

## Discover Your 'Sparketype' and Meet Your True Self – Jonathan Fields – #872

Dave Asprey:

Today, we have our live studio audience from the Upgrade Collective, which has a lot of new members after the Biohacking Conference. Welcome new guys. It's super fun to be in the live audience. And I think we're going to have some time at the end of the show for you to ask some questions of today's guest.

And it's really relevant because he's been on the show quite a while back. And he came out with a new book called, Sparked: Discover Your Unique Imprint for Work, that makes you come alive. And if you've listened to me for a while, you've heard me talk about being an entrepreneur, you know that I tell you, don't spend time on stuff that sucks your energy.

And I learned that from Dan Sullivan, one of our village elders who's been on the show, I think twice now and a guy I really admire who's helped me on some of my entrepreneurial learning. Well, this goes deeper than that kind of work. And it's a carefully curated book with even a quiz that tells you what's actually going to make it come alive, because guess what?

If you get paid to do some things come alive, your outcome at the end of the day is going to be a lot better. So with no further ado, I guess it's Jonathan Fields, who is the author of not just this new book Sparked, but also host of the. Good Life Project podcast, which has done exceptionally well. Jonathan, welcome back to the show.

Jonathan Fields:

Dave, it's good to be hanging out with you. Thanks for having me.

Dave:

Why this topic now?

Jonathan:

Man, I started into this topic two decades ago. The fact that the last two years have dropped literally the entire world into the biggest existential questioning in generations is not something that I saw coming. But we are in that place, as we sit here depending on the research that you look at, anywhere from 25 to 50% of people either have quit their jobs are in the process of quitting or seriously considering it.

And while the current circumstance has certainly played a role in why people are doing that, the level of pervasive, systemic discontent is nothing new. The level of misalignment between how we invest most of our waking hours and the things that truly nourish us has been there for a really long time. So this is a moment where I think it's all bubbling up to the surface right now.

And people are really reexamining, so many of us made a bargain in our late teens or early twenties when we stepped into our "working life". And we're looking at that bargain now and saying, okay, so that got me here, but the way that my work is making me feel, is that the bargain that I want to keep going for the next 10, 20, 30, 40 years?

And a lot of people are saying, no. They may not know what the bargain is that they want to step into, but what they're getting clear on is the fact that the way that work has made them feel has satisfied certain needs, for sure, security, safety, but the more existential needs, which tend to really become more important when we get a little bit further in life. Those have generally been set aside. Part of that bargain was maybe later, later is here.

Dave:

Isn't the reason we pay people is to do stuff they wouldn't do for free? Could have to pay people to eat, we could have to pay them to have sex. Well, not usually anyway, there's a couple of people here in the Upgrade Collective, or I'm not so sure, but other... Just kidding guys, I love you all. But the whole point there is, isn't work supposed to be unpleasant at least some of the time?

Jonathan:

What if I reflect that question back to you, do you wake up in the morning and say, I am looking forward to this day sucking and I'm going to get paid for that? There was a point in your life, we know your story, where yeah, that was the way that you lived.

Dave:

I loved putting auto parts in boxes in a 95 -degree warehouse in the middle of summer in central California. It was great, man.

Jonathan:

Was that then not the most purposeful thing that you've ever done? But even that, we can parse it. If you even go to that stuff and you at some of the work that's been done around purpose in the workplace, there are some fascinating things where... I remember a study where they were looking at actually the general staff in hospitals, and some of them experienced their work is really emptying and they had zero sense of purpose and it was a responsibility that they had to do.

And then others actually felt the profound sense of purpose in the identical job description, the identical work. And the difference was not that they were doing something different, the difference was an overlay of... They felt that they were actually part of the care team. They felt like they weren't just cleaning a room.

They were actually an essential member. They were part of something bigger that gave them a stronger sense of purpose. And that reframe allowed them to experience a nearly identical task and process experience as something very different. So yeah, at the end of the day, part of it is seeing if we can actually align those tasks, processes, cultures, with something that truly makes us come alive.

But even then, when there are things that we don't want to do, there's no job is all stuff that we want to do, even the best job in the world. There's a certain ability to reframe the parts of it that we're not doing, but the different context that allows us to experience them differently.

Dave:

When I look at the way people treat at treat you when you're working in food service, now, guys, I scooped ice cream for what? Two years, at Baskin-Robbins my very early twenties trying to make ends meet for college.

Jonathan:

Yeah. I was a dishwasher in a [crosstalk 00:05:45].

Dave:

You were a dishwasher at [KC 00:05:47]? That's probably even worse, right? Because your back of the house, people don't even see you. But people come in and they unload on you and it's just not pleasant. And if people see me like, oh, Dave, entrepreneur, always successful. No.

And so having lived through that, there was no purpose in that job. I don't think they treated me very well and I'm sure I didn't treat them very well either because a lot of times you don't have the maturity at that age. But the reality is that, I look at where I am now, okay, we've got the Upgrade Cafe in Victoria and in Santa Monica, one in Santa Monica has been open for almost eight years.

We have people have been there the whole time and there is purpose in that job. I do everything we can to show why it matters, but the customers also do it too. And given that we have a huge shortage of people doing what you would typically call grunt work, like washing dishes, scooping ice cream, driving trucks, stuff that actually should be getting gratitude all the time and doesn't, is it a lack of gratitude that sucks the life out of the jobs? Or is it just that no one's willing to do them at any price?

Jonathan:

It's probably a yes end and no, and either, or something like that. And there probably are other factors as well that go into it. But I think also, especially now, because two years ago, we didn't have the same problem. And I think a lot of it really has to do with, we are in this very, very altered state right now where people are just deeply re-examining every part of their lives in a way that we haven't before.

And there's a willingness and an unwillingness to step into certain decisions, certain relationships, certain investment of energy. That's just changed. People are really, they're asking different questions. And that's going to take a bunch of disruption and some reshaping of the landscape of business and work and careers.

