

Understanding Personal Strengths to Achieve Professional Fulfillment



Jennifer Caragol MD

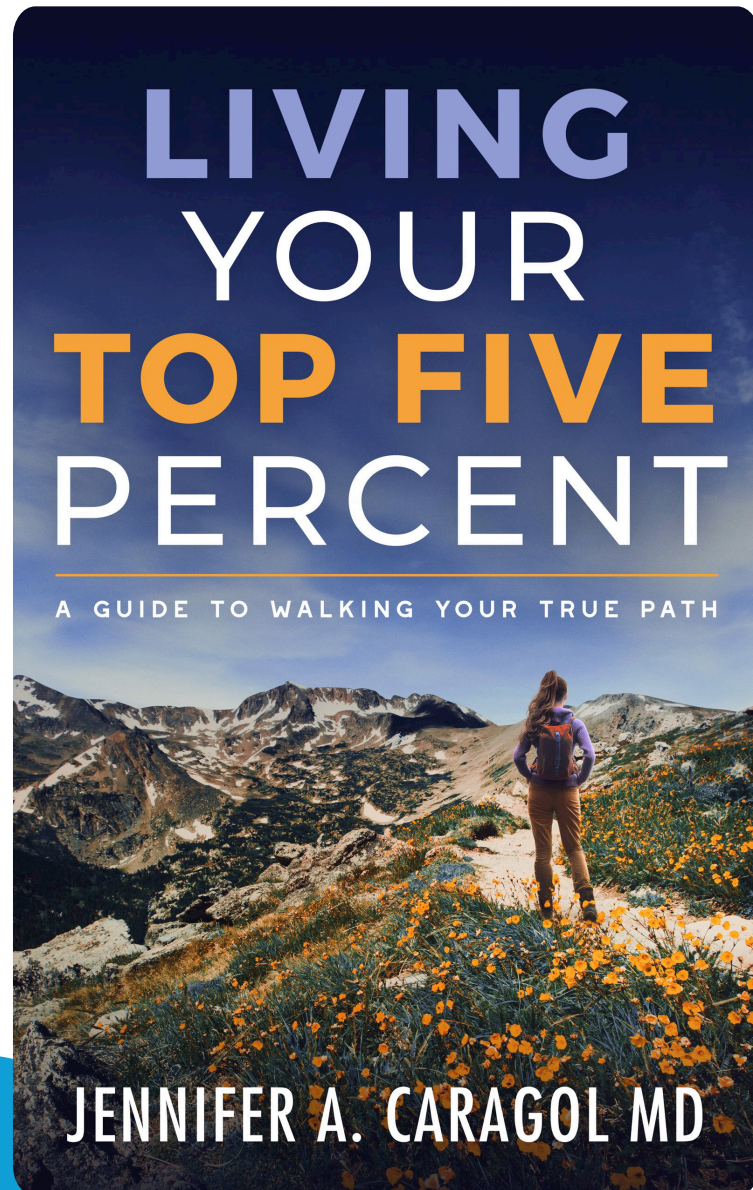
Well-Being Leader

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A large green circle containing the text 'Workshop Roadmap'. A small purple circle is positioned at the bottom-left edge of the green circle. To the right of the green circle, there are five blue curved lines of varying lengths, arranged in a semi-circular pattern.

Workshop Roadmap

1. Analyze the evidence behind strengths, including how they contribute to professional satisfaction
2. Explain how strengths support well-being
3. Practice identifying personal strengths
4. Write a mission statement



What are strengths?

Strengths:

- Inherent assets, abilities, and capacities for action that support our purposeful movement throughout life
- Guide our actions
- A force for creativity, self-realization, and contribution
- Promotes wellbeing
- New strengths can be developed

Caragol, J. (2024) "*Living Your Top Five Percent*", Purple Lupine Productions
Caspi A, Harrington H, Milne B, Amell JW, Theodore RF, Moffitt TE. Children's behavioral styles at age 3 are linked to their adult personality traits at age 26. J Pers. 2003 Aug;71(4):495-513. doi: 10.1111/1467-6494.7104001. PMID: 12901429.



