

*A Love Letter
For Our*



SPARK Community

MAY 1, 2018 | LL 1.0 | SPARK CREATIONS & COMPANY INC.

*“What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
What the world needs now is love, sweet love,
No not just for some but for everyone.”*

- Jackie DeShannon

After reading Warren Buffett's Shareholder Letters, I was inspired to write a Love Letter for our SPARK Community. This letter will share our story, our greatest lessons, our purpose and our vision for 2018.

First, why call it a Love Letter. Love is my strongest personal core value (if you didn't know that already) and the core value that all of our SPARK family members share. It's also our company's core value. Everything we do and say comes from Love. Love is the rope that ties all of us and you, our community, together. I reference a rope and not a thread because it's stronger. It's also what I've used to rock climb mountains for almost 25 years so this rope has literally saved my life. Our rope when tied into a figure 8 knot, is our logo and a symbol of trust and belonging. It's me, you and we... together as partners and connected as one family.

Now that we understand the essence of this letter,
here's what I really want to share.

Our Story

When I reconnected with Aileen in 2010 to start a Success Circle (a.k.a. mastermind group), little did I know that she had a BIG gift for me. She gave me the gift of life and purpose. She didn't know it at the time. No one did. And that's why it's so special.

I still remember her presenting her "little" idea of a personal development company using her computer and PowerPoint slides. She was so cute looking all professional, as if she was presenting to a group of investors. She giggled throughout the presentation like a little girl excited to share her school project. I giggled with her. Smiles were shared. Then the big moment happened minutes after I left her place. I called her up immediately and said, "Let's do it!" She replied, "Do what?" I said, "Let's start your SPARK!" And the rest is history.



*"Surround yourself
with only people
who are going to
lift you higher."*

- Oprah Winfrey



What is SPARK Creations?

"It's really about finding that sweet spot in your heart to come out."

- Aileen de la Torre

What people don't know about this SPARK story is that while Aileen openly shared her heart for the first time, she wasn't really expecting anything to happen with this idea. This is why it's so fascinating to see how far we've come along in just over 6 years. When you least expect it, when you just share to simply share, that's when the magic happens. That's when you don't even realize that someone is actually listening and wants to support you to fulfill your dreams.

I think they call this divine intervention. I call it divine connection. The feeling I felt when I heard the idea was like taking the first bite of a warm peanut butter cookie just out of the oven. It tasted SO GOOD! I knew after hearing the idea that it was something we had to do. No 'buts'. No rhyme or reason. I guess when you find your calling, you just trust your gut and go with the flow. The pull was so strong and yet, so effortless. All we had to do was listen and then follow our hearts. Our hearts knew exactly what to do.

Our Greatest Lessons

In rock climbing terms, when you take a big fall, it's usually when you're about to make a move and you're running out of energy. You underestimate how far the clip is and then when you reach, you fall. Our greatest lessons came from big falls.

FIRST FALL

State your dreams
out loud!

SECOND FALL

Letting go means
trusting completely!

THIRD FALL

Connect. Connect.
Connect.

SECOND FALL

Letting go means trusting completely!

When I climb mountains, letting go at the top of the climb is always a scary feeling. Whether you're rappelling or you have a belayer ready to lower you to the ground, the moment you sit back and let go, takes your breath away. You feel anxious until your feet finally touch the ground. You have to trust completely.

When Aileen decided to pursue a family dream in the Philippines, I was happy for her and also uncertain on how we were going to keep our SPARK alive. It had only been the two of us for so long.

When we decided to bring on a third person in 2015, it didn't work out. I found it challenging to trust completely and to fully let go. I held onto the rope so tightly that the tension affected the relationship. In climbing, when the rope is held too tight, it's frustrating. You can't move freely or take chances, and you feel stuck. I learned after the fact that I never did let go. That was a hard lesson. I felt guilt and shame. How can I inspire Leaders to openly give trust when I myself am not trusting?

Aileen making this life decision created another opportunity for me to let go. If I didn't, then we wouldn't have been able to grow. The moment I let go, that's when SPARK flourished. That's when our family and clients doubled in size. And that's when I experienced the true benefits of trusting completely.

Our Purpose

When people ask me what SPARK is today, I say with a sense of knowing and excitement that **we are a community of loving human beings that want to elevate the human spirit.**

So what does that have to do with the workplace?

We believe in the deepest parts of our hearts that every business owner, Leader, and team member (a.k.a. human being), wants to feel valued and cared for at work. The days when we focused on finding a “job”, no longer exists. We have evolved as humans and we want more.

For the last 20 years of my professional experience, what I have learned is that all human beings at work (and at home) want a fulfilling experience. What creates that fulfillment will be different for every individual as we all have a unique set of human needs. Therefore, it's our shared responsibility to discover what matters most to each of us (values), what inspires us to get up everyone morning (purpose), and what we want to create in this life (vision) so that we can live that fulfilling life we all desire.

