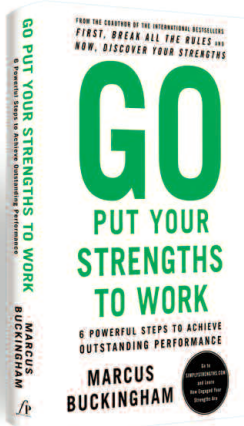




SOUNDVIEW  
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by Marcus Buckingham

## 6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance

# GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The strengths movement is everywhere: the corporate world, the worlds of public service, of economies, of education, of faith, of charity — it has affected them all. It has its detractors, but an appeal as universal as this begs the question, “Why?” Why do so many people from so many different worlds see such power in the strengths-based perspective?

Now that the strengths movement is in full swing, this summary answers that question and the ultimate question: How can you actually apply your strengths for maximum success at work?

Research shows that most people do not come close to making full use of their assets at work — in fact, only 17 percent of the workforce believe they use all of their strengths on the job. This summary aims to change that through a six-step experience that will reveal the hidden dimensions of your strengths. It shows you how to seize control of your assets and rewrite your job description under the nose of your boss.

With proven tactics from people who have successfully applied its lessons, this summary arms you with a radically different approach to your work life. It also opens up an exciting uncharted territory for you and your organization.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why your strengths aren’t “what you are good at” and your weaknesses aren’t “what you are bad at.”
- How you can take the simple steps each week to push your time at work toward those activities that strengthen you and away from those that don’t.
- How to talk to your boss and your colleagues about your strengths without sounding like you’re bragging, and how to talk about your weaknesses without sounding like you’re whining.
- How a 15-minute weekly ritual will keep you on your strengths path for your entire career.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

by Marcus Buckingham

## Lead This Movement

Conventional wisdom tells us that we learn from our mistakes. However, the strengths movement says that all we learn from mistakes are the characteristics of mistakes. If we want to learn about our successes, we must study success.

Fueled by this idea, the first stage of the strengths movement — the stage we are in right now — has been dominated by efforts to label what is right with things. Thus, whereas the World Bank used to rank countries according to their negative qualities, such as poverty, violence and vulnerability, today it has developed a list of positive labels that capture a country's overall level of well-being, labels such as social capability, economic self-determination and sustainability of local customs.

### High-Performance Teams

Ask a nationally representative sample of the work force how often they feel an emotional high at work — a sure sign that they're playing to a strength — and 51 percent say "about once a week."

Our challenge now is to dramatically increase how often we play to our strengths. On high-performance teams, people say they call upon their strengths more than 75 percent of the time. For us to reach this level, we don't need to cast aside our current work and strike out for the perfect dream job.

Instead, we simply need to learn how to take our existing job, and each week, reshape it around our strengths — even in the face of interference from the world around us. To do this, we need to master a new discipline, one that brings order and focus to a series of incremental moves. If we put this discipline into practice each week, we will gradually, degree by degree, tilt the playing field so that the best of our job becomes *most* of our job.

### 'The Push Discipline'

Simply put, we need to ditch the typical "pull" approach to work and replace it with the "push" discipline.

"Pull" looks like this: Somebody else tells you what is expected of you; your goals are set. Your best hope for achievement and reward, you tell yourself, is to try to focus

your time so that you spend most of it on those few activities that will really drive your goals. As such, your goals pull you toward certain activities and away from others.

The "push" discipline looks very different. It begins with you taking responsibility for identifying your own strengths and weaknesses. Then, having identified them, you take a stand for them. In practical terms, this means that you push the people at work, along with their many expectations, toward your strengths and away from your weaknesses. These people — your colleagues, your customers, your manager — are good people, with good and appropriate expectations of you, but they don't know your strengths.

### The Best of You

You do know your strengths. It's your responsibility to know how to push each week for more opportunities to play to your strengths. This doesn't mean you should swagger into work each day and demand that you be asked to do only strength-based activities. No one would want to work with you if you did this. But what you can do each week is start this new discipline — discipline that begins with the simple question, "How will I ensure that I put my strengths into play just a little more this week than I did last week?" and ends with you building your job around the best of you.

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**The author:** Marcus Buckingham spent 17 years at the Gallup Organization, where he conducted research into the world's best leaders, managers and workplaces. The Gallup research later became the basis for the best-selling books *First, Break All the Rules* and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, both coauthored by Buckingham. He now has his own company, providing strengths-based consulting, training and e-learning.

