

**Working from Strength: an Exercise (from Buckingham, Go!)**

<p>Definition:</p> 	<p><b>S</b><u>uccess</u> - you do it well and are successful at it  <b>I</b><u>nstinct</u> - you are drawn to it and look forward to it  <b>G</b><u>rowth</u> - when you are doing it you forget time &amp; food and feel inquisitive &amp; focused, you want to read up on it and learn more about it  <b>N</b><u>eeds</u> - you are driven to doing it - it fills some real need  <b>S</b><u>trong</u> - it makes you feel strong, energized, powerful, fulfilled</p>
	<p>Exercise: During the next week or two, track your strengths and weaknesses using index cards. Here is how:</p>
	<p>1. When you feel like this: powerful, confident, smooth, on fire, high, “great!” authentic, “that was easy,” awesome, “when can we do this again?” create a strengths card that says “I feel strong when I _____ (be as specific as you can).</p>
	<p>2. When you feel like this: drained, "time is going by slowly", "I can't concentrate", frustrated, wiped out, forced, "I'm getting a headache", "How much longer?!", irritated, bored, "Why can't the new guy do this?", create a weakness card that says “I feel weak when I am _____ (once again, be specific).</p>
	<p>It might make a difference where, or with whom, or for whom, or the audience, or the size of the audience, or the specific subject matter, or your familiarity (or lack of familiarity) of the topic, or the time of day - so be as specific as you can be. It may make a difference later!</p>

	<p>At the end of the week, create 3 or more “strengths statements.” A strength statement looks like this: “I feel strong when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm coaching my team to meet their quarterly sales goals.</li> <li>• I'm meeting with a buyer to discuss the benefits of our product relative to a competitor's product.</li> <li>• I'm preparing for a presentation on something I'm really interested in - especially the FIRST time I present on that topic</li> <li>• I synthesize and compile information into a clear and concise report</li> </ul>
	<p>You can take this exercise a step further by having a sharing session within your workgroup. We frequently find that one person’s strength is another’s weakness, and by swapping workloads you can improve both the productivity and the morale of both.</p>
	<p>Your goals? To use your strengths more and more. To have everyone using his or her strengths daily – most of the time if possible. To help people partner where their areas of “weakness” are matched by a partner’s area of strength.</p>

### Bibliography

Buckingham, Marcus. *Go Put Your Strengths to Work: 6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance*. New York: Free Press, 2007.

Buckingham, Marcus, and Donald O. Clifton. *Now, Discover Your Strengths: How to Develop Your Talents and Those of the People You Manage*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2002

Buckingham, Marcus, and Curt Coffman. *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*. New York, NY.: Simon & Schuster, 1999

Peterson, Christopher, and Martin E. P. Seligman. *Character Strengths and Virtues: a Handbook and Classification*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2004.

For more information call Michael McCann at (603) 501-0761 or email him at [michael@matchboxgroup.com](mailto:michael@matchboxgroup.com)