Dave:

It is going to require reshaping. And I want to ask you this because your Good Life Project work that you've done for, what? 700 episodes. We've interviewed some similar people you've done a lot of personal and people haven't, but Gretchen Rubin, James Nester and Bishop Michael Curry are examples.

Part of me feels that we're kind of at an energetic point in society. Humans, we're both individuals, but we're also part of a complex organism that can shift like a beehive or a herd of sheep or whatever there's individuals, but the herd goes somewhere to eat for some reason, I'm getting a pretty strong sense that we're at a big inflection point.

We're going to go in one of a couple of different ways and part of that inflection point is people reassessing their career and saying, I got to do something that matters or at least something that doesn't suck the life out of me. Do you feel like this is a societal movement? Is this caused by sunspots or caused by bad algorithms? Banning stuff from YouTube, or what's behind it all?

Jonathan:

I think there are a couple of things. I think one thing is that if you look at an individual level, what are the things that normally make somebody make a profound change in behavior? that is not just, yeah, BJ Fogg and somebody we both know, it's not just a dot change, but it's either a span change or lifetime change, this is really big and different

On the individual level, it's rare that somebody makes a really big, profound change without some sort of big profound disruption dropping into their lives. It has them question their existence, their mortality, the way that they spend all their waking hours, the fundamental nature of how they interact with the world.

That's what's happened at scale, so we're in a moment where that level of disruption is happening, not just to individuals, but it is literally happening to hundreds of millions of people all

simultaneously. It's sort of like the cosmic ground has been ripped from underneath us, and now we're all just kind of floating here and waiting for earth to return and then realizing, oh, it may not be coming back so fast.

So how do I want to be in this place? And then when it comes back do I want to keep feeling the way I felt for the last 10, 15, 20 years? And that happens on an individual basis. The classic midlife crisis is a crisis of meaning, not a crisis of money or power or sex or love, it is a crisis of meaning.

And we're all dropped into that now at scale, in a level that we have not seen in our lifetimes. And my sense is that you add that to a level of profound discontent and lack of satisfaction that has been brewing underneath the surface for three generations now, and it's changing the assumptions about what people want and expect out of the way that they show up and devote themselves.

It's all kind of mixed into this soup of reexamining a re-imagining that we haven't seen before. And that's why I think you've got so many people quitting jobs often without something else lined up to go to, which would have been unheard of 10 years ago. And you've got a whole bunch of other people also who were working probably more sustenance jobs, like what you were talking about earlier, who are also choosing to say, let me re-examine this place.

Literally at every end of the spectrum, this is happening. And like I said, I was in New York City for 9/11 and there was a profound shaking in the year surrounding that, but it was much more localized, and it wasn't at a level that we're seeing now. And there was a local reexamining and there were pockets of it, but this is something that's much bigger.

Dave:

It is a big societal shift, it's multi-generational. And what I find impressive is that you've had about half a million people now use your tool called the Sparketype that's part of the book to figure out what they want to do, because it's a little bit scary for saying, oh, I've been a nurse for 10 years and I'm a caretaker, which I think is one of the archetypes or the Sparketype they have in there. Or it's probably a slightly different word for that. I didn't [crosstalk 00:12:13].

Jonathan:

Yeah. Nurturer.

Dave:

Nurturer. Thank you. But then saying, okay, I'm not doing that job anymore because even though there's an alleged shortage of nurses, we will fire all the ones who don't take a treatment that they don't want to protect other people, which is a violation of the medical ethics course they had to take to get their license to be nurses.

But I won't rant about that. Just that there are literally a million nurturers looking for work right now. It's a once in a lifetime change for actually, you can do this anytime individually, but as an employer, when thinking of starting something, there's more people, good people who think for themselves available right now than you could ever hire ever as long as you actually can match up what you ask them to do with what they ought to be doing. So what have you learned from half a million people?

Jonathan:

Yeah. And as we have this conversation, it's probably closing in on closer to 600,000 people now, probably about over 30 million data points from all that. And so you got some really fascinating, both quantitative and qualitative intel from this over the last four years or so.

One is that we all do have this unique imprint for work that makes us come alive. And let me be more precise with the language too, because coming alive, it's a really nebulous phrase, right? So when I talk about that, I'm talking about the confluence of five different states. Each of them well-researched and critical to human flourishing.

One of them is meaningfulness, the feeling that what we're doing actually matters, and that it in doing so we matter. The second one is access to flow states, which I know you've talked about a lot and had different guests on covering that. The third one is excitement enthusiasm, the org world calls this engagement. I like to use human words.

So it's like you wake up in the morning and even if it's really hard and it's a lot of work, you're actually excited to do it and it energizes you. The fourth is what I like to call express potential, the feeling that you're not stifling, that all of you is being brought to the task, that there's no sense of repression happening.

And the fifth one is purpose, and that operates on two levels. One is a more immediate sense of purpose. You're working towards something that you're clear about and it matters to you, but then more broadly, purpose in life. That you've kind of had this feeling you're doing the thing that you're here to do.

So when I say, we all have an impulse for work that makes us come alive, I'm talking about, we have this thing inside of us that can tell us to invest effort in a way that gives us those five feelings. And one of the things that we've learned actually is that these impulses are real.

Now in some preliminary data and in a secondary study, a phase two study that we're working on, I'll share, we've got about a 93% accuracy rate reported back to us with the assessment that we developed in 2018. But also we've got really fascinating correlation data coming out of it.

So those five states, we basically asked people, how often do you feel you're doing the work of your sparker type in your work on a day-to-day basis? And we've seen really strong correlations. The more people say they're doing that work, the more likely they are to tell you that they have a feeling of profound meaningfulness and drop into flow.

