

- Your Divine Spark –

By author and career coach, Robert Meier

No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light – Luke 11: 33 (NIV)

For the past 15 years, I've helped job seekers move forward in their careers by discovering their unique gifts and talents, what I call their "divine sparks", now its time to help you reveal God's touch in your career to potential employers. The easiest definition of a divine spark are those unique times in your work-life where God inspired you to add value to the company that pays your salary. The inspiration can be either conscious, meaning you know God gave you the 'eureka' solution to a thorny problem or unconscious, meaning your career success is simply the result of a life yielded to God's directing.

To discover your "divine sparks", you must believe that God created *you* as a one-of-a-kind original. Now that's not hard to believe since our fingerprints prove that no two people are created exactly alike. Yet, in this world we feel as special as, hum...lets see...a cog in the machine, a number on a list, a dot on the bell curve, or the "occupant" who picks up their unsolicited mail each day. In our heart we know God made us in his image, we believe his image is glorious, and that we should reflect that glory, but we don't feel special or glorious. So discovering God's glory in our career can sound like a great idea, but it can also feel too elusive to apply on a personal basis.

That is the crux of the problem. The conflict between what we read in the Bible – that we are very special, and how the world defines us as average on so many levels. Average income, age, height, appearance, weight and on and on *ad nauseam*. The feeling of being average is so pervasive that some people are not comfortable being told they are rare, unique and original. They become suspicious of the accolade. "If everyone is special," they think, "doesn't that make everyone average by default?" This logic is also illustrated by the rhetorical question, "if every rock were a diamond, wouldn't diamonds become as worthless as sand?" Good argument, but in this situation, you are not quite on target. Every gram of carbon has the potential to be a diamond under the right circumstance. Diamonds are created from the same material found in coal and graphite – the main ingredients in BBQ briquettes and pencil lead. What can make carbon worth up to a quarter million dollars per ounce are the conditions that produce diamonds, specifically; high pressure and temperatures, but no oxygen. That sounds like the environment that makes career diamonds: a high-pressure boss' combined with the fire of demanding expectations and short deadlines without the breathing room to make mistakes. In our world, transforming common humans into extraordinarily employees is reflective of demanding work, performed in difficult job environments to form your professional facets, which, when displayed properly, reveal the "divine sparks" in your career.

It is only fair to tell you that everyone I meet struggles to reveal their God given talents properly to talent-buyers of the job market (i.e., employers). The difficulty of communicating value causes some to dismiss the problem altogether and blithely state that's what heavens for anyway. To be transfigured from average sin-ridden, fallible humans into glorious celestial beings. Baloney. We need to shine our lights here on earth while we are still alive. God is the God of the living. Don't buy the all too familiar lie that only famous people, i.e. professional athletes, movie stars, singers, doctors, politicians, or CEOs are considered the rare jewels in America. Down deep, you know that God formed you in a special way for a special purpose. Your life is rare and unique. So lets make a deal. From this point onward, you and I agree to suspend our pessimisms, skepticisms and history of personal failures. For a time, you will embrace the spiritual fact that you are much more valuable than any *Hope* diamond because you are God's marvelous child. Paul confirms this point by telling us, "You made him (man) a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor." Hebrews Chapter 2 vs. 7

To learn how to reveal the divine sparks in your career, you need to think in a new way. I want you to see your job-history as a raw diamond, meaning, stored within your career are the facets that reveal the touch of God in your life. The sparkle of the facets is reflective of the length of your career. The size and quality of the diamond depends on a variety of factors such as level of responsibility, quality of solution delivered, results gained, costs saved, processes improved, timeline, etc. As a career-jeweler, I believe that every human has “divine sparks” that should be displayed, we just need to look at our career through the eyes of a jeweler. What do jewelers know that you don’t? They know that it takes tons of dirt to uncover a single caret of diamond and many hours of skilled labor to turn raw diamonds into sellable products. If they don’t do the work, no one buys their goods and they go out of business. You likewise, need to cut facets into your career jewel in order to uncover God’s divine spark and attract a skeptical talent buyer who is not easily impressed. The sparks are your accomplishments and the results you have delivered and you display these sparks in a “personal value proposition”.

Calculating Your Personal Value Proposition - PVP
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One reason job-seekers find it hard to reveal their “divine sparks” is they separate their work life from their faith. This idea is neatly summarized by Ray Kroc, who built McDonalds into a multibillion-dollar behemoth. He is quoted as follows, “on Sunday my priorities are God first, family second and my career is third. On Monday that order is reversed.” Mr. Kroc’s Sunday-to-Monday reversal is all too familiar; he put his career on a different track than his faith. But the two are not easily separated, that is, if we do our work in a way that honors God. If that reflects your career reality, then the fact is, God is leading your mind, your hands, your energies and creative abilities. What you need to do is calculate the value of being led by God in your workplace. I call this a Personal Value Proposition (PVP), which I define as the results, contributions, and impacts you have made as an employee.

To discover your PVP, you must drill down through your work history and look for direct or indirect impacts to the company’s bottom line. Whether you are a manager, line employee or senior executive - the only way a company can justify continuing your employment is if you contribute more than the cost of your salary. So the salary becomes a benchmark for your PVP. A high PVP is multiples of value relative to our salary. As illustration, if you’re earning \$50,000 a year and have a five-time (5X) PVP you show a potential employer that your contributions deliver \$250,000 worth of value annually.

PVP Example (as written in a client’s resume)

1980-1989 Overview	BORG WARNER CORP. Transportation Manager Managed outbound and inbound transportation/distribution of automotive parts to aftermarket customers for an operation with an annual freight budget of \$9 million at a company generating sales volume of \$500 million annually.
Goal	Maintain freight as a percent of annual sales between 1.90% and 2.0 %
Actions	Developed a request for bid program used to source new less than truckload (LTL) carriers.
Results	Reduced annual freight costs below 1.90% of annual sales, down from 2.25%, thus saving Borg Warner over \$1.7 million annually.

Although there are many ways to measure your PVP, the best way is by defining your impact on the bottom line, meaning how you helped gain operational efficiency, led or supported projects, increased revenues, minimized costs, enhanced customer service, and so forth. Ultimately, your “divine sparks” are calculated in a PVP to show the world that you are a divinely inspired employee.

Robert Meier is a Christian career coach who can be reached at 813-746-5844 or at coach@godsjob.org. To learn how to calculate your “divine spark” and PVP, consider using the “Divinely Inspired Job In The Box” career kit, http://godsjob.org/Workshop_Products.html, which was created to help believers reach God's destiny for their careers.