

What makes people smart? I've wrestled with that question, and the answer came through a simple truth: we become by playing. As kids, we stretch for a toy and discover our reach, or race a sibling and master our stride. Learning isn't static—it's testing, risking, and finding what fits. Errors teach us limits; discoveries reward our leaps.

But today's education forgets this. It hands students a map with one path, expecting them to guess their future before they've explored the forest. I see a different way: a forest of unlabeled trees—skills, interests, passions—where young people wander freely, guided by their own compass. But brute-forcing every tree is impossible. What we want is for youth to learn an approach to their testing and exploration: you pick a subject and work your way through it. Don't like it? Use the approach you've learned and scale it to other trees. You learn a method, that method gives you a framework, that framework gives you a compass, and that compass gives you a ticket to where you feel you belong.

Too many feel lost before they begin. "I suck at math, can't draw—where do I start?" You start small: What moves you? What's your spark? Even the tiniest hint can light the way. But climbing a tree takes more than curiosity—it demands understanding your roots, your strengths, and the gaps to bridge. Most underestimate the effort; others think it's beyond them. A clear-eyed assessment turns "impossible" into "I can."

That's why I'm building a platform—not to spoon-feed answers, but to hand students the tools to craft their own. An AI-driven guide that asks, "Who are you? What pulls you?" then gamifies the journey—challenges, reflections, tailored paths—so they don't just consume the world, they shape it. No dull courses or endless lists, just a space to play, test, and grow, until they stand atop their tree, breeze in their hair, knowing they belong.

Smartness isn't a grade or a title. It's the courage to explore, the method to navigate, and the freedom to become.