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According to Strengths Expert Alex Linley, PhD:



The strengths approach focuses on what works in the human being.



Strengths are a part of human nature.



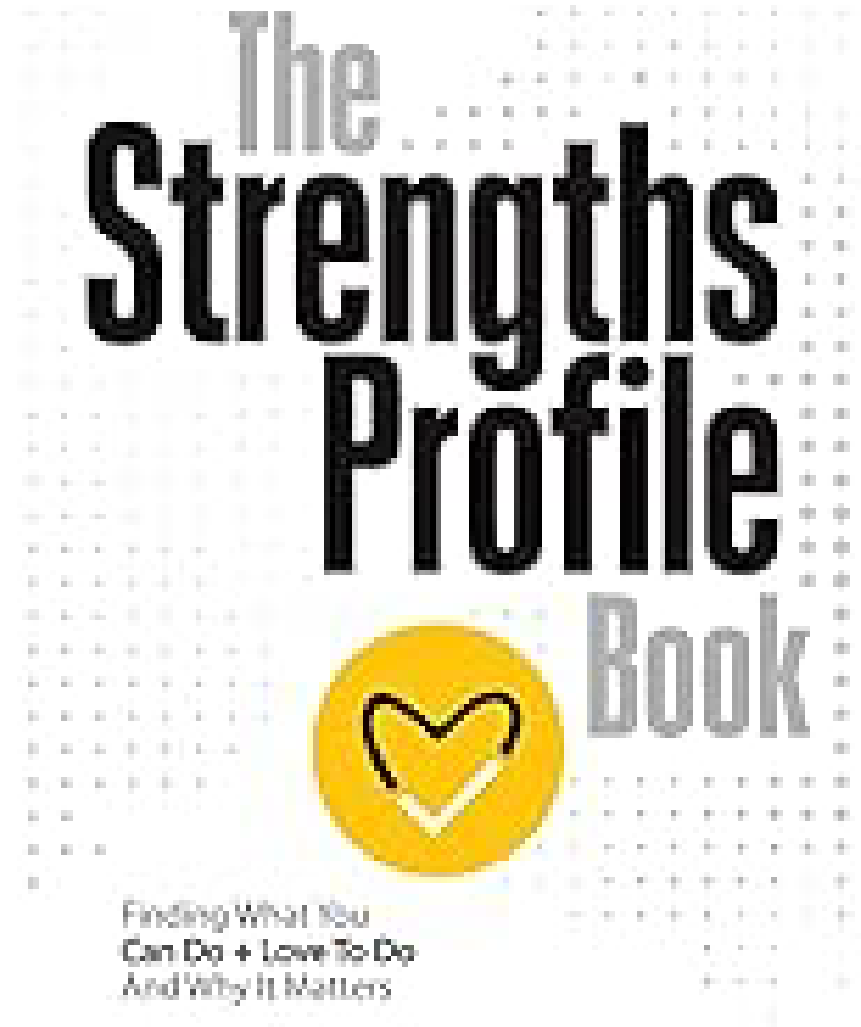
One's greatest potential for development lies in one's strengths.



Success is attained by fixing weaknesses only when making the most of strengths as well.



Focusing on one's strengths is the smallest thing to do to make the biggest difference.