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# Summary: GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

## Lead This Movement

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Here are the six steps that make up this discipline:

- 1. Bust the Myths.** Capitalizing on your strengths is the best way to compete.
- 2. Get Clear.** Identify your own strengths and weaknesses.
- 3. Free Your Strengths.** Learn how to volunteer your strengths to the team.
- 4. Stop Your Weaknesses.** Learn the best strategies for lessening the impact of your weaknesses on the team.
- 5. Speak Up.** Master the art of talking about your strengths without bragging and your weaknesses without whining.
- 6. Build Strong Habits.** Build the right habits, so that week in, week out, and year upon year, you stay in control, always pushing toward activities that strengthen you, ever watchful for those that drag you down.

### Two Places for Conversations About Contribution

At work, the two most common situations in which you should have a “my strengths and weaknesses” conversation are the “how are we going to divide up the work” conversation with your teammates, and the one-on-one with your manager. You want them to know how to set you up so that you can make your greatest possible contribution. ■

## Step 1: Bust the Myths

A majority of us have come to believe in certain myths — three, to be precise — that our parents told us were true, that our teachers reinforced, and that today we hear in one form or another from our managers. These myths have become so ingrained in our lives that we no longer see them. They are core assumptions that even now we are passing on to our children, our students and our employees, and we are pleased with ourselves for doing so.

To help you bust each myth and figure out the best way to get a friend or colleague to bust it too, here are three questions that should prove revealing. Write down your answers after reading each myth. Later, when you’re trying to persuade others, use these questions as a way to begin your discussion:

- 1. How does the myth serve you?** Only by understanding how the myth helps people get through their day can you start to see how they can be disentangled from it.
- 2. What would it cost you to stop believing in this myth?** Before we can think about what we will gain by

changing our beliefs, we first have to fess up to what we will lose.

**3. How would it benefit you to believe the truth?** If we can capture in detail what we will gain by carving a life around our strengths, we’ll keep fighting for it for the rest of our lives.

### The Three Myths

Consider these myths:

**Myth: As you grow, your personality changes.** Sixty-six percent of us believe this to be true. The truth is that as you grow, you don’t change into someone else. You don’t change your personality.

**Truth: As you grow, you become more of who you already are.** Getting a little better at something than you were before doesn’t necessarily mean that you’ve changed the distinctive peaks and valleys of your personality.

**Myth: You will grow the most in your areas of greatest weakness.** Sixty-one percent of people believe this to be true. Instead, the truth is that you will learn and grow the *least* in your areas of weakness, and what learning and growth you do achieve will be hard-won.

**Truth: You will grow the most in your areas of greatest strength.** You may not be creative in all aspects of your life, but whatever your general level of creativity may be, you will be at the peak of your creative powers in your areas of strength. You will learn the most, grow the most and develop the most in your areas of greatest strength. Your strengths magnify you.

**Myth: A good team member does whatever it takes to help the team.** Ninety-one percent of people believe this to be true. The truth is that while you will certainly accomplish more if you collaborate with your teammates — there’s no question that teams are more effective than groups of disconnected individuals — when you look closely at the most effective teams, you discover that the players on these teams are not chipping in and doing whatever the team requires of them.

**Truth: A good team member deliberately volunteers his or her strengths to the team most of the time.** Team members have realized that the right, most responsible thing to do is to identify where their strengths lie and then figure out how to arrange their time and their role so that they play to these strengths most of the time. ■

## Step 2: Get Clear

Your strengths are defined by your actual activities. They are things you do, and, more specifically, things you do consistently and near perfectly. Thus, if you are

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## Step 2: Get Clear

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a nurse, one of your strengths might be giving injections that seem almost painless to the patient. If you are in sales, you might have a strength in closing deals when competing head to head.

Strengths such as these are made up of three separate ingredients:

1. **Talents**, such as empathy, assertiveness or competitiveness.
2. **Skills**, such as knowing the steps involved in giving injections.
3. **Knowledge**, such as of which dosage is correct for a particular patient or who is your most dangerous competitor in the marketplace.

To capture the *specific activities* that constitute your strengths, you are going to have to go beyond generic talent labels and pinpoint how your actual activities in a regular week make you feel. Pay close attention to your feelings before, during and after your weekly activities. Only then will you get clear on exactly what your true strengths are.

