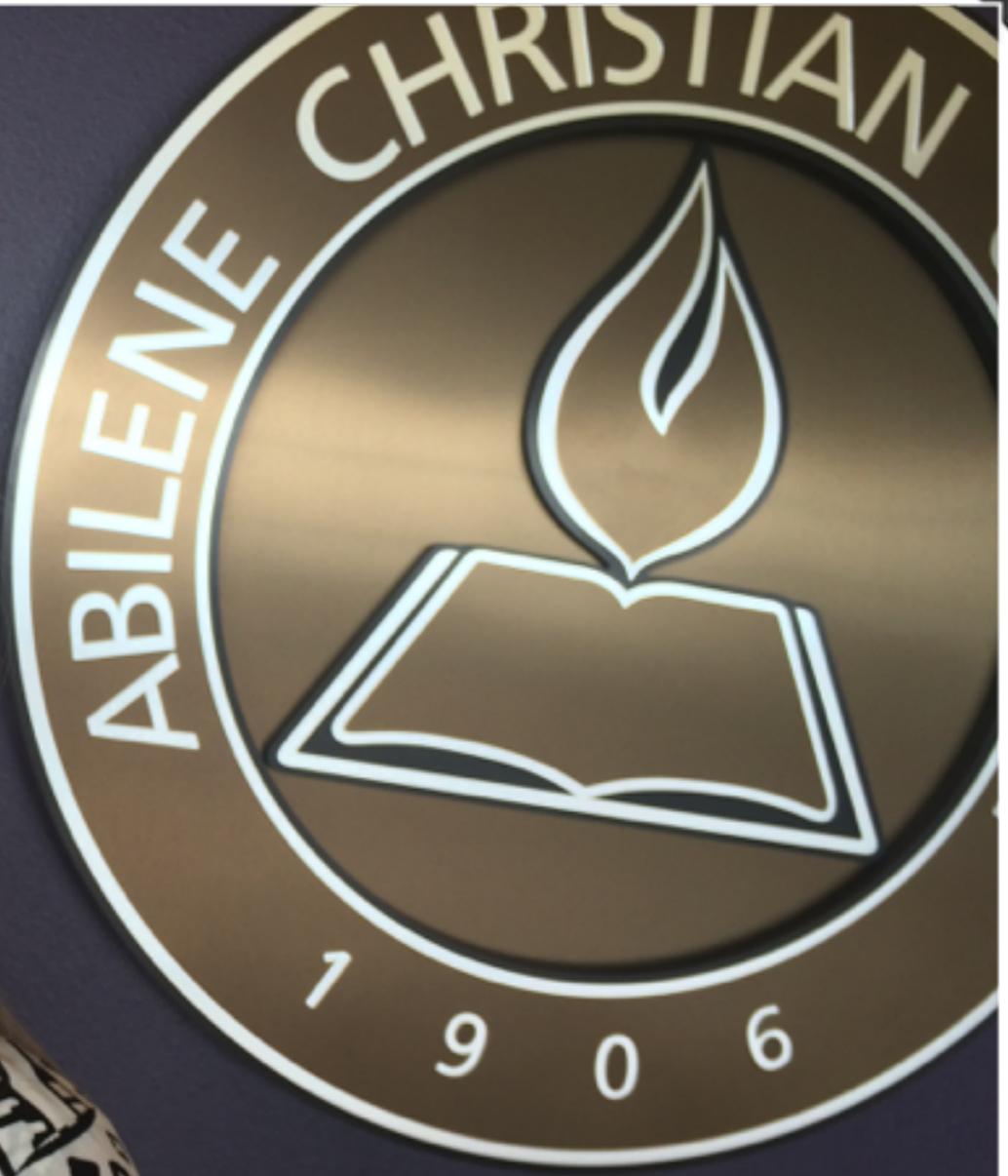
TOM RATH

New York Times Bestselling Author of

WELLBEING



2017 New Student
Laura
Wilson
Guthrie
#acul5



Gallup has found that when people understand and apply their strengths, the effect on their lives and work is transformational. People who use their strengths every day are six times more likely to be engaged in their work and three times more likely to say they have an excellent quality of life.

**Do we focus on gaps/deficits
or seek out possibility and
potential through building on
strengths?**

3 Stages of “Strength Training”

1. Name It

Gives us the language
to describe how we are wired.

2. Develop It

Provides us opportunities
to put talent into practice.

3. Use It

Allows us to find meaning,
purpose and value
through our strengths.

"At an early age, you started hearing it: It's a virtue to be 'well-rounded.' They might as well have said: Become as dull as you possibly can be."

**“When we studied them,
excellent performers were rarely
well rounded. On the contrary,
they were sharp.”**

“Each person's talents are enduring and unique. Each person's greatest room for growth is in the areas of his or her greatest strength.”

Discovering your gifts is not the
ultimate goal - using them to
bless others is.

- Erik Rees, SHAPE

So what?

#FindTheirSpark

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