

THE SET FREE LIFE

You've Got Talent

How many of you have not yet read *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton? Please, get it and read it. There is simply nothing more revolutionizing than gaining a clear view of the talents with which you are hardwired and why they're important. I often quote the authors: "We do not value what comes to us naturally."

When we start to get a glimpse of the things we were born to do, we find ourselves more in tune with what fits, what suits us. We make certain decisions through the knowledge of our gifts because we are aware of how unproductive it is for us to pursue paths where we cannot use our talents or, worse, for which we have no talent. Why waste time and energy struggling to make yourself something that does not heed the very rare and exclusive neural pathways your brain provided? Find out what *your* strengths are, *your* gifts, *your* solitary portion, and honor the things you were born with. You do an injustice to yourself by never seeking to know the unique constellation of talents within.

To be sure, we often must address tasks that have nothing to do with our talents. We have to learn some things just to be able to operate in the world, or we have to tackle educating ourselves in areas of non-talent because they are stepping-stones to using the talents we have. For instance, you may have a blend of strengths that make your work as a dentist utterly suitable. In order to get there, though, you had to apply yourself to learning experiences you never want to see again once you managed to get your grades and evaluations and move on—because you didn't have the talent to excel at them. You managed to get by, but you know you'll never be a whiz kid in those areas and, in fact, you may now hire others who do have the talents you lack so you don't have to deal with them anymore. We have to do budgets even when we're not great

with math or financial concepts. We have to participate in strategic planning even when we don't see the big picture like others do. We have to force ourselves to write, or organize, or practice essential exercises. The trick is to do these things mostly for the service of our natural abilities and talents.

There's an added benefit to recognizing and developing the gifts God gave you: you start to notice the gifts in others. You see plainly why that customer service agent was so helpful to you, or why you prefer one veterinarian over another for your pet. This gives you the opportunity to compliment others on their talents—something I cannot stress enough. It is the specific, intentional compliments we are given that help us figure out how we affect others and how our place in the world is significant. You see, I need to know what I bring to life to continue to develop the characteristics that speak meaningfully to those around me, and so I do this for others. I sow a seed every time I compliment someone else. I make my comments something a person can digest: "I'd like you to know why I think you're so good at what you do," I will tell a store clerk. "You were very thoughtful about what would work for me because you put yourself in my place. That is a real talent." It makes their day *and* mine!

Listen for the clues people give you, and make sure you offer some yourself. Before too long, you'll see the value in what is naturally yours. ♣



Sue Thompson is a personality expert, etiquette trainer, and an instructor in life lessons. Her seminars on recognizing and developing talent, identifying personalities and working effectively with the people who possess them, responding appropriately to difficult experiences, treating others with respect, and behaving like a professional have caused listeners at companies and business organizations throughout the country to rate her presentations as "the best seminar of the conference!" She trains those entering the workforce how to present themselves with style and authority; new employees in the importance of respecting one's work and the workplace; managers in the value of understanding employees' talent and temperament; and everyone in the timeless rules of behavior that will always bespeak excellence.

Quick Links

Now, Discover Your Strengths

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Teddy Bear Says...

You may not have noticed this, but dogs are pretty much happy no matter what their circumstances. Even



when some horrible, inhumane person nearly starves us to death or chains us to trees in backyards for our entire lives, we still usually wag our tails when people approach and want to make them happy. Unless our natural tendencies have been bred or beaten out of us, we know how to be contented in just about any situation. We may have to manage with only two or three legs or lose our sight, but as long as we get to be

with you and be loved by you, it is enough. This is a canine gift—one we would like to pass on to humans.

The world is so filled with utter contempt and negativity and downright hatred that humans must make a decision to refuse to be sucked into the darkness. If you don't determine to remain outside of it, you might give into it, and you won't like what you become. (You may not care about what you become, but that's another subject entirely!)

This is why good character is so important: it recognizes and respects others, treating even those with whom we disagree with behavior several levels above dog abusers. Good character doesn't bark incessantly, dig up nasty items to show off, expose private matters, or soil the furniture in the living room of life. Good character is well behaved and thoughtful, and it often brings peace where there is great discord, because gracious manners always make others feel comfortable. That doesn't mean that we don't respond when provoked; there are times when only a good chomp on the flesh will instruct. We do try to avoid this, however, because it makes us look bad when we are frequently just protecting ourselves. The point is you have a choice. Remember how Jackie DeShannon used to sing, "What the world needs now is love, sweet love," and Stevie Wonder used to sing, "Love's in need of love today"? Yeah. That's what I'm howling about. Maybe it's not love, exactly, but I'm sure it's character.

Make yourself a pledge, like this one written by author Christian Larson a hundred years ago:

Quotable

A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Contact Sue today to learn how she can meet your business needs

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Promise Yourself

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something worthwhile in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful expression at all times and give a smile to every living creature you meet.

To give so much time to improving yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

To think well of yourself and to proclaim this fact to the world, not in loud words, but in great deeds.

To live in the faith that the whole world is on your side, so long as you are true to the best that is in you. 🐾

Who's Your Psycho?



I'm reading *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us*, written by Dr. Robert Hare, who created the standard diagnostic instrument of psychopathy for clinicians and researchers.

Dr. Hare has noted elsewhere that if he hadn't studied psychopaths in prisons, he'd have focused on their presence in corporations. Approximately 1% of the general population is truly psychopathic. It seems we're seeing a great deal of that 1% these days. Although written in 1993, this quote is pretty timely, don't you think?:

"The capacity to con friend and foe alike makes it a simple matter for psychopaths to perpetrate fraud, embezzlement, and impersonation, to promote phony stocks and worthless property, and to carry out swindles of all sorts, large and small. . . . 'Money grows on trees,' said [one] psychopath, a woman with a long history of frauds and petty thefts. 'They say it doesn't, but it does. I don't want to do it to people, it's just so easy!'" 🐾