

# Quality of Work

Rosemarie M. Rowley

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## Building on Your Strengths

Volume 1, Issue 1

### *Doing What Comes Naturally!*

When I was in grammar school, I was always chided for not being able to conquer what my teachers considered my weaknesses. This, of course, made me feel self-conscious and somewhat inferior to those who excelled in the areas of my weaknesses. My childhood experience is nothing new for the many people who feel their personal shortcomings are constantly being laid bare. Our society has often been quick to stamp "needs improvement" on the less than perfect areas of our life, highlighting our weaknesses instead of identifying and improving our strengths. As a result, many of us grew up stumbling to improve upon our inadequacies, while underestimating our actual abilities. However, there were always a few pioneers who knew enough to identify their strengths (or gifts) and then build their lives around them while delegating, hiring, or ignoring what they felt were their limitations. If you speak to those who are successful (that is, fulfilled in their lives' work) they will tell you that they were born to do what they do, or even that they only do a few things well. Warren Buffet, the American billion-

aire, businessman and philanthropist, once stated, "I am really no different from any of you; I just get up every morning and do what I love to do everyday." Not everyone is earmarked to be wealthy, but all of us can invest our gifts into society and reap the rewards of finding true fulfillment.

The Gallup Organization conducted psychological profiles on two million individuals over a twenty-five year period to help people learn how to focus and perfect their strengths. The results of this study are summarized in the best-selling business book, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham & Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D. The conclusions from this study stated that most of us have little sense of our talents and strengths, much less the ability to build our lives around them. Instead, we are guided by our parents, our teachers, and our managers. We become experts in our weaknesses and spend our lives trying to repair these flaws, while our strengths lie dormant and neglected.



### Word Study

#### **GIFTS:**

A natural ability; a talent.

#### **STRENGTHS:**

The inherent capacity or power to accomplish something

### Book Review

#### *Now, Discover Your Strengths*

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Remember how Annie Oakley and her sisters happily sang the words, "*Doin' What Comes Naturally?*" Gifts are those things that "come naturally"- those things that were inherent in us while being formed in our mother's womb. Everyone was created with a gift or *gifts*, although they may be hidden or unused. Most of us do not give much credence to them because they come so easily to us. In my coaching practice, I always tell my clients that their gifts are those strengths that everyone tells them they do so well. Since most of us take what we are adept in for granted, we do not realize that we can build a successful and fulfilled life "doing what comes naturally."

Essentially, the key to living a successful life is to identify those gifts that give us pleasure. These are the things that we would do on a rainy Monday, for free, or even do while we are on vacation. It is not impossible to identify your gifts; it may just take some time. A good start would be to begin reading the book mentioned in this newsletter. The authors have provided the readers a free internet-based *StrengthFinder Profile™*. There is an identification number on the inside of the dust jacket of the book, which allows you to access the profile for free on the internet. It can be a useful tool as you begin your journey of identifying your strengths. Another exercise you may want to pursue is asking five of your close friends

or family members what they perceive as your strengths. This may confirm what you already know about yourself, or it may illuminate areas that you previously overlooked because they came effortlessly. *Go ahead, unwrap your gifts!*

In our next newsletter, we will be covering the book, *Cure for the Common Life, Living in Your Sweet Spot* by Max Lucado.

Rosemarie M. Rowley has 25 years of business experience in human resources consulting. She has held officer level positions with two New York based international consulting firms, Ernst & Young and Mercer Human Resource Consulting, and is currently the Founder and Principal Consultant of Ambassador, Inc., a human resources consulting firm. Ms. Rowley has been coaching professionals for 20 years. She has coached Chief Financial Officers, Consulting Partners, Business Owners, Sales Professionals, Middle Managers and new Supervisors. Ms. Rowley has had two published articles in the Wall Street Journal's National Business Weekly, and has been a guest speaker at various organizations, including NYU's Stern School of Business, the National Convention of Broadcast Financial Executives, the American Association of University Women, WEDLI and LIWA. She was a member of the Board of Directors for the Stein Center in New York City for seven years. Ms. Rowley is also a licensed facilitator for *The Path, Creating a Mission Statement for Work and Life*.