### The Four Signs of a Strength

To help you, there are the four telltale signs of a strength. The acronym SIGN is a good way to organize and remember them:

- **S is for Success.** For an activity to be labeled a strength, you must obviously have some ability in it, and your success, measured or otherwise, is the best indicator of ability. How effective you feel in any activity — your *self-efficacy* — is a solid first indicator of a strength. But your strengths are more than merely what you're good at.

- **I is for Instinct.** You can't quite articulate why, but you find yourself drawn to certain activities repeatedly. You may feel a twinge of fear, but, unprompted, you put yourself in situations where you have to perform them.

- **G is for Growth.** Research by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of the seminal book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, has shown that happiness and concentration are very closely linked. The results from a study of more than 10,000 people, gathered over the last 25 years, show that, although our absolute level of happiness won't vary much, each of us is at our personal peak of happiness when we are deeply immersed in a specific activity.

- **N is for Needs.** Some activities just seem to fill an innate need of yours. When you are done with them, you feel fulfilled, powerful, restored — the exact oppo-

site of drained.

The simplest and most useful definition of a strength is this: Your strengths are those activities that make you feel strong. The flip side is also true: "An activity that makes you feel weak" is the best definition of a weakness.

### The Best Judge of Your Strengths

No one can tell you which activities make you feel strong and which ones make you feel weak. Here, your perspective is, and will always be, sure and true. So trust it. Pay close attention to your appetites. Capture them, clarify and confirm them, and outstanding performance will follow.

Learning how to capture, clarify and confirm your strengths is your goal for this step. Examine the actual activities that fill up your week, look for the telltale signs that point to your strengths, and identify them. By the end of this step, you'll be able to write three statements that describe your strengths vividly. These three Strength Statements will stem from you pulling apart the jumble of activities filling your week, sorting out the strong from the weak, and then distilling the strong down to the most tangible level possible. These three activities will be you at your most productive, innovative, resilient and focused. They will be you at your best.

The most effective way to identify your strengths is through a simple three-phase process. This process will ask you to pay attention to your work more closely than ever before and to sort out exactly how the things you do make you feel.

### Capture

This process begins with the challenge of *capturing* which specific activities over the course of a week played to your strengths and which ones played to your weaknesses.

For one week, on a small memo pad, keep track of the times when you find yourself doing something that makes you feel powerful, confident, natural, authentic, etc. Likewise, if during the course of the week you find yourself feeling drained, frustrated, forced, irritated, bored, etc., write down exactly what you are doing. (You'll deal with your weaknesses in step 4.)

At the end of the week, sort the pages of activities that make you feel strong by spreading them out over a flat surface with the most positive pages on top, all the way down to the least positive pages on the bottom. Then "deal" off the top of your deck your top three pages and lay them out in front of you. These specific activities provide the raw material for your three Strength Statements.

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# Summary: GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

## Step 2: Get Clear

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### Clarify

Next you need to *clarify* the specific activities you've captured and arrive at statements that are both precise enough to preserve the original emotional punch and general enough for you to apply each week.

First, clarify the essence of each of your positive statements while not entirely losing their specificity. Second, identify exactly which aspects of the activity are critical and must be preserved if the activity is to generate in you the same positive emotions in future weeks as it obviously did this week. Ask the following four questions:

1. Does it matter *why* I do this activity?
2. Does it matter *who* I do this activity with/to/for?
3. Does it matter *when* I am doing this activity?
4. Does it matter *what* this activity is about?

You should now have three statements, derived from a regular week at work, that vividly capture activities that make you feel strong. Take a long look at them. Simply put, your goal for this coming year will be to figure out how to exploit each of these a little more efficiently week after week after week.

### Confirm

Finally, you'll want to *confirm* that these three are indeed your most dominant strengths.

You should go through the capture-clarify-confirm process twice a year. Pick a week and capture your emotional reactions to the activities of your week, then clarify and confirm what you captured. To seize control of your time at work, you have to know what your targets are, what you want to push your time toward. This twice-a-year process will set your targets.

