



*Connection · Meaning · Results*

*A quarterly bulletin to support your personal and professional growth and development*

March 2010

I am thrilled to announce the launch of my new quarterly newsletter, designed to keep you connected to and informed about the latest tips and techniques being employed by coaching experts around the world.

In the March 2010 edition (attached), the focus is on taking a strengths-based approach to achieving greater fulfillment, learning and improved performance in all areas of your life. Many people strive to improve their weaknesses without giving much/any thought to instead using their strengths to their advantage. Indeed, many people haven't given much thought to what their strengths even are. When is the last time you tapped into your strengths to achieve your goals?

I invite you to read the attached article and then take the time to give serious thought to how you can use the ideas it contains. The information in this article is drawn from work done by Marcus Buckingham, a recognized author, consultant and motivational speaker, and from Martin Seligman, a distinguished and honoured psychologist in the field of positive psychology.

Follow the reflective process suggested by Buckingham and Seligman, experience how it opens you to an awareness of strengths you didn't even know you had, and see where those strengths might lead you. And, as always, please feel free to call if you have any questions or if you would like to further discuss implementing a strengths-based approach to your life.

Warm regards,

*Christine*

**Christine  
Martinelli**



**Corporate  
Trainer and  
Certified Coach**

Helping clients gain new perspectives, increased clarity, and greater self trust to achieve meaningful and sustainable results

## Playing to Your Strengths



*Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.*  
- Aristotle

How much of your typical day do you spend playing to your strengths? When Marcus Buckingham, an internationally renowned consultant and sought-after speaker, asks his clients this question, surprisingly few feel they call upon their best every day.

We are a world fascinated by weaknesses, says Buckingham. We focus more on what's wrong than on what's right, and hold a misguided belief that we will grow and learn more by focusing on our weaknesses than our strengths. To change that ideology and maximize our satisfaction at home and at work, it's important to discover the best in ourselves, to know and own our strengths. But what exactly is a strength?

A strength is a personality trait, an asset that you can tap into when challenged. When you use your strengths, you feel pride, joy and satisfaction. Your true strengths reappear often and in different situations. Getting to know those strengths doesn't require learning or training, but rather self reflection and ownership.

Many of us take our strengths for granted, or perhaps we recognize them but don't regard them as important, instead relying on others to tell us what we're good at. Let's face it, most of us have been praised for our effectiveness in doing a specific activity, but if we never had to do that activity again, it would be too soon. It actually drains us. Deep down, we know what excites us, we know when we're strong and energetic. By identifying exactly what it is that makes us feel that way, we can take the best in ourselves, own it, and apply it every day to all that we do.

### **Discover the Best in You**

Rather than relying on feedback from others about what you are good at, look inside yourself. Focus on the things you do in your job that make you strong before, during and afterwards. Think about activities you look forward to doing, notice how the time flies while you are doing what you love to do and finally, notice how you feel once your task is completed. If you feel energized, that's an indication of a true strength. Learn to trust these feelings - they are powerful signs that can be counted on to tell you the truth.

Once you know what activities energize you, reflect on what's important to you about each of them. You will know you've identified that importance when you feel the energy shift, leaving you confident, invigorated and alive.

### **Diminish Your Weaknesses**

Your next step is to volunteer your strengths regularly. You can do this by leveraging them – and by diminishing your weaknesses.

Since our weaknesses essentially drag us down, one approach is to stop doing the activities that play on those weaknesses wherever possible. If your job requires the activity, however, then get a little bit better at it so that it doesn't undermine your strengths.

A second useful strategy to handling our weaknesses is to design a support system, a structure that will help you to spend less time fretting about the weakness and free up time that could be better spent on refining strengths. For example, if money management isn't your strong point, enlist the help of someone who can set up a budget for you (bank manager, accountant, investment counsellor) and review it with them regularly to make sure you stay on track. Free yourself from what isn't your strength and focus your energy

on what you do well.

A third technique is to look at your weakness from a different perspective. What strength can you draw on to help deal with the challenge? If you are a house-organized but time-challenged person, can you use your organizational skills to create an environment that gets you out the door on time for your commitments?

Finally, look for a partner that can complement your weakness. It takes courage and strength to acknowledge when we need help.

### **Leverage the Strengths**

Now that you've identified your strengths, leverage them. Focus on identifying how and where they help you right now – and how you can better use them in the future. It's also important to check out what's passing you by. Are you missing out on opportunities to use your strengths? This can happen when you don't trust your own capabilities and therefore don't pay attention to the opportunities.

Ask yourself these questions: How good is the fit between what your role requires of you and your real strengths? Does this role allow you to shine with your strengths? What can you do to enhance the opportunity for your strengths to be utilized? To intentionally direct your life towards your strengths, you may need to learn some additional skills and techniques that will enable you to build on what you already have that's great within you.

Now ask yourself the question Marcus Buckingham asks his clients: how much of your day do you spend playing to your strengths? Better yet, how much of your day would you like to spend doing that?

*The happiest life is that which constantly exercises and educates what is best in us.*  
**Hamerton**

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Our intention is to provide you with tips and strategies to help you achieve your personal and professional goals. If you know of someone who you believe would benefit from this information, please feel free to pass it on. Equally, if you feel that this information is not a priority at this point, feel free to unsubscribe at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions please contact me directly at [cmartinelli@cmconsulting.ca](mailto:cmartinelli@cmconsulting.ca).

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