



How to Start a Fire:

Find what you are passionate about and focus the flame

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Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1 Interests](#)

[PERSONALITY](#)

[Chapter 2 Skills](#)

[Chapter 3 Strengths](#)

[Chapter 4 Talents](#)

[Chapter 5 Personal Qualities](#)

[Chapter 6 Values](#)

[Chapter 7 Passion & Meaning](#)

[Chapter 8 Personal Branding](#)

[Your Unique Selling Proposition](#)

[Conclusion](#)

Introduction

When you know what you are passionate about, you connect with an amazing renewable energy source. When you know what your talents are and how you will use them, you shine. Some people seem to have no difficulty discovering what they are passionate about and what their talents are. For others, it can be challenging to figure these things out. This eBook is like a toolbox filled with the best tools to explore and look for clues to your hidden talents.

Links to the tools mentioned in this eBook and contact information for the Daily PlanIt at:

[dailyplanitwiki.pbworks.com/Fire Book Links](http://dailyplanitwiki.pbworks.com/Fire%20Book%20Links)

Find the Spark

While I have not found a magic formula for discovering passions and talents, I can point to some ways to look for clues. This eBook includes the top tools I've found to explore interests, skills, strengths, talents, personal qualities, meaning, and values.

Focus the Flame

Purpose is the laser focused energy of the flame of passion. A Unique Selling Proposition (or USP) combines everything you discover in your explorations into a clear statement of exactly how you will use your talents to add value in a way that is meaningful to you. You can then share this message as your personal brand on business cards, resume, email, websites, and social profiles. Your USP can be the starting point for a short elevator speech or verbal business card that answers the question "what do you do?" and why you do it. Knowing what you are passionate about and how you will pursue it for a purpose provides immediate direction and motivation.

"Where the needs of the world and your talents cross, there lies your vocation" – Aristotle

To uncover hidden talents, look for the intersection between:

→what you're best at

→what you love to do the most

→what the world needs most

In each chapter you will find the top tools to locate this intersection. There are many great tools here, but if I could recommend only one, it would be Oprahs' Find Your Passion Exercise.

This eBook is a condensed version of the "On Purpose" course at Udemy.com. The course provides more detail and access to several more tools, like the Daily PlanIt Talent Table. You can find links to the course and even more *free* tools for exploring talents at the [RESOURCES](#) at the end of this book.

I love to create tools and share information for developing work and life skills and invite you to explore the resources at my website, The Daily PlanIt (www.dailyplanit.com).

Chapter 1 Interests

Interests are things you love to learn about, and enjoy to a degree. A mild interest might only be pursued in leisure time, but following an intense interest could become a lifelong career.

What are your top five interests? Do you like to read about certain subjects? What are some favorite websites? How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies? These are some indicators of interests.

Exploring interests can help identify good career choices, so there are some wonderful resources available at websites dedicated to the career search process. Try one of the following assessments for identifying interests.

TOOLS:

Holland Codes are Six Personality Types developed to help match interests to careers. They are: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, enterprising, and Conventional. Use one of the following tools to identify your Holland Code:

- Iseek Interest Assessment (pdf) & Online
- O*Net Interest Profiler

Career Clusters group similar occupations and industries for career planning.

- Iseek Career Cluster Survey (pdf) & Online
- Career Clusters (pdf) 4 pages w/descriptions from New Hampshire
- Holland + Career Clusters at iseek.org shows Career Clusters grouped by Holland Codes.

PERSONALITY

Understanding your personality can be helpful, although it's of minor importance as a clue to talents.

- David Borchard's Passion Revealer

· Myers-Briggs

Interests can reveal patterns, but you may not want to devote a lot of time and energy in these areas. As we proceed, each chapter will cover areas of increasing importance for discovering talents.

Tools to explore Interests at List.ly: <http://list.ly/list/LOC-tools-to-explore-interests>

Chapter 2 Skills

Skills are abilities that can be learned. Think of projects you are proud of, things that are easy for you to do and have contributed to your successes. **What are your top five skills?**

Career sites often divide skills into 3 Types as outlined at Identify Your Skills from Berea College.

- Job skills are specific to an occupation, like filing or writing a report.
- Transferable skills are general work skills like the ability to use a computer program or attention to detail.
- Self management skills are personal qualities like being analytical or reliable.