All those five things, if you're interested in the number side of it, our values of the correlation coefficients with those are anywhere from 0.5 to 0.8. So it's strong correlations. We can't make claims about causation yet, that'll be down the road, a project over the next couple of years.

So one of the things that we know is that actually with a big dataset, that we are really seeing a powerful correlation between doing this work, following this impulse, this red thread that exists inside all of us, and actually all of these five critical states for human flourishing, the ones that we aspire to, the ones that make us feel like, I feel good.

And then the follow on effect of that, which I'm fascinated by it is where there's a stronger tie into your work over the last decade, is when we hit those dates, what does that actually mean? What's the tumble on effect between feeling of meaningfulness and purpose and inflammation, and disease risk, and anxiety and depression and your physiological states in addition, that's a way down the road thing, but I'm excited to certainly push it there over the next five, 10 years and see that.

Dave:

I'm certain that having an inflamed brain means you're not making as much electricity in your brain, and that's just how it works for the whole big book about that topic. So could you not be showing up in your life the way you want or finding your purpose just because you didn't have enough electricity to do it? I see that at 40 years of Zen all the time.

We feed them the right stuff, they can actually raise voltage in the brain, it's trainable. So I think I don't have any doubts about that because I've already seen enough evidence, even though you don't need double blind clinical trials for that, but what I'd love to know is, and by the way guys, Sparketype is S-P-A-R-K-E type.com is the survey that lets you figure out what are the things that give you spark?

And my answer there was terrorist. No, no, sorry. That's not one of the categories. My answer was a maker/scientist. What I want to know because all of the members of the Upgrade Collective who are in our live audience, they're all doing the test right now and it looks like we have Sage, maven, maker, scientists, nurturer, what are the other possible answers that come out of?

Jonathan:

Yeah. So there are 10 possible answers. Maker, Maven, scientist, essentialist and the impulse or the essentialist is created as effectively to create order out of chaos, clarity, utility. What we see though is when functioning at the highest level, they actually experienced that, not just as utility, but as beauty, as there's elegance that they'll associate with the outcomes.

We have the performer, which is about animating enlivening interactions moment or experiences. We have the, I think you referenced the sage already, which is all about awakening insights about elimination. We've got the warrior which is gathering, organizing, leading, and very often protecting. There's a very fierce energy to that state. And while we talk about leaving as a skill very often, there's also an underlying impulse that some people have to do this from the youngest age.

We've got the advocate. The advocate is all about championing. It's shining the light on ideas, ideals, individuals, communities, brutally hard impulse to stay full. And when it does, the release valve on that looks really big. The nurturer, you referenced, the fundamental impulse there is lifting people up, it's elevation, giving care and taking care often when others either can't or won't, it's a deeply empathic impulse.

Very often one of the triggers or the things that trips up that person is, they don't take care of themselves because they can't conceive of them turning this impulse on themselves when so many other people know it.

Dave:

Oh, man. That's a big statement right there. I'm a member of Jack Canfield's and group called the Transformational Leadership Council. Are you a member?

Jonathan:

I'm not, but I know what it is.

Dave:

You're familiar with it. So this is a group of largely nurturers, people who give enormously many leaders in personal development. And it was a big honor to be invited in, but the reason he put it together is that they don't take care of themselves and they never take time for it. And even doctors get this caregiver fatigue. And sometimes if you have someone with Alzheimer's in the family, caregiver fatigue is an issue, but they were getting it. So Jack put thing together 20 years ago, get together twice a year

and just take care of each other. And it's actually really fun and it's been a path for me to meet some amazing elders and just a lot of wisdom. But the impetus for that is to solve the problem you just identified in society that we don't really recognize that too much.

Jonathan:

Yeah. And each one of these different impulses has a readily identifiable set of tendencies to behaviors and preferences that wrap around it. Thus, it forms an archetype, which are the things that I call Sparketypes? And they have triggers, they have warning signs, they have things which are unique to each one of them. So you're the maker scientist, for example.

Dave:

Well, it's kind of accurate, man. I'm reading it. I did it in preparation for the interview, it says, interestingly, your creations may have a tremendous impact on others. You enjoy this. It's a beautiful by-product that's essential if you want to turn making into your living, but when you're really honest, it's not the essential reason you do it.

The fact that it moves people on the depth of the effect is more a meaningful measuring stick of capabilities, then why you're here. So I'm like, oh, that makes sense. And of course, when you're dealing with financially motivated investor types, they don't get it. And like, oh, you'll make a decision to make the most money. I'm like, no, my standards matter way more than whatever dollars might be involved.

And it does for real make us... You nailed that. it really does. it really does, if you know that about yourself, create alignment, but if you don't know that about yourself and you think, oh, I was taught in business school to take the money and basically turn everything into Twinkies instead of quality food, well, then you're going to make decisions that don't make any sense to you because you have that pain, right?

Jonathan:

Yeah. And it's also, that point that you just brought up is something that is generally not polite to admit in society.

Dave:

That investors are typically douche bags or some other one?

Jonathan:

Not that point. I didn't know some very fine investors [crosstalk 00:22:20].

Dave:

Just kidding. Half my friends are investors. And by the way, if they were a vendor that, they're probably not really my friend.

Jonathan:

No, the fact that actually the thing that you make that the by-product of that may have profound effect, it may lead to tremendous business and industry and revenue and may have a huge effect on other individuals. But at the end of the day, you think that's cool. You've love that, it's really good and it may be the thing that allows you to actually earn a living doing it, but it's not why you do it.

You do it because the process of creation, the generative process itself is its own reward. So you're wiring the maker, scientist are also two impulses that are very heavily processed fulfilled. So these alternative, these live on a spectrum between being processed fulfilled and service fulfilled. The maker and the scientist are very heavily on the process side of things. So you can get lost in process, you can completely live there and create amazing things.

