



BROOKLYN_BORN

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Where have all my old friends gone? Day 22

Sunday, May 29, 2016

The Spark World and my gym have several things in common.
As I analyze and synthesize what I've learned during this project I've noticed several similarities.

Some people are regulars in the fitness classes - something for everyone.
Some sparkers are active on teams - quite a variety of options here too.

Some people workout individually making use of different resources and focusing on their own goals with minimal interaction with others.

I myself experienced success on Spark while being a hermit for several years.

Some enjoy the social aspect.
One corner of my gym has a coffee pot and several chairs where regulars gather (usually men).
A lot of the interaction on Spark has a social media flavor too. Our status reports and many blogs cover aspects of our lives that are not as much about seeking a healthy lifestyle but our lives in general.

2 people (gym members or spark friends) can both be active and yet not bump into each other.
We visit the gym or spark at different times of day.
We miss the friend feed or recent blog.

Sometimes sparkers leave a "note."
"I'll be temporarily out of touch while traveling abroad"
"I'm leaving. I can do this on my own"
Sometimes someone else posts the information.
Occasionally that includes the notice that a mutual friend has died.

Recently a new article on the gym bulletin board caught my eye.
It was the obituary of a member that I knew well in the gym environment.

In both environments people often join enthusiastically with great hope and expectations.
Some flourish and others don't, often within a few weeks or months.

I've read on Spark about joining a gym and not feeling welcome for a variety of reasons like a new person occupying a veteran's favorite treadmill. Yeah, it happens especially at the new year.
Does it happen here as well? I think resources are in place to help new members adjust and assimilate but I can't speak from experience since I was a self-selected hermit.

As I near the end of my chronological list of friends, I would expect a higher percentage of active members. After all, I "spoke" to them more recently than those at the beginning of the list.

To a certain extent that's true, but I see that the highest percentage was 8 days ago at 90%
Today's group includes 2 who joined at the end of 2015 but lasted only a short time.
There was no explanation as to why they gave up.

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Today's results:

17 Active & 3 Inactive/Missing - 85%

Summary so far:

238 out of 410 are still active - That's 58%

Edit: One main difference

I pay a monthly fee for my gym.

Spark is FREE!

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BBEAGAN

What a wonderful comparison! It is very like my gym, too. There, too, I am fairly self-contained (not quite a hermit!) but still find folks mutually supportive. A nod, mile, hello - seems to say I've noticed you are still here, keep up the good work.

1839 days ago



SMILINGEYES2

It sometimes takes time to feel like part of a group sort of like breaking in a new pair of shoes.

1839 days ago



DOVESEYES

I started out on SP as a member only person and then as my confidence gained I joined teams and became a leader. I found myself at the keyboard most of the day and had to decide that it was too much. So I returned to just posting and not sitting all day leaving comments or trying to get lots of points.

I have really enjoyed your blogs- thanks so much.

1839 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM

I think our little group of bloggers who read one another's stuff might be that coffee corner in your gym, symbolically! I have found this research fascinating, I have to say. It even had me bouncing thoughts around in a slightly different direction: I have many friends on FB who might "like" something I post... I notice cross over between work friends, running friends, friends I connected with due to my son's military experience, and some Spark people who have jumped the fence to a more exposed "real life" kind of friendship, which FB provides... the crossover in "likes" depends on the topic of the post.

And it made me wonder about whether we could slice the kinds of research you've done with "where did I find this friend?" Were they part of a Spark team? Did they friend me after reading a blog? Did I follow one of my Spark friends "home" and friend them first because they looked like a kindred spirit? What elements attracted us in the first place? And then, based on all of that... how do the percentages of "still active" add up?

Fascinating stuff!

1839 days ago



PHEBESS

Really is interesting. I'd love to see a follow-up survey conducted by SP coaches, trying to figure out what has happened with the people who are no longer on SP. How many found other ways to support a healthier lifestyle, how many gave up, how many had life get in the way (work, family, illness, pregnancy, whatever). Such interesting information!

1839 days ago



2BDYNAMIC

I must say you have done an excellent job with your study. Yesterday my husband and I brainstormed that one about why do so many members join sparks or even join teams and then all of a sudden you don't see them anymore or seldom.

His thought was that often when something is new there is excitement but then for a lot of people the newness wears off just like a honeymoon and then it becomes a routine or even a rat and then they are gone.

I have been here four years now and I've had some nice relationships with Spark friends end all back to left without giving a reason why.

Likely they don't realize that when you form friendships and you go away someone is going to miss

you.....Like ME.....



.....(I will always wonder how they are and if they are okay but I guess

I will never know).

1839 days ago

Comment edited on: 5/29/2016 3:48:19 PM



WATERMELLEN

It's so interesting: why some stay, why some go! I guess even Spark People -- with its huge range of options for interacting AND even the possibility of just "lurking" and tracking -- still isn't for everyone!!

1839 days ago



CD4114015

GREAT series and we thank you for persevering to the end!

1840 days ago



JIBBIE49

I go through my FRIENDS list about once every three months and "thin it out" with those who have closed their account or who have not been here in ages. Those I sent a Spark mail to and ask how they are doing. But you are right that they come and go. I'm still here after 8 yrs.

1840 days ago



GARDENCHRIS

i wish we knew what happened to those that have left

1840 days ago



LOVENHWOODS

Awesome job!

1840 days ago



JEANKNEE

I have really enjoyed reading this series of blogs as you've worked your way through your chronological list of friends and shared your experience and reflections along the way. Thanks so much for sharing this with us!

1840 days ago



PRNCSCUP1-2FULL

Over the years I have joined gyms and then wasted the money not going back after a certain time! Now I am older and wiser and don't waste money! Hee. Spark People keeps me going even when I get mad about something they changed, etc. I hope to be here a long, long time!

1840 days ago



LIVEDAILY

LAW hit the nail on the head exactly! It is WORK, sometimes hard work, to become healthier, to unlearn bad habits and learn new ones, to become more active, and to lose weight. It's even harder if you don't have support at home, as many do. This is why I love Spark. You can blog, you have team forums, you can Spark mail, you make Spark friends - and there's support all around you!



1840 days ago



PHOENIX1949



1840 days ago



LAW06211

I know in order to lose the weight it takes dedication for what you believe in. People get excited in the beginning but after they find out there is more work than the care to follow they slack off. I want to lose my excess weight so I am staying.

1840 days ago



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Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.