Fill out cards with your top three Strength Statements. Keep them front and center on your desk, on your wall or in your top drawer. Whatever you choose to do with these statements, take them seriously. Elevate them. Spotlight them. Keep them directly in your line of sight. ■

## Step 3: Free Your Strengths

There are powerful forces pulling your week away from your strengths: the needs of your customers, the demands of your colleagues, the expectations of your boss, your own career aspirations. It will take a rare concentration of the mind to push back these forces, channel them, and thereby restore them to their proper place and influence in your time at work.

These forces won't ever disappear completely, nor should they. The key question for you is, "How can I use my strengths precisely to fulfill my customers' needs, to listen to the demands of my colleagues, to meet or renegotiate the expectations of my boss and to honor my career aspirations?"

Your answers to this question will certainly not sap your energy, but neither will they be smooth sailing. The world out there is, at best, indifferent to you and your strengths.

The most extreme answer is that the only way for you to free your strengths is to leave your current role or get out from under your misguided boss. In some circumstances, that is the right strategy. But it is the *fifth* possible course of action. There are four distinct strategies you must consider first:

1. Identify exactly how and where each strength helps you in your current role.
2. Find the missed opportunities to leverage each strength in your current role.
3. Learn new skills and techniques to sharpen each strength.
4. Build your job toward each strength.

### Your Strong Week Plan

We need to find those activities at work that play to our strengths and then fill most of our time with them. We need to turn the *best* of our job into *most* of our job.

To make this happen, you will need to establish in your life a specific routine or regimen that is straightforward enough for you to do regularly, but meaty enough to keep your time at work centered on and moving continuously toward your strengths.

The most effective routine is a Strong Week Plan. The seven-day week is one of the best weapons you have in your battle to build your entire life around your strengths.

At the end of each week, or over the weekend, or very early on a Monday, take 15 minutes to complete a Strong Week Plan. The plan challenges you to identify two specific actions that you will take each week to free your strengths (and two actions to stop your weaknesses). Devise a plan each week to push *toward* two specific activities and away from two others. Do this each week, every week, year upon year, and the changes you want to make in your life will both work and last.

### Four Strategies to Put Your Strengths to Work

After closely studying people who have managed to stay on their strengths path, and those who have man-

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## Summary: GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

### Step 3: Free Your Strengths

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aged to find their way back after taking a wrong turn, researchers discovered a clear sequence to putting strengths to work.

The word *FREE* captures this sequence well, with each letter referring to a distinct strategy for putting your strengths to work. Whenever you find yourself struggling to identify what you can do this week to capitalize on your strengths, pick one particular strength and then try one of these four strategies.

- **F is for Focus.** Identify how this strength helps you in your current job. If you want to have a strong week this week, begin by taking stock of how you currently use this strength to succeed.

- **R is for Release.** Find the missed opportunities in your current role. What new situations can you put yourself in to use this strength more? Can you change your work schedule to put yourself in these situations? What new systems or techniques can you try that will accelerate this strength? How can you measure how much you use this strength? Are you struggling with any of your current job responsibilities? How can you use this strength to help you overcome this?

- **E is for Educate.** Learn new skills and techniques to build this strength. What new skills can you learn to leverage this strength? What actions can you take to learn these skills? Who can you job shadow at work? Who can you talk to about how to use this strength more effectively? (e.g., a friend, teacher, manager or mentor.)

- **E is for Expand.** Build your job around this strength. How can you share your best practices using this strength with others? How can you expand your role to make better use of this strength? ■

### Step 4: Stop Your Weaknesses

By becoming intimate with the activities that weaken you and labeling them for what they are, you can take steps to stop their rotten work.

Activities that weaken you are like dirty little bombs, waiting to spread their cloud into your strength time — time you could be spending on the activities that make you feel strong. By identifying these toxic activities and naming them, you'll be able to recognize them the moment they appear and either navigate around them or suffer through them for only a finite amount of time. In effect, you can shut them up in a lead box and neutralize them.

Second, you'll be able to see them in their proper perspective. While it may feel like your entire job is contaminated, that's probably not true. In reality, just a few activities are ruining your days, corrupting everything else in your job. By identifying, naming and tagging them, you restore them to their actual size.

#### *Capture, Clarify and Confirm*

Flip through your pages of negative activities and consider what you wrote. Try to zero in on those three activities that generated strongly negative emotions and are regular parts of each week. Look for the clearest signs of a weakness, which are the inverse of the strength signs. These signs will prove useful not only in pinpointing your three most dominant weaknesses but also in spotting future potential weaknesses before they spread and contaminate your entire work:

- **S is for lack of Success.** The most useful definition of a weakness is an activity that makes you feel weak. You are the true expert on what weakens you.