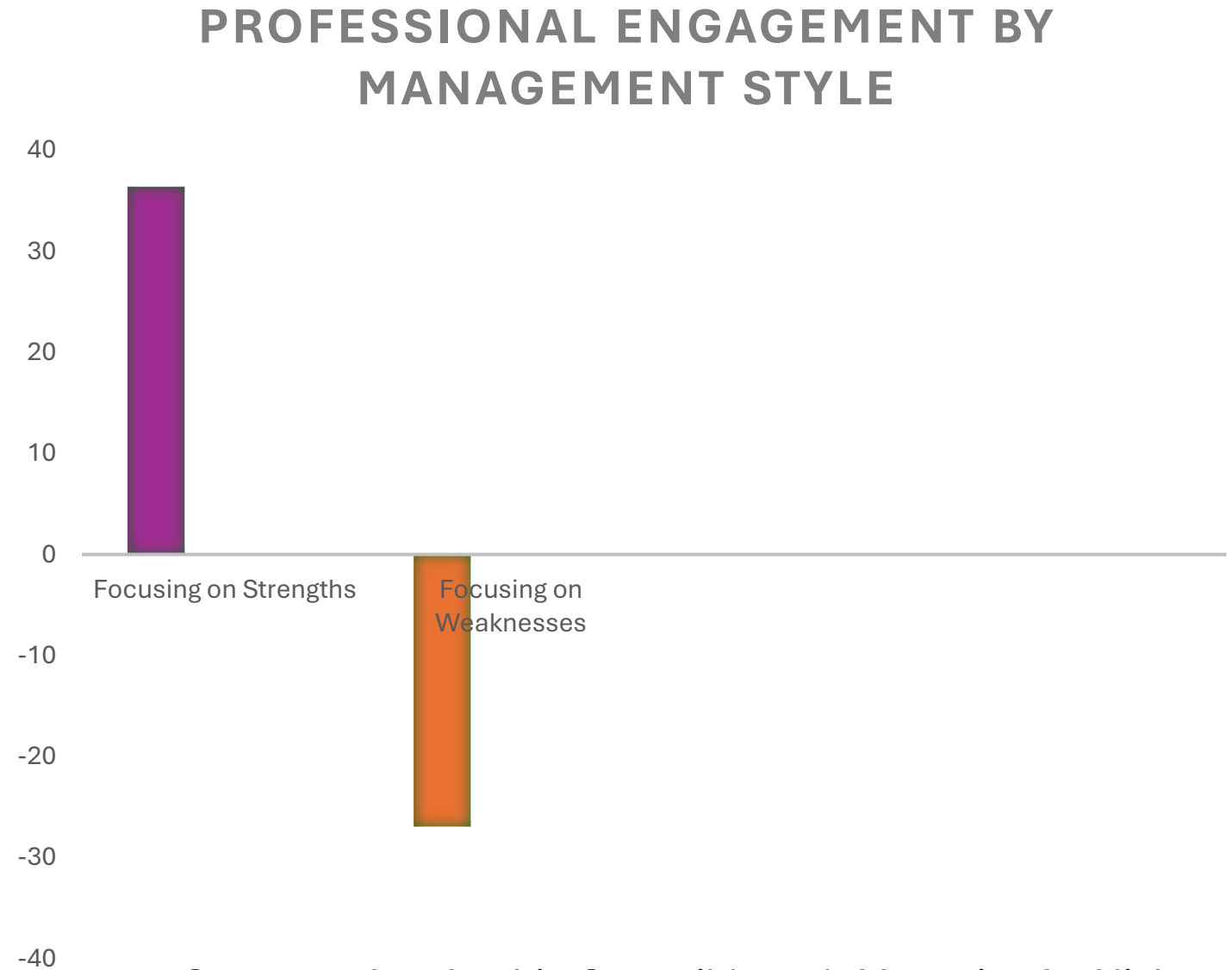
Miglianico, M., Dubreuil, P., Miquelon, P. *et al.* Strength Use in the Workplace: A Literature Review. *J Happiness Stud* **21**, 737–764 (2020).

Relying on your strengths makes sense!