The scientist and bosses about figuring things out, deconstructing, problem solving, you can sell profound problems that may affect society and you think that's amazing, you love that it benefits other people, and it may allow you to make a very nice living. But still, it's not why you do it. It's the classic Richard Fineman response when he was awarded the Nobel prize, he's like, prize means nothing to me, it was the kick and figuring the thing out.

Dave:

Yeah. Yeah. It's not about the accolades for real creators that never and never has. Okay. I love it that you dialed in on that. But I'm really curious because there's also an anti-Sparketype. And for me, the anti-Sparketype was the advocate, which I'm assuming means I'll just never be woke enough or woke at all as the case may be. What is an anti-Sparketype?

Jonathan:

Yeah. Sort of the opposite end of the spectrum. We've been gathering about 90% of the data to figure that out. And then towards the end of this year, we came out with the 2.0 version of the assessment where we expanded the algorithm to be able to calculate effectively what is the work that empties you out, that's the heaviest lift that requires the greatest amount of recovery and very likely the greatest extrinsic motivation to get you to do it?

That doesn't mean that you don't have to do it. It doesn't mean it's not part of your job description. And it also doesn't mean that you may have a strong value association with that work being important to you on a values level. And because of that, you're still going to say yes to doing it.

But what it means is that when you do it, there's something about the way that you're wired that is going to very likely leave you emptier than other people who may actually be called to do that work and it may be incredibly nourishing for them. So it's interesting when people get either the advocate or the nurturer as their anti-Sparketype.

Because one, when they get the nurturer, very often, they'll say, is that just me? And I'm an awful person. I just don't care about anybody. And of course not, but what it tells you is that when you step into that place of lifting others up, of taking care of them, it may take a lot more out of you than it takes out of somebody else.

So you need to be aware of that. And also that comes with a certain level of responsibility for self-care, and also a sense of forgiveness tested to basically let say to yourself, it's not that I'm a bad person, there's something inside of me that just makes us harder. And with the advocate, the question often comes up, does that let me off the hook? Do I not have to speak up about anything?

And the answer again is, no, because most people actually have a strongly held value around actually "doing the right thing". Like standing up, being an ally, all these different situations, it just tells you that it's going to come a lot less naturally for you, but it doesn't let you off the hook, you're going to have to take care of yourself differently than doing it.

Dave:



Is there any bias in the answers based on sex, based on race, geography, height, what other patterns have you seen, politically incorrect question, because we're all supposed to be identical, but we're not.

Jonathan:

Yeah. There may well be. And in fact, that's sort of the next work that we're going to be doing. So this all happened has happened astonishingly quickly. We worked on the original version of the assessment for about a year, came out of beta, the end of 2018 in the blink of an eye. Hundreds of thousands of people were pouring through this assessment. A

And now we've got this giant dataset, but we haven't added in classic, deeper level demographic stuff. And so what we're looking at doing now is, okay, so can we actually now... We probably have to split off or duplicate what we have publicly and then add in a bunch of much more nuanced questions. And also, probably look at this point, doing more of a representative sample version of this.

Because yeah, anytime that you have something where you've got pretty big data coming in really, really quickly, you're always going to have some level of bias in that data. So we're now looking at the next wave and saying, we've gotten some really strong general things that we can pull out of this, but now let's see if we can actually tease out.

Are these are the answers different for different types of people from different walks of life and all sorts of different measures. And I'm actually pretty excited for that next wave. Probably be the next couple of years before [crosstalk 00:27:50] out of it.

Dave:

Next couple of years.

Jonathan:

Yeah.

Dave:

It's funny even the IQ test, it turns out has a bias that's in it, right? So if you didn't grow up in a White House, you might score with a lower IQ because you didn't know some of the things they assumed because of the people that wrote it whatever, 70 years ago. And your data set here is whoever clicked on it, whoever is attracted to your book. So you'd have to do some randomness. I get that.

Jonathan:

Yeah, totally. Even the prevalence data, which we actually share in an appendix at the end of the book, we break down the prevalence of all 10 primary types, all 10 shadow types and all 91, I think it is pairings. But you got to imagine, if this is publicly available, who's most likely to actually take this assessment.

Well, one of the types is the Maven, which is all about knowledge acquisition. So you got to imagine there's some bias that skews towards that person in the prevalence numbers, in the data. Interestingly though, it may be less than it appears on the surface, because we've also done a bunch of work with teams and organizations now with this, where anywhere from seven to four or 500 people take it, not because they want to, because they're curious, but because it's mandatory, pre-work for an engagement.

Dave:

But what if it puts out their spark to take surveys?

Jonathan:

What if it...

Dave:

Sorry, I'm just messing with you.

Jonathan:

Then they're going to be like, [inaudible] their anti-Sparketype.

Dave:

Right. I like your sense of humor, Jonathan, always have that. That's funny. What's your score?

Jonathan:

I'm the same as you on the top end, actually, I'm a maker/scientist.

Dave:

Okay.

Jonathan:

I wake up in the morning and my entire life, I'm like, what can I create? And the scientist is always sort of advising that, whenever I knock up against something and I'm stuck, it's sort of, let me go into figure it out mode. The opposite end of the spectrum for me is essentialist. That is a work that as an entrepreneur, a couple of times over like you, I love when that work is done. I love when we have systems and processes that work and hum.

I love order and clarity with everything that I'm doing and I want nothing to do with actually having to be the person who does that work. I've gotten good at it because in the early days of any endeavor, you got to do it, it's just what you do. So I've developed the skill of being good at that kind of work, and that makes it a little bit better.

Competence helps offset the feeling of emptying that sometimes you get from doing that work, but it doesn't completely counter it. It just makes it a little bit better. And the minute I'm resourced in any endeavor where I can actually have that work done by somebody else who literally wakes up in the morning and wants to do that work, I'll do it.

In fact, the producer for the Good Life Project podcast is an essentialist. We have a massive spreadsheet with 40 episodes in production at any given time, probably similar to you, and I look at it and I'm like, thank God this exists. And then my next impulse is, thank God I didn't have to create this.