- **I is for lack of Instinct.** Avoidance, searching for someone else to do it and having to brace yourself are all good clues that you lack the instinct for it.

- **G is for lack of Growth.** When you are doing it, all you can think about is when you can stop. You aren't inquisitive about it.

- **N is for lack of Needs.** The only thing that makes you happy thinking about this activity is contemplating a world where you would never have to do it again.

#### *Four Strategies to Stop Your Weaknesses*

There are four strategies to help you figure out how to minimize the amount of time your weaknesses take or the amount of distress they cause. As you did with your strengths, first select from your top three weaknesses the one that is currently proving most damaging to you. Then consider each of these four strategies:

- **S is for Stop.** Stop doing the activity and see if anyone notices or cares.

- **T is for Team.** Team up with someone who is strengthened by the very activity that weakens you.

- **O is for Offer Up.** Offer up one of your strengths, and gradually steer your job toward this strength and away from the weakness.

- **P is for Perspective.** Perceive your weakness from a different perspective.

When you find yourself struggling to identify what you can do to stop one of your weaknesses, turn to these four strategies and take action. You will always have more room to maneuver than you think. ■



### Step 5: Speak Up

Until now you've been working on your strengths and weaknesses largely on your own.

Now, in step five, you're going to speak up and get help. Specifically, you're going to go up to your manager and have a strong conversation with him. You're going to describe to this person what strengthens you and what weakens you, and you're going to have to do it in such a way that he winds up thinking not that you're trying to make life easy for yourself but, rather, that you are a responsible colleague looking for ways to contribute more — and at the same time make *his* life a little easier. By the time you're done, he must not only understand you better, he must actively want to help you maximize your strengths.

To reach outstanding levels of performance, you must stop tiptoeing. You must learn how to express — using unambiguous words and examples — what strengthens you and what weakens you.

Before you charge off to confront your manager, you should face up to your own fears. Not that they will ever go away completely, but by identifying what they are, you reduce the likelihood that they will trip you up at the critical moment.

#### **Four Conversations**

To help you through your fears, follow this sequence of conversations. Of course, you'll want to vary the exact content of each one according to your unique situation, but if you ignore the sequence, or skip parts of it, your chances of getting other people to want to help you will fall sharply.

**Conversation 1: The Strengths Chat.** Start by having a chat with someone you're close to about what you've discovered about your strengths over the last five weeks. You are simply asking that she listen to you, that she be your audience as you try to find the best way to describe your strengths.

**Conversation 2: "How I Can Help You?"** Now you're ready to talk with your manager about what you would actually like to do differently, given what you've discovered lately about your strengths and weaknesses. Set up a "How I can help you" meeting. The point of this meeting is for you to describe to your boss just one of your strengths and exactly how you can exploit this strength to advance a specific project or improve a certain performance outcome.

**Conversation 3: The Weakness Chat.** Let a couple of weeks go by. Then call a close friend who cares about you. Tell her you want to chat about some of the

### Tips for Strengths-Based Managers

The role of all good managers is to do everything to turn each employee's unique combination of strengths and weaknesses into real-world performance. Here are a few tips that will help you play this role as effectively as possible:

- Your chief role is to listen to what your employee is saying, affirm what you hear her say, and offer ideas for actions that can be taken.
- If you really can't approve an employee's request because you absolutely need her to do that activity, keep in mind that if the activity is something that weakens her, it is not and never will be productive to ask her to do it repeatedly.
- If an employee wants to do more of an activity that you know he's really bad at, make sure you've accurately assessed the situation. Be completely sure of your assessment before shutting someone down.
- If the job has certain responsibilities that just aren't going to change, ask, "Does she have to spend a *majority* of her time on these activities to deliver outstanding performance?" If so, it might be time to suggest an alternative role. If not, what can she do differently to make the activities less draining, boring or frustrating?

things that weaken you. First, you must become good at claiming a weakness as a weakness, rather than pawning it off as something else. Try not to give your weaknesses a positive spin. You also need to learn the art of the comeback. You don't need this weakness so that you can fully appreciate your strengths. You just want to figure out how to navigate around it so that it doesn't drag you down as much as it does now. Call another friend and do it again.