- Well-being (positive affect, life satisfaction, greater self-esteem, less stress and depression,)
- Job outcomes (work performance, work engagement)
- Personal growth
- Group outcomes (information sharing, group cohesion)

- Ghielen, S. T. S., van Woerkom, M., & Christina Meyers, M. (2017). Promoting positive outcomes through strengths interventions: A literature review. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 13(6), 573–585.
- Miglianico, M., Dubreuil, P., Miquelon, P. *et al.* Strength Use in the Workplace: A Literature Review. *J Happiness Stud* **21**, 737–764 (2020).
- Wood, A. M., Linley, P. A., Maltby, J., Kashdan, T. B., & Hurling, R. (2011). Using personal and psychological strengths leads to increases in well-being over time: A longitudinal study and the development of the strengths use questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 50(1), 15–19.

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- **63.3 percentage point difference between a strengths-focused and weakness-focused management**



Corporate Leadership Council (2005), Managing for High Performance and Retention

How can I tell if I'm using one of my strengths?

- Linley suggests that you can recognize a strength by noticing when you:
 - Feel ENERGIZED in an activity
 - Feel AUTHENTIC in your actions
 - LEARN QUICKLY
 - LOSE TRACK OF TIME
 - Regularly SUCCEED in an activity



A dramatic photograph of a massive ocean wave curling into a barrel. The water is a deep, vibrant blue-green, and the crest is white with foam. A small surfer is visible in the barrel of the wave. The sky is overcast and grey.

How Strengths Impact Engagement

1. Natural talents drive motivation and initial engagement
2. Flow: Full engagement creates optimal performance and deep focus
3. Risk: Pushing boundaries introduces uncertainty and potential for growth

What are your superpowers?

“Sometimes our strengths become known to us only when we need to use them. They not only support us to act, but they guide what actions we take.”

- Caragol, *Living Your Top Five Percent*



Strengths Storytelling Exercise

1. Take 5 minutes to jot down a story of a time when

- YOU FELT STRONG
- EVERYTHING SEEMED TO FLOW
- YOU FELT IN CONTROL
- YOU WERE STRETCHED TO SOLVE A PROBLEM OR COMPLETE A TASK
- AND YOU DID IT!

2. Name 1-3 of your strengths from your story (see handout for help)

3. Notice if there is synergy between the strengths

4. Pair up and share



A Working List of Strengths

- Adventurous. Adaptable. Advocate. Analyzer. Artistic. Assertive. Athletic.
- Brave. Believer.
- Centered (composed, calm, aware). Charismatic. Clever (problem solver). Communicator. Competitive.
- Connected (feeling connected). Conscientious. Counselor. Courageous. Creative. Critic.
- Defender. Designer (aesthetic awareness). Diligent. Disciplined. Doer. Dreamer. Driver (getting things done, not necessarily associated with leading). Discerning.
- Emotive. Empathic. Enthusiastic. Expander (thinking expansively).
- Fair. Faithful. Flexible. Focused
- Generous. Guide.
- Helper. Honest. Humanitarian. Humorous.
- Inclusive. Industrious. Innovator. Insightful. Introspective. Intuitive.
- Kind.
- Launcher (support people in their projects). Leader. Learner. Listener. Logical. Loving.
- Manager. Motivator. Musical.
- Networker. Nurturer.
- Optimistic. Organizer.
- Passionate. Peaceful. Playful. Persevering. Persisting. Philosopher/Thinker. Positive. Precise. Present (centered, aware, mindful).
- Relational. Resilient. Resourceful. Responsible.
- Sensual. Service-minded. Strategic. Strong physically.
- Teacher. Trusting. Trustworthy.
- Unifier.
- Visionary.

List is taken from Living Your Top Five Percent by Dr. Jennifer Caragol

Using our strengths on purpose

- Name your strengths
- Know your skillsets
- Practice using your strengths on purpose
- Encourage others to use their strengths

“Minimizing weaknesses can prevent failure but cannot inspire excellence,”
Miglianico et al.



Mission Statement: Why write one?

Clarify

Clarify Your Unique Purpose: Connect your strengths to the meaningful impact you want to make in your work and life.