It's also our belief that if we can support organizations to elevate the life experience at work, this joyful energy will naturally be shared with our families and children. **Love is contagious so sharing that love at work will flow through to our homes and our greater community.**

“Ask senior executives what their biggest concern is and they will all tell you the same thing. It’s talent possessing some specific soft skills beyond conventional business and engineering training. Five essential talents that companies need emerged in research: intellectual curiosity, 360 degree thinking, cultural competence, empathy, and adaptability.”

- Fortune

“Psychological safety - team members feeling safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other - was far and away the most important of the five dynamics we found that set successful teams apart.”
- Project Aristotle, Google

At the World Economic Forum, Jack Ma, Founder of Alibaba, stated that in addition to having IQ and EQ, Leaders must also have LQ - the quotient of love. He shared, “A machine does not have a heart, a machine does not have a soul, and a machine does not have a belief. Human beings have the souls, have the belief, have the values; we are creative.”

In a Forbes article by Dan Wellers on “How To Be Human In An AI Future”, he states that, “to stay ahead of AI in an increasingly automated world, we need to start cultivating our most human abilities on a societal level – and to do so not just as soon as possible, but as early as possible.”

The machines are learning from humans. Therefore, if we want a world where AI is maintaining our humanity, we must start living and leading from love so that the machines will learn to cultivate our human existence.

Here are a few data points that inspire us to bring more love and human connection into the workplace.

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A 75-year Harvard study discovered that the secret to leading a fulfilling life is the presence of quality relationships. Human beings are wired for social connections. Yet, research shows that the rate of loneliness has doubled since the 1980s.

Globalization, the digital era, and the demand for flexible work schedules have reduced opportunities for in-person human connections.

Loneliness is a growing epidemic and shortens lifespans in a way similar to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

“If learning leaders focus more effort and resources on building the soft skills required for leadership, the payoff can be significant. Organizations demonstrated an average return on investment of \$4,000 for every \$1,100 spent developing soft skills.”

- Development Dimensions International

“Overall, social skills—such as persuasion, emotional intelligence and teaching others—will be in higher demand across industries than narrow technical skills, such as programming or equipment operation and control. In essence, technical skills will need to be supplemented with strong social and collaboration skills.”

- World Economic Forum, January 2016

In the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work for, research shows that, “...trust between managers and employees is the primary defining characteristic of the very best workplaces.” These companies, “...beat the average annualized returns of the S&P 500 by a factor of three.”

As you can see from the extensive research conducted from credible companies and thought leaders, what the world needs right now is to elevate our human experience.

To be human is to love.

We will continue to elevate the life experience at work partnering with Leaders, teams and organizations that share a similar desire. Whether you call these people-first, culture-first, purpose-driven or infinite companies, we are committed to supporting individuals and teams who are ready to co-create human-centered experiences in the workplace. By focusing on the human experience, ***our vision is to inspire people and companies to build meaningful cultures and workplaces that ultimately creates a sense of belonging and community.***

*When you love your people,
they will love your
customers, and as a result,
your customers will love
your company.*

We are here to reinstate love
in the workplace and to guide
you on this infinite journey.



Our Vision for 2018

Now, we know this a big endeavour and we can only achieve this vision with you, our community. Therefore, our theme for 2018 is community. We want to use this powerful thing called LOVE to build a community that is sharing their love at work and at home. To do this, we invite you to co-create the following programs with us.

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love

SPARK It Forward

Every participant that invests in their learning with SPARK will automatically invest in another student's education. We have integrated a give back program into our business model so that we are growing our community together worldwide. If you know of wonderful organizations that need our support, connect with us today.

connection

SPARK Ambassadors

To SPARK more members of our community, our SPARK Ambassadors will share workshops, speaking engagements, and attend events to spread the love.

These wonderful human beings are values and purpose driven, life-long learners, and are community builders. If you or someone you know is ready to give back in a big way, connect with us today.

fun

SPARK Play

To elevate the life experience at work, we want to inspire more joy and play in the workplace! We will hold quarterly interactive sessions, where we will share new and fresh learning activities to inspire creativity, innovation and play. To join the next SPARK Play event, sign up for our newsletter today.



It always begins and ends with Love.

On behalf of our SPARK family, thank you to all our of clients for trusting us completely and giving us a chance to share our human centric culture and learning programs, to our SPARKners (strategic partners and champions) who continue and so graciously share our work with various organizations locally and globally, and to our love circle (family and friends) that support us to share this work with our whole selves for our community.

To our SPARK Family, thank you for your continued love and inspiration. We love you all unconditionally and we are excited to create more SPARKs with you!

We look forward to sharing more Love Letters with our community as we continue to grow on this life long journey.

Let's #chooselove together and always.

*Love,
Lorie*

Co-Founder & CEO
SPARK Creations & Company Inc.