**Conversation 4: "How Can You Help Me?"** Now you're ready for the next meeting with your manager. The point of the meeting should be to ask your manager to help you figure out how to be more productive. Before the meeting, pick the weakness that distracts you the most from playing to your strengths and develop three or four ideas for how to minimize it. ■

### Step 6: Build Strong Habits

Faced with a world that doesn't really care about your strengths, your challenge now is to continue to accelerate your progress by building strong habits. To help you,

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## Summary: GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

### Step 6: Build Strong Habits

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there are five things you absolutely must do to fight for this strong life of yours. It is, after all, your career, your professional life, your success and satisfaction that are at stake.

**1. Every day look over your three Strength Statements and your three Weakness Statements.** It's up to you to fix them so clearly in your mind that you can recite them word for word from memory.

**2. Every week complete a Strong Week Plan.** Start each week with a plan for making the week as close to

### 'And What Happens If ...'

You will inevitably face a few situations that will slow or even halt your progress. To prepare you to survive them with your strengths focus intact, here are the four most common:

**1. "What happens if I don't know if I should take this job?"** When considering a new role, the three questions most people ask themselves are: (1) What is the fundamental purpose of the role, and do I have an appetite for this purpose? (2) What are the kinds of people I'll be working with? and (3) What are the specific activities that will fill my week?

The most important question is the last one. It is the activities themselves that will determine your success.

**2. "What happens if I don't think I should have taken this job?"** Face up to it fast and take action to get yourself out of it. Occasionally this will mean packing up and leaving the role, but more often than not you'll be able to track your way back onto your strengths path without resorting to something quite as drastic. Identify a specific strength, take a stand for this strength, and volunteer it to your team.

**3. "What happens if I'm new to the job?"** Pick one of your strengths and lead with it. When all else is uncertain, this strength of yours will not only showcase you in the most self-assured and confident light possible, it will also provide a core of certainty from which you can start reaching out and filling in the gaps of your knowledge.

**4. "What happens if I'm constantly over-worked?"** It took you a while to become over-worked, so it will take you a while to get out from under it. Concentrate on your three strongest strengths and push everything else aside. See what happens after a month. You may find that an awful lot of stuff falls by the wayside.

an ideal week as possible.

**3. Every quarter close the books on your strengths.** Put it on your calendar, once a quarter, to seek out your manager and have a 30-minute conversation about your strong quarter. Look back over your Strong Week Plans and identify three tangible achievements in which you contributed more to the team, based on either exploiting your strengths or minimizing your weaknesses.

**4. Every six months pick a week to capture, clarify and confirm your strengths.** Your underlying personality will not change much, but your strengths will. Capture these changes twice a year.

**5. Every year take the SET survey.** The Strengths Engagement Track, or SET, can be found at the Web site [wwwSimplyStrengths.com](http://wwwSimplyStrengths.com). Take the survey annually. You'll see movement, and this movement will serve as a leading indicator of your performance and contribution. Pay attention to it. It will show you your future. ■

### Take Your Stand

You have distinct strengths. No one has quite the same configuration of strengths as you.

You will be at your most productive, creative, focused, generous and resilient when you figure out how to play to your strengths most of the time. When you do, your customers, your colleagues, your company and you will win. Everyone will win.

But it doesn't matter what other people believe. It only matters what you believe.

So let tomorrow be a different day than today. Let tomorrow be a stronger day than today. Let tomorrow begin with you asking yourself "What are my strengths, and how can I contribute them today?" and let every day thereafter begin the same way. You've always known what your strengths are. You've always known what lies within you. So trust your strengths, be proud of them, and take your stand. ■



If you liked *Go Put Your Strengths to Work*, you'll also like:

1. ***Talent Is Never Enough* by John C. Maxwell.**

Maxwell, a leadership expert, asserts that talent is often misunderstood and overrated. To combat this, he suggests that people build their strengths and become a "talent-plus people."

2. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.**

The corporate world is full of intelligent and skilled executives, but few will ever reach the top and, according to Goldsmith, subtle nuances make the difference.

3. ***How* by Dov Seidman.**

According to Seidman, in this ever-increasingly competitive world, it's not what you do, but how you do it that sets you apart from the pack.