Bridge

Bridge Personal & Professional: Integrate who you are with what you do. Authenticity creates fulfillment.

North Star

Create Your North Star: Build a personal compass that guides decisions and sustains motivation through challenges.



A mission statement turns your strengths into a roadmap for impact.

Mission Statement

- A MISSION STATEMENT inspires, empowers, and motivates you to act. It centers you in your intention for your life. It guides your choices. It carries you when times are hard.
- The language in a mission statement is bold and visionary, and it shows what you value.
- Your mission can change as you grow as a person. This is a work of art in progress.
- Your mission may be lofty! It is something you work towards and will set you on a rewarding journey.



Mission Statement Exercise



Take 5 minutes to begin to write your Mission Statement.



Start with “I will.....” Or “I want to...” Or “I will help the world by...”



You can use bullet points. Short is fine.

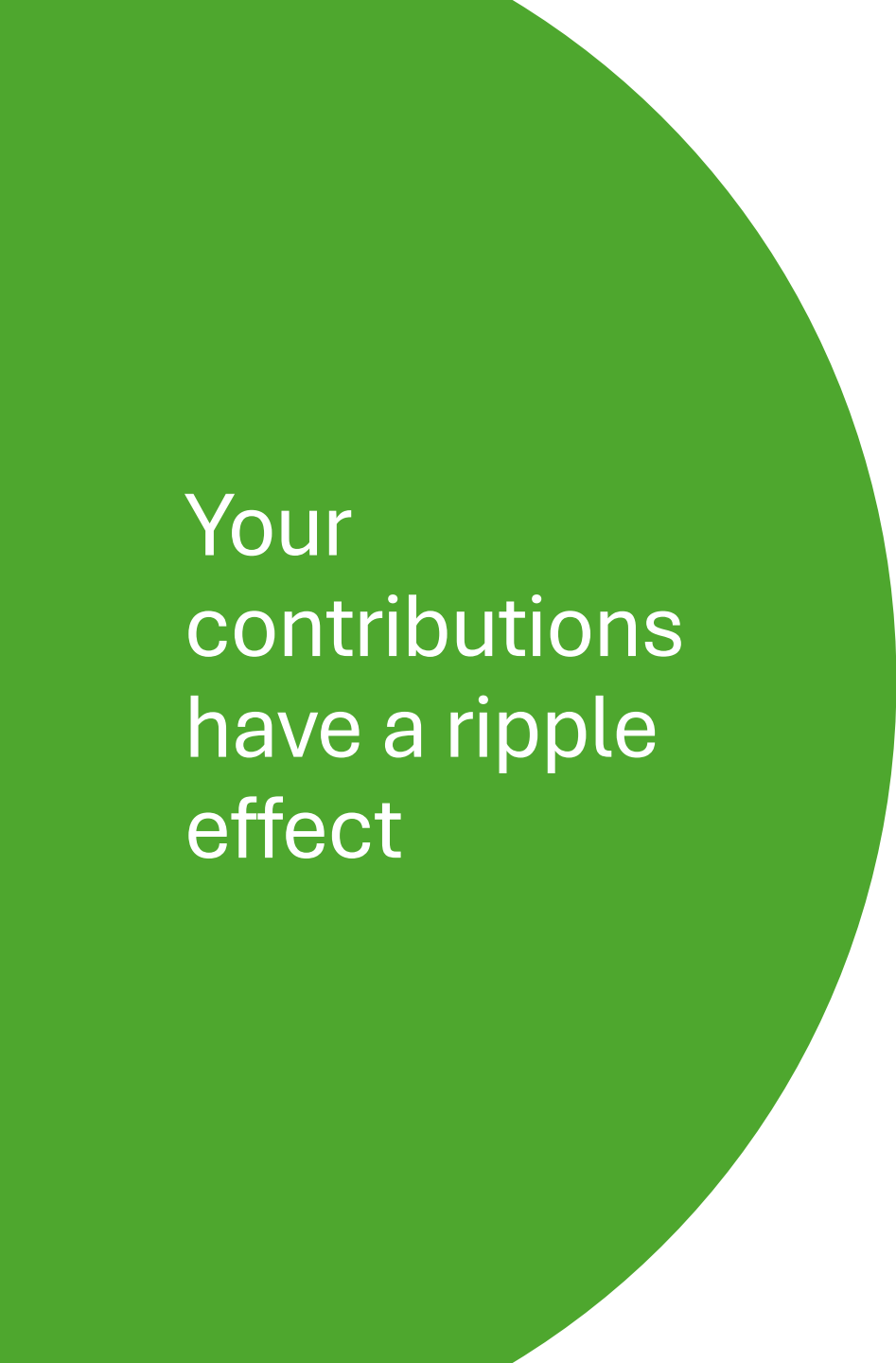


Once you are done, convene at your table to either

1. Read your statement aloud OR
2. Talk about your experience writing this. How do you feel?



Please listen to each other with kindness and without commentary. It’s important that this space for sharing is neutral and open. (10 minutes to share)



Your
contributions
have a ripple
effect

You don't have your job by
accident.

Are you in the right place but
in the wrong way?

Look at your job for the
contributions you can make.

Your strengths are guiding
you to do great things.

Baby steps can get you there!









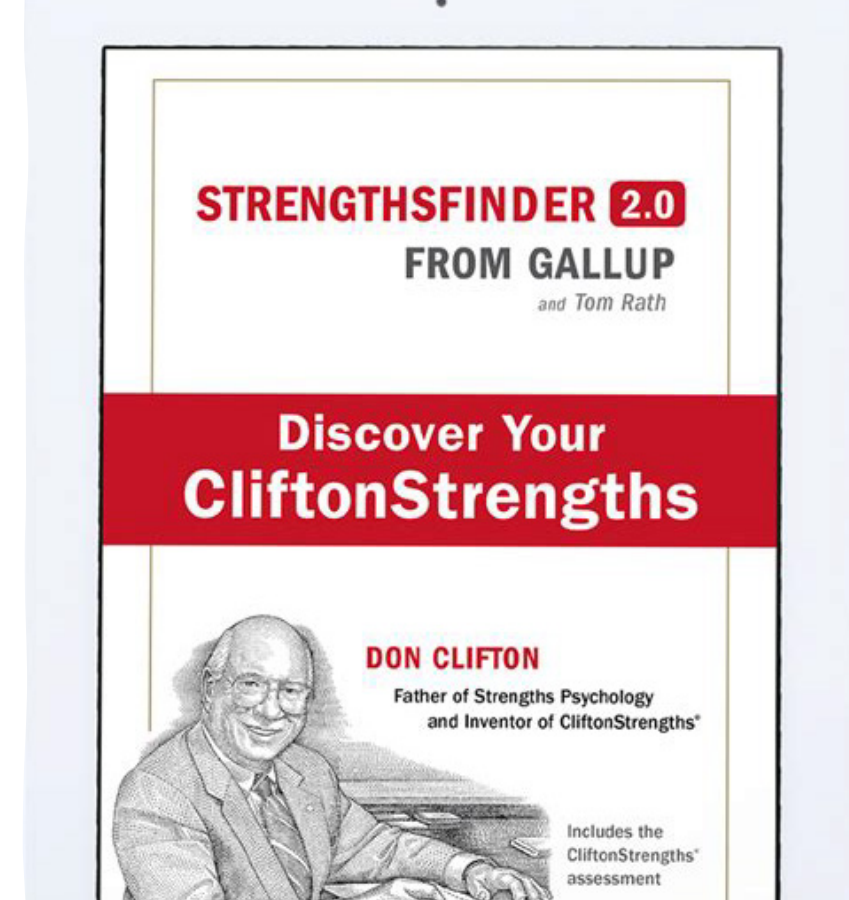
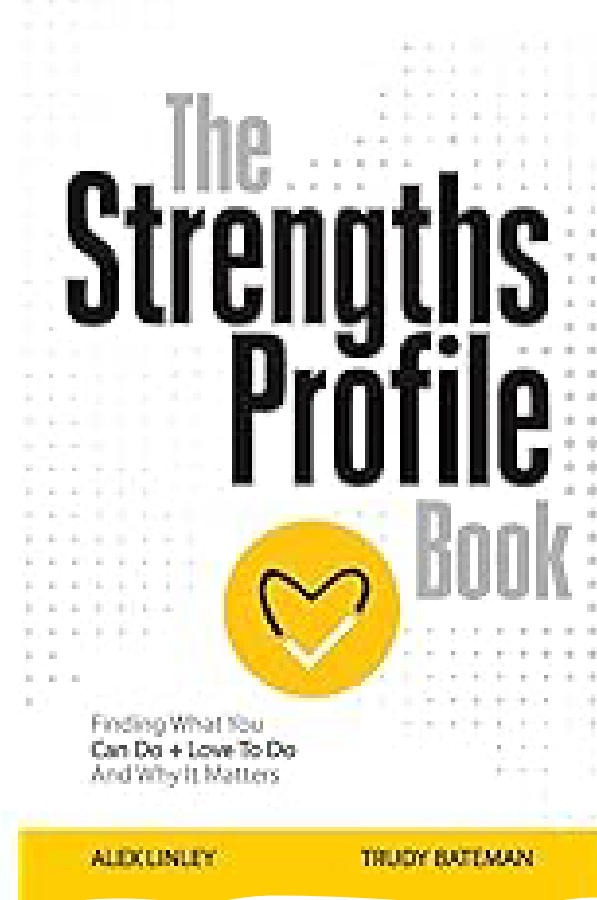
Whether that's feeling more fulfilled at work