Dave:

Yep. I'm with you there. Thanks Darcy for having a spreadsheet. I would dream in PowerPoint, not Excel. Let's just put it that way. And I don't do any amount of calendaring because it takes my spark out, literally. My wife will be like, are you available then? I'm like, why would you ask me that? I don't know, look at my calendar. I don't manage the damn thing. I just do what's on it because it's kryptonite, right?

And I learned that about myself the hard way. I don't do stuff that takes my energy. I don't care what it is. I will give everything that I own to someone else to do the things that take my energy because my energy is the most precious thing. And when I set up my life that way, I sure can't do a lot more.

And it turns out, there's other people who have these other things, the other Sparketype, they actually doing the stuff that literally makes me weak. And that's a big learning for everyone out there. Even if you're saying I can't afford to pay anyone to do anything, there's people who love doing the stuff you hate. There are people who clean because they to clean, what the heck?

Jonathan:

I'll give you a funny example. There are people who hate being makers. So three years ago at a time where I was hugely busy and I had no business doing it, I took a month off of work and I vanished out and I lived on top of this partially renovated roadhouse in rural Pennsylvania. And I was working basically doing manual labor 18 hours a day and sleeping on top of this thing with a short little break, 13 hours, not 18 hours a day.

And I was the happiest person that I could ever be. I paid for the privilege of doing that. I wasn't doing anything benevolent, I wasn't doing anything good for society. I was working with a Luther guitar builder to work side by side with him for a month to teach me how to build a guitar.

I paid thousands of dollars to spend probably five times more hours and it would've taken someone who's competent and making this instrument to create an instrument that was nowhere near the quality of what I could have just bought off the shelf for a fraction of the price.

And so literally, there's somebody else who was doing this identical job five times better than me and getting paid to do it. And here I am, living on the top of a roadhouse in rural Pennsylvania paying thousands of dollars for the privilege to do the exact same thing purely for the way that it made me feel.

Dave:

Wow. So you're willing to just go for the experience there.

Jonathan:

Yeah.

Dave:

Which is really cool. I'm asking around with all of our live studio audience to see if we have any primary advocates. What was your anti-Sparketype?

Jonathan:

Oh, for me.

Dave:

Yeah.

Jonathan:

Yeah. No, it's essentialist.

Dave:

Oh, that's right. You had mentioned essentialist. Okay. So yours is essentialist. So we had a few essentialist, but I was looking to see if we had any primary advocates floating around. So it's interesting because I've gotten to know some of the people in the audience and we've chatted a few times, so I have a sense for you, but it really does map quite well.

It's a neat framework and it's a new one and you've got enough data that I think it's quite real, and I want to go and we're talking about what's quite real, let's assume that when someone takes us to go, oh my God, I'm in a career that my parents told me I should be in and it's totally wrong for me, what do they do if you're in just the wrong career and you take the Sparketype test and suddenly you realize, am I just screwed? It could be not a happy place.

Jonathan:

Yeah. And that happens with a fair level of frequency, so much so that actually the very beginning of the book, before I even get into the book, there's literally a five sentence personal note for me that says, you may learn something that may ring as really true to you, but then maybe immediately make you feel like, but I'm not doing that in a really big way and you may have this impulse to just blow everything up and start over. Please don't do that.

Dave:

Right.

Jonathan:

If you're 19 years old and the stakes are low and there's not a whole lot riding on it or whatever, maybe that's okay. But for the average person, who's further into life and you've got responsibilities and it's not just your decision and it's not just your life and it's going to be really, really painful.

The good news is that there's actually a tremendous amount that you can do to reimagine what you're doing, there's a bunch of research in what folks in positive and social sciences called job crafting, which essentially says, what if you actually took the same job with the same on paper job description.

But once you understood something that is more important about what you need and don't need, you look at that identical job and you look for opportunities to do more of the things you already do that give you that feeling of coming alive. You look for new things that you're not even doing, but there are available to you, even if it means stepping outside of the confines of the job description for which you were hired, maybe there's another project or another team that's adjacent to you.

And there's something where you could actually help out or maybe your own team. But you've never actually said, I can do this or I want to do this. Once people actually understand what it is that will give them the feeling that they want you're profoundly differently, equipped to start seeing opportunities to do more of it and to do less of the emptying side.

There's data on this that shows that you actually can make really big changes. Very often, enough to know that what appears on paper to be the same thing is experienced in a really different way, and it makes you feel very differently. And even if you don't get all the way there, you can almost always make it a whole lot better.

And if you have, for example, a value around financial security, let's say, I have a really strong held value around supporting myself and my family, maybe I have extended family cousins, parents, grandparents, that are relying on me and that's really important to me. So I'm not just going to blow things up.

If I can honor that value, but then take this thing which feels really emptying and make it first a whole lot better, so now it's just kind of fine, or maybe you're going to like, this is actually half decent. There are a decent amount of times where I feel like, yeah, I feel alive and lost in flow.

That transforms certainly the overall experience because now you get to honor a nonnegotiable value and you feel a whole lot better. And then you start to look outside the confines of the actual job and say, okay, so what are the activities and the pursuits and the hobbies and the roles and the devotions that I can fold around this that will a hundred percent give me that feeling.

And the blend of that experience, very often, honoring values, optimizing your central job, and then building around it things which are truly steeped in the expression of your Sparketype, it gives most people almost everything that they need on the rare experience that somebody still gets to that place.

And they say, you know what? It's still not there. That becomes a moment where then you start to look out and say, okay, now does it actually make sense to take the nuclear career option? Not as it makes sense to consider blowing it up, but when you do it from that standpoint and that state, now you're doing it from a place of deeper self-knowledge, of optimized wellbeing and state, of mind of confidence rather than from a place of emptiness, of futility, of victimhood.

So when you step out and you actually look to create or find something that is much better aligned with that impulse and set of values for you, you do it in a very different state of being and state of mind. And the world tends to respond to you in a very different way. So it's a wholly different experience than if you just woke up one day and said, I'm tapping out, I'm just going to blow it all up and then figure it out from here.

Dave:

It seems like if you're one of those people who has been illegally and unethically fired for not giving up your biological autonomy, but this might be a good, and it's totally free., a good test to take, to see what your new career direction is. And I want to tell a little story from very early in my career. I was probably 25. Before I went to the company that made me briefly a multimillionaire in my twenties before I lost it all.

I was in an IT department at a company called [Threecon 00:39:20] that was once a challenger was Cisco for computer networking. And I decided I was going to get a certification in project management. This is the land of spreadsheets and Gantt charts, and I wanted to do it because I sucked at it. And my algorithm was, I should make sure that I'm not weak at anything.

So I put all this effort and time and got my boss to pay for a course. I never even finished the course. I couldn't stay awake in the classes for the course, because it was such a kryptonite sort of thing to do. And that was maybe the first time in my mid-twenties when I realized, you know what? Maybe I just suck at this. And it's not that I suck at it, it's that it's so much resistance and half the resistance that we have is from trauma.

Like something bad happened to me once I did that. So I have this sort of, I'll procrastinate, I'll do something else. And then others, it's because it's just not in your nature and it's not a trauma-based thing. How do we sort out when we feel resistance, because it's unnatural for us, which I think is where you're going with this Sparketype versus air resistance, because someone was mean to me in seventh grade?

Jonathan:

Yeah. That is such a good question. It's one that I've been trying to tease out, a couple of thoughts, come to mind. One, I don't think there's a clear and obvious answer that's right for everyone there, because

we're not all one homogenous being with the same level of trauma and the same history. So it's going to show up differently for all of us.

I have a bit of an unusual litmus test for me, which is, for me, things tend to show physiologically. I look to my physiology as a really important tool for discernment. And it's largely about where I feel it in an odd way. So I'll try and rationalize things. I'll make lists of how do I actually feel about this? What are the pros and whether all the cons and, how is this landing for me?

And I'll literally ask myself, what is the fear that's coming up involved in this? Is there a fear? And what am I coping strategies? And so I'll try and really deconstruct it with a little bit of a homegrown CBT approach. At the end of the day, very often I'm tapping into how something makes me feel.

But whether it's something as a fear response or not, or a trauma response or not is an interesting thing. We had at a friend of mine and the very early beta testing of the assessment where the data was coming in slow enough where I could actually see who was taking it and how they were answering. I saw somebody answer, and they came up as a performer, but this is somebody who I knew to be sort of a very detailed operated meticulous operations person in a startup.

And at very behind the scenes, very intentionally not forward facing but absolutely meticulous with systems, process, documentation. And actually this person came up with their lead Sparketype, their primary as a performer. And I was like, huh, that feels weird to me.

So I reached out to her, I was like, dude, there's something wrong with the algorithm here do we actually need to... Because I want to deconstruct it. And she's like, no, actually that's been me my whole life. I've been hiding it. And part of the reason that she was hiding it was that there was also a lot of anxiety associated with it.

And part of the reason that her forward facing role and skillset had become being massively detailed-oriented, systems and processes was because it was a coping mechanism because it allowed her to organize, it allowed her to sort of say, this is the one place where I know exactly how things are going to be in my life.

But part of it was also a coping mechanism for a feeling of persistently knowing she's not showing up as the person who she really is. So the answer is, it's complicated and that's actually a really fascinating question that I've been starting to deepen into with our team and say, how can we continue to work on the language and the prompts.

So that without then having to take these metrics and then sit down with a coach or a consultant and just spend conversationally work through this, which I think is actually a really good idea. How can we keep improving on the language and the ideas that we're putting into the tool itself to try and tease these things out at a higher and higher level. So I'm sort of right in the middle of this question right now.

Dave:

I think you'll find something really valuable in what you said there. And this is for everybody listening, that idea that where in the body is it, that's one of the questions that I've asked countless numbers of times during 40 years of Zen, when people are sorting out this sort of stuff, instead of trauma versus core attribute, et cetera.

And yeah, you feel it in your gut, it feels different, but if you're not trained or you didn't hear it hear or read a book or do some yoga class or something where, especially if you're an engineer or process-driven to, oh, hold on, that one was in my gut or my parents' diem or in my throat, those mean something.

There's data in that noise. I had no idea there was any data below the neck and tell us about 30. so your answer there, it was actually a very finely nuanced. Well, you can tell because if it's trauma, your gut clenches up or your heart closes down or something, and it doesn't do that if it's going against your core nature.

Jonathan:

Yeah, no, for me, that's always been a huge sell.

Dave:

Yeah.

Jonathan:

But like you said, it takes a certain level of awareness to get to that place.

Dave:

It's one of those things that that's on your life path and if you're at the beginning of your career and you hear this, well, this is important because one thing you can do is in my job where I realize I suck at project management, well, I didn't have to do that to be successful in that job.

So you can almost always tune your job. And it's one thing if you're washing dishes or scooping ice cream, or your job is to scoop the damned ice cream, but there's nothing that says that I couldn't come up with a new process for organizing things so I could do less work, because I do that all the time because I was bored and it's in my nature to do that. They didn't pay me for it, but at least I was less bored.

So unless you have a very defined role, you can usually, once your Sparketype say, I'm going to do more of that, and this weird thing happens. One of the people on my team with Upgrade Labs and with Bulletproof Media and all came in with that situation, I'm like, we'll find a way to do something that's more valuable, that's how you increase your compensation and your role in the company at all.

And so within a year and a half of seeing my figure out something that you like doing, that adds a lot of value, she exceeded our wildest dreams in terms of the company, right? And it's because it was something that came natural instead of because she worked hard and pushed and struggled.

And so I would just say, look, if you're under 25, under 30, and you're not sure about this, this is one of those really important things that you don't want to miss. If you're retiring and you spend a whole bunch of time doing a bunch of shit works so you have a lot of money, you also should do this. [inaudible 00:46:40] seem the two most important times, am I right?

Jonathan:

Yeah. No, for sure. I think it's sort of in the early days when really trying to figure out the early path and then yeah, so many people when they're thinking about the Encore career and they're like, okay, so now it's time to do something for me, but what is that? I don't even know what it is that gives me the feeling I want to feel. So yeah, you're spot on. I think those are the two windows where this becomes really important.

Dave:

Let's bring Joanne on to ask a question from the Upgrade Collective and well, Chris, dials are up here, guys, if you're listening to the Upgrade Collective is my mentorship and membership group. We meet every week. You get tons of time with me, with my coaching team and it's quite affordable.

Given all the support and you also get a full course on every class or on every book I've ever written. There's a class that I teach and thousands of people working together on answering questions and all of that. So it's called ourupgradecollective.com and Joanne, what do you have to ask?

Joanne:

Okay, thanks a lot, Dave. And thank you, Jonathan. This question is for Jonathan. Jonathan, I want to ask you about the current changes in society, which of course you're studying. By more people setting up personal life projects, whether it's setting up a private business on something they're passionate about or setting up some kind of a different private, personal life project my question is this. Is this chance for personal fulfillment threatened by maybe a whole or small private number of people that is possibly attempting to corral people into mundane work they want them for their greedy purposes. So kind of a big question.

Jonathan:

Yeah. It's a very big question and one that I don't know if I can actually give you an answer to that because it would probably require me to know something about a lot more and on a lot more systemic issues than I do. I confess it, my focus is so narrowly focused right now on really working with these types and focusing more on just our ability to express these, whether it's in our work, whether it's in something that we're starting that's more meaningful and or whether it's has nothing to do with what we're getting paid to do.

But so whether there are forces outside of our own agency and our own immediate communities is something that I probably feel not well equipped to speak to because it's just not really the area of focus for me.

Joanne:

Okay. Okay. Thanks. I particularly, I'm kind of interested in Dr. Mercola has pointed out that one person has purchased 242,000 acres land, farming land in the U.S., that person's very interested in GMOs. And I guess I hope it never comes to the fact that we can't get some of the things we want, like good food and other healthy things.

Dave:

Remember, can't is a weasel word. There's always a way, you can always go to change the laws of physics, or you could just take it back. And we're about to reach that point. If things continue where they are and throw it all of history, usually there's pitchforks involved.

So I'm hoping that people own the land understand there are some lines you can't cross, they're right on the edge of those lines. Fortunate I don't own any pitchforks. I live in Canada, we just have maple syrup up here. But I'm gravely concerned with the stuff you're talking about. And let me ask you this, what Sparketype is mostly to lead a revolt?

Jonathan:

All. They'll just do it differently.



Dave:

That is a really good answer. Do you have concerns? If the NSA and CIA didn't already have access to your full database or at least they had access that you knew about, could you do bad things knowing people's Sparketypes, like punish them by giving them work that's the opposite of what gives them energy? Trust me, Amazon's already thinking of this.

Jonathan:

I have no idea, but yeah, could you do worse than we've already done to ourselves by the choices that we've made based largely on external expectation than our own inner impulses? Not so sure.

Dave:

Got it. So all of us are capable of creating change and so when you say I can't do anything about it, there are lots of things you can do. You just were not programmed to think about it, which means do your Sparketype, see how you would solve the problem and just recognize there's other people on the team with the same goal that would solve it different differently. So let's move on to a question from Deborah. Deborah, you had a question, right?

Deborah:

Hi, thanks. I just took the quiz and I'm a performer/sage, which works out great because I'm a bio-hacking coach for actors. So I guess that works out perfect.\

Dave:

There you go.

Deborah:

But I wanted to find out, does this have implications beyond just employment? Is it the five love languages or something for compatibility, for personal stuff? And can you use it to get out of housework or doing the dishes because it doesn't work with your Sparketype.

Jonathan:

Yeah. I don't know if you can use it to negotiate getting out of certain things because it's just not my organic impulse, but does it have larger implications beyond the domain of the thing you get paid to do? Yeah, very likely. We've had so many people come back to us and say, I took this, my romantic partner or my colleagues or my friends, we all took this. And there are two things that people tend to say, which are really important far beyond the world of work.

One is, I feel validated and granted, no other human being can validate another human being. But what it is, is effectively a tool that reflects back at you, something which is a truth that exists beyond the facade of expectation. And then in addition to that, a lot of folks, they feel seen, they feel seen for something that is not normally what they're seeing for something that feels a deeper truth to them.

And they have language, they have language for that, both to explain themselves to themselves, but also to then talk to other people in their lives and say, this is me, this is who I am, this is a lot of the reason why I do what I do and why I am the way I am. And a lot of folks have shared with us that they've used that as jumping off points in a lot of personal relationships and conversations with family.'

That has been really opening where it opens a conversation to a level of understanding mutuality that exists beyond the domain of work. So, yeah, I think you're spot on. That wasn't the

original intention of doing the work, but what we're seeing as people run with the ideas and the learnings is that they are experimenting and seeing how it unfolds in all parts of life.

Dave:

That was a cool question, Deborah. Thank you. I got to ask you Jonathan, what's your love language?

Jonathan:

Physical touch. I think that's probably not the exact language, but it was-

Dave:

I think that is it.

Jonathan:

Is that the language?

Dave:

Yeah. You want to hug, basically.

Jonathan:

Yeah, basically. Yeah. I could care less about gifts or words of appreciation, whatever that one is. It's like, nah, just give me a hug, hold my hand.

Dave:

Give me a hug, not as not a stack of cash. Got it.

Jonathan:

Exactly. Yeah.

Dave:

Kinesthetic is what Scott says it is. I'm going to go with what Scott from OK Collective says. I don't remember mine being physical touch, but who the heck knows, but I'm trying to remember mine, it's acts of service and physical touch as well, if I remember but I don't know which one was upfront.

But same thing, gifts, unless it's an act of service gift. Like, oh, thank you. It was really nice. So is there a mapping or would you predict a mapping between love language and Sparketype? They're pretty different domains, but I bet there's commonalities.

Jonathan:

I bet there is, I have no idea, but funny, I haven't been asked about love languages yet. I've been asked about most of the other major indexes like strengths and Enneagram, especially these days. And so we're kind of figuring out like how could we actually explore the overlays? Because my gut tells me there probably are those overlays.

Dave:

I think there are. And Don from the Upgrade Collective just said, his love language was no decaf. So I'm switching mine as well. Thanks Don, that and butter, are love languages, to heck with all this physical touch. Now, Jonathan, this data set of 600,000, probably a million people soon. We've really helped him figure out if not, what's my purpose, but at least what are the areas to focus on that are going to give me enough energy that I'll just keep doing them, which is part of finding your purpose.

Jonathan:

Yeah.

Dave:

Where do you see it going? Where's the Sparketype 10 years from now?

Jonathan:

Yeah, it's funny because I never imagined we'd be here when I started this work. It's gain traction a whole different level. It started as a project as so many things do, and now I'm an entrepreneur, so I'm constantly running experiments and I never know which ones are going to gain traction and because of the response to it, we ended up splitting it into its own organization, Spark Endeavors.

And then the goal now is to continue to develop more nuanced understandings and to continue to build tools that are helpful for people. So we started with the assessment, three years later, we rolled out the 2.0 version of the assessment, which introduced the anti-Sparketype.

Now there's a book which effectively takes a massive dataset of more qualitative data through stories, use cases and applications that's been just building in my head for a really long time and puts them all into one big thing that people can interact with. And now we're looking at what other tools can we build, what other program can we build to help people both individually step into this space, and also organizations.

There's a lot of interest in the context of leadership engagement, living in development. And my strong belief is that organizations now that don't in some way recognize and invest in not just maximizing shareholder value, but also developing the human beings that allow their shareholders to have value from the get-go, they're going to lose out.

Because I think a lot of people are going to want more from the things that they're showing up to do. And so I'd love to play a role in that, if we can create anything that is helpful and meaningful and then leverage the structure and the scaffolding and the logistics of organizations to help share ideas, to me get, that's a really interesting thing to be exploring over the next couple of years.

Dave:

Wow. I think there's going to be some neat knowledge about humans that you end up unlocking here. Things that we didn't quite understand, a lot like the love language. So I'm grateful that you're doing the work and that you're publishing it. And I was curious, so I asked the team while we were talking, we've got about 40, 45 people in the live audience.

So I pulled them, and so far it looks we've got mavens is the dominant one with six, and then there's usually fours on stage and advisor and fewer there's just one or none. So do you find that if you go to a football stadium and the audience is going to be evenly distributed across this, or is that all warriors or... I'm trying to get a sense, do you form tribes around this or do you form teams that are highly variable?

Jonathan:

Yeah. In my mind, you form teams that are highly valuable, because let's say you have a project, almost any projects need a whole bunch of different types of things done. So to the extent that you could actually align people or have people make choices that say yes to things where everyone's working, not because there's some characteristic being dangled in front of them, or some fear that if they don't work it's going to be bad, but they actually show up and do anything they want to do.

There's no project that's just requires one thing to be done. Basically, every project requires everything to be done. So to the extent that we can have more complex, nuanced diverse teams, I think we're all better for that. Plus, you know this from your own work. If you're doing the thing that you wake up in the morning to do, the notion of classical motivation, it goes away.

And that's the age old question for leaders, how do I motivate people to show up as their best selves? How do I remove friction from the process? You help them figure out what is the thing that they wake up in the morning that they feel like they cannot do simply because of the feeling it gives them.

And to the extent that you can align the work that they're doing with that. You can't always do it a hundred percent. We're always going to do some stuff that we don't want to be doing, but the closer you can get to that, it's not just good for them, it's good for the outcome of the team and the project and the enterprise at the end of the day.

Dave:

I very much like that answer. And I think you've done some cool work to crack the code. And if I would have been able to go back in time to when I was 20 or 25 and understand, this is different than follow your passion. This is actually way more scientific, but it's follow the stuff that's easy and feels good, which is different than your passion.

You might be passionate about woodworking, but suck at it. So you do that for fun, but it isn't what's easy for you. And so just that little bit of nuance on follow your passion is really important. I'm recording classes on all of the books that I've written for the Upgrade Collective, and I just finished part of game-changers where I do talk about following your passion out.

It's important to care about it, but this little nuance of removing friction by following, you can follow your passion, but you follow it via the mechanism, the Sparketype, it's cool and I think it's really valuable. So guys, if you're anywhere at a point of transition or making a decision about what's next, where should you go, using this, not as a roadmap, but as a way to say, if you go down that road, it's going to beat you up a lot less, and there's probably multiple roads to get there. That's what this is.

Jonathan:

Yeah. It's a data point and hopefully it's valid data, it's not the only data point for sure, a lot of stuff goes into our decision making, but hopefully it adds some intelligence to the process.

Dave:

Nice. Well, thank you for writing a book about it. The book is called Sparked and you can do the survey at Sparketype, S-P-A-R-K-E-T-Y-P-E.com. Jonathan, it's great to have you back on the show. It's been quite a while. And so we'll stay in touch now that I know scientist/maker, and my anti one was kale.

Jonathan:

Well, thanks for having me, Dave, it's always fun.