Consider your Assets
Hand, Head, Heart Exercises

Hand: Physical skills you possess that you would be willing to teach others: i.e., carpentry, photography, painting, bicycle repair...
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Head: Knowledge that you have in a particular area like child development, health care, history of the neighborhood...
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Heart: What are your passions; what stirs you to action; what would do if you knew you could not fail?
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Most communities address social and economic problems with only a tiny amount of their total capacity. Most of the community’s capacity is not used! This is the challenge and the opportunity of community engagement. Everyone in a community has something to offer. Every person and every gift is necessary.

6.) POSING QUESTIONS RATHER THAN GIVING ANSWERS INVITES STRONGER PARTICIPATION.
People in communities are usually asked to follow outside experts’ answers for their community problems. Agencies generally ask community members to help with the agency’s answer. A more powerful way to engage people is to invite communities to address their questions and find their answers, with agencies responding to and coming alongside those answered questions.

5.) ASK, ASK, ASK.
Once a person’s possible ‘gifts to give’ and ‘motivations to act’ are recognized; and somebody must offer an opportunity to act. Asking and inviting are key community-building actions. “Join us. We need you.” This is the song of community.

4.) LISTENING TO CONVERSATIONS.
Building relationships and building trust is an essential component of Asset Bases Community Development. Forms and surveys are acceptable, but it is not a substitute for listening and talking face to face to hear a person’s Hopes, Dreams, and Aspirations!

3.) EVERYONE CARES ABOUT SOMETHING.
Agencies and neighborhood groups often complain about apathy. Apathy is a sign of bad listening. People in communities are motivated to act. The challenge is to discover their motivation to act.
2.) RELATIONSHIPS BUILD A COMMUNITY.
See, Encourage, and Deploy. An intentional effort to build and nourish relationships is the core of ABCD and all community building.

1.) EVERYONE HAS GIFTS.
With rare exceptions, people can contribute and want to contribute. Gifts must be discovered. Gift-giving opportunities must be offered. Strong communities know they need everyone. There is unrecognized capacity and assets in every community. Find it.