Decreasing how much conflict you may experience between home and work

Leading with your strengths on purpose

Encouraging others to lead with their strengths too

WISDOM	CREATIVITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Originality• Adaptive• Ingenuity	CURIOSITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest• Novelty-Seeking• Exploration• Openness	JUDGMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical Thinking• Thinking Things Through• Open-mindedness	LOVE OF LEARNING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mastering New Skills & Topics• Systematically Adding to Knowledge	PERSPECTIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wisdom• Providing Wise Counsel• Taking the Big Picture View
COURAGE	BRAVERY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valor• Not Shrinking from Fear• Speaking Up for What's Right	PERSEVERANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistence• Industry• Finishing What One Starts	HONESTY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authenticity• Integrity	ZEST <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vitality• Enthusiasm• Vigor• Energy• Feeling Alive	
HUMANITY	LOVE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both Loving and Being Loved• Valuing Close Relations with Others	KINDNESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generosity• Nurturance• Care & Compassion• Altruism• "Niceness"			SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aware of the Motives/Feelings of Self/Others• Knowing what Makes Other People Tick
JUSTICE	TEAMWORK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citizenship• Social Responsibility• Loyalty			FAIRNESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Just• Not Letting Feelings Bias Decisions About Others	LEADERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizing Group Activities• Encouraging a Group to Get Things Done
TEMPERANCE		FORGIVENESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mercy• Accepting Others' Shortcomings• Giving People a Second Chance	HUMILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modesty• Letting One's Accomplishments Speak for Themselves	PRUDENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Careful• Cautious• Not Taking Undue Risks	SELF-REGULATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Control• Disciplined• Managing Impulses & Emotions
TRANSCENDENCE	APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awe• Wonder• Elevation	GRATITUDE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thankful for the Good• Expressing Thanks• Feeling Blessed	HOPE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optimism• Future-Mindedness• Future Orientation	HUMOR <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playfulness• Bringing Smiles to Others• Lighthearted	SPIRITUALITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religiousness• Faith