The skills identified by the Secretaries Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) are: Basic Skills, Thinking, Skills, and Personal Qualities. Still more skills: there are also soft skills like communication and teamwork, and work skills like computer skills, customer service and leadership.

The following tools can help identify skills.

TOOLS:

- Know Your Skills is an interactive module from New Zealand
- Skills Assessment at iseek.org
- Skills Profiler at careerinfont.net.org

Skills are like the blades on a Swiss army knife: the more you have the better. Free online resources for developing skills can be found at the [Daily PlanIt Development Center](#), and at the [Smart Skills](#) page of the Daily PlanIt.

Tools to explore skills at List.ly: <http://list.ly/list/LOE-tools-to-explore-skills>

Chapter 3 Strengths

Strengths are developed skills and talents. Strengths are often what others say you are good at.

What are your top five strengths?

A SWOT analysis is a tool that looks at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Fill out a SWOT form, and explore your strengths with some of the following tools.

TOOLS:

SWOT analysis

Find Your Strengths at literacyworks.org

Strengths Test at Kent University

In the same way we can develop physical strength with exercise, we can develop strength in all areas. The book “The Power of Full Engagement” by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz has ideas for developing four sources of energy: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Marcus Buckingham is an expert on strengths who has written several books. The purchase of one of his books provides access to his Strengths Finder.

Tools to explore strengths at List.ly: <http://list.ly/list/LOG-tools-to-explore-strengths>

Chapter 4 Talents

Talents are natural abilities. When you are using your talents, you feel joy and gain energy.



Are there times when you have been so immersed in an activity that you forgot to eat? This experience of complete absorption is known as flow, and it is the most important indicator of talents. To **find your flow**, focus on identifying activities that so engage you that you lose all track of time when you are doing them.

Name Your Talent

The “Naming Your Genius” exercise from the book “Is Your Genius at Work?” by Dick Richards is the best exercise I know for discovering your talents.

On your nametag, write a gerund (a verb ending in ing) and a noun that describe what you love to do.

Example: Creating Clarity

The printable Finding Genius (pdf) is a list of gerunds and nouns for inspiration.

TOOLS:

The List of Talents at michaelhartzell.com can inspire ideas.

A 32 page Find Your Gifts & Talents Guidebook at manifestyourpotential.com (pdf)

Discovering talents can take some time and thought. Keep trying activities you might love, and be aware of times when you experience flow. When you know what you are naturally good at, you can develop these abilities into strengths.

Tools to explore talents at List.Ly: <http://list.ly/list/LON-tools-to-explore-talents>

Chapter 5 Personal Qualities

Personal qualities are positive personal traits sometimes called self-management skills. Employers look for applicants who are responsible, honest, and flexible. These qualities are also another clue to discovering talents. People you admire often possess these traits.

What are your top five personal qualities?

Find personal qualities that describe you on the list from nextsteps.org.

You can also ask friends and relatives what they think. Sometimes our qualities aren't always obvious to us, but may be to others. A Johari window compares words that we would use to describe ourselves with words others would use.

TOOLS:

[Personal qualities](http://nextsteps.org) at nextsteps.org

Ask Friends & Relatives: Johari Window: <http://kevan.org/johari>

Chapter 6 Values

Values are your guiding principles. Do your actions reflect your values?

Value Definitions:

1. the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something.
2. a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life.

What are your top five personal values?

Core values have intrinsic worth and are fairly universal among cultures and religion. The Six Pillars of Character at Josephson Institute are examples of core values.

Work values are the things you value in a work environment.

Personal values are subjective and can vary. You might place a high value on art or humor, while others may value something else.

The Map Your Values Exercise from the ebook, "Get Goaling," helps clarify values. For a more detailed video explanation of how it works, see <http://dailyplanit.com/2014/01/01/choosing-goals/>

In this exercise, the value words are *qualities that will most improve your life if increased*.

Choose a word to answer the question: "What will fill my life with value?" for each life area.

The two tools listed below are excellent resources to explore more about your values.

TOOLS:

Core Values Worksheet (pdf) at mikedesjardins.com (4 pages)

Pave Your Life Roadmap at Idea Sandbox

Tools to explore values at List.ly: <http://list.ly/list/LOK-tools-to-explore-values>

Chapter 7 Passion & Meaning

Now it's time to look for that elusive spark of passion and consider how you can use your talents in a way that aligns with your values and is meaningful to you.

"The most successful people are obsessed with solving an important problem that matters to them. They remind me of a dog chasing a tennis ball."

Drew Houston, founder of Dropbox, said this in an MIT commencement speech, and it's a very good way to identify what you are passionate about.

Here's your biggest clue: what is it that you are always chasing? What problems do you want to solve? What causes do you believe in? What lights you up? If you are still not sure, try new things, learn, and look for others who are passionate about something.

It's important to know not only *what* you do, but *why*. Simon Sinek, author of "Start With Why," tells why it's important in his [TED Talk](#).

- A manifesto (like the [Holstee Manifesto](#)) is a written statement that describes the intentions and opinions of a person (or group).
- A mission statement is a written declaration of core purpose and focus.
- A wheel of life is a tool that shows balance in several life areas.

Once you have clarified what you find meaningful, the final step is to take action. A unique selling proposition allows you to communicate your personal brand with a clearly outlined plan of action.

TOOLS:

Stephen R Covey Mission Builder

Wheel of Life at Mindtools

Wheel of Life (pdf) (3 pages)

Wheel of Excellence (pdf) (4 pages)

Oprahs' Find Your Passion Exercise

Tools to explore passion and meaning at List.ly: <http://list.ly/list/Odw-find-your-passion>

Chapter 8 Personal Branding

A brand communicates the special benefits you provide. A personal brand is the authentic expression of the elements you have been exploring in this eBook. Personal branding tools help you get very clear about how you will use your talents for a purpose. With the clarity you have gained, you can share a clear message about:

- What you do
- Why you do it
- How you do it

Design graphics, logos, tag lines, and media for use on a resume, business cards, email and social profiles. Practice sharing your USP as a verbal business card or elevator speech.

Your Unique Selling Proposition

Your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is the special benefit only you can provide.

Elements of a USP: Because I believe in [this] passionately I will [use these talents] for [these benefits] by doing [what] how [in this unique way] to [solve this problem]. Consider all these elements, and choose what to include and how to combine them.

TOOLS:

Personal Branding Tools at List.ly (<http://list.ly/list/LOO-tools-for-personal-branding>)

Conclusion

The tools in this book help to uncover hidden talents and gain clarity about how you will use them to add value to life. With this knowledge you can take steps for purposeful action to make your special contribution to the world. Thank you for exploring these tools for discovering your talents, what you are passionate about, and how you will focus this energy for a purpose that is meaningful to you!

MORE RESOURCES

The article “Uncover Hidden Talents” at <http://dailyplanit.com/2012/01/10/uncover-hidden-talents/> includes links to top tools and this free ebook “How to Start a Fire.”

My Udemy course “On Purpose: Uncover Your Hidden Talents and Discover Direction” at <https://www.udemy.com/on-purpose/> shows in more detail how to discover hidden talents.

My Productive Magazine article at <http://productivemag.com/16/personal-branding-for-a-purpose> explains how personal branding is a powerful way to discover purpose.

Learn about productivity with the Your Time, Your Way Workbook ebook available at Sellfy. [Time Management 101](#) is a free tutorial at the Daily PlanIt.

My eBook, “Get Goaling,” a clear step-by-step guide to setting & achieving goals, is available at <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00GBHFHRC>. There is a free short course on How to Set Goals at <http://dailyplanit.com/2006/09/10/how-to-set-goals/>.

Some of my printable tools are available for sale at Sellfy at <https://sellfy.com/RosemaryRice>. There are also lots of Free Tools for productivity and personal development that I’ve created or found from others at <http://dailyplanit.com/free-tools/>.

You’re invited to continue learning about developing life and work skills at the Daily PlanIt

(www.dailyplanit.com). Please consider subscribing to the [RSS feed](#) , signing up for email newsletters, or join the Facebook page so you won't miss a thing.

Find the Daily PlanIt at:

The Daily PlanIt You tube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/dailyplanit4u>

Daily PlanIt on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DailyPlanitSkills>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/rosemaryhonn1/>

Delicious Links: <https://delicious.com/dailyplanit>

Flipboard: <https://flipboard.com/@rosemaryhonn1>

Find links to the tools mentioned in this eBook and contact information for the Daily PlanIt at:

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