

Title: "Now, Discover Your Strengths"

Author: Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, PhD

Publisher: New York: Free Press

Pages : 260 pages

Price: Book \$30.00; (\$18.00 from Amazon.com); abridged 3 CD Simon & Schuster Audio (\$24.00)

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Reading Time: 6 hours (book); 3 hours (CD)

Reading Rating: 5 (1=difficult, 10 = easy)

Overall Rating: 1 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

If someone asked you what your top 5 strengths are, could you name them?

"Now, Discover Your Strengths" and the online questionnaire are written to assist you in the process of finding your strengths, your "ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance in a specific activity." The book introduces the concept using examples of "Strong Lives," lives of people who have discovered and built on their natural talents, honed their skills, and consistently perform with excellence.

Each book and the CD set has one access code so the purchaser can complete an online questionnaire, the Internet-based Clifton StrengthsFinder® Profile, which captures a spontaneous choice between pairs of statements, sorts the results, and gives immediate feedback on the five most dominant patterns of behavior from the 34 "dominant themes." The authors derived these themes from conducting psychological profiles of over two million people. The reader can return to Section II of the book, "Discover the Source of your Strengths." to read a description of each theme followed by two or three real-world examples of what someone with talents similar to yours might say – "sounds like" illustrating it.

Section III of the book briefly answers questions many people ask upon completing the profile: Is there any significance to the order of the themes? Can I develop new themes if I don't like the ones I have? Can my themes reveal whether I am in the right career?"

So, this reader took the online assessment and was surprised and a bit disappointed to find marketing materials on follow-up programs immediately after the results of the online questionnaire rather than a more in-depth analysis of the results. The online information for each of the top five talent categories was exactly as written in Section II of the book and there was no listing or rank-ordering of the remaining 29 talents. Gallup, however, offers everything from an individual one-hour "in-depth Strengths Discovery Session" with a Gallup Strengths Performance Coach on how to use the top five talents to maximize performance, draw on supporting talents, and strategies for managing talents at the bottom of the sequence (for \$550.00) to "advanced development programs that provide individual and organizations the chance to explore their entire sequences of the 34 areas of talent..." (no prices listed).

If interested, the reader can also read a relatively current question and answer section with author Marcus Buckingham on the Amazon.com site for the book. According to

Buckingham, the purchaser of the book may submit an email request to Gallup for one additional code for a family member to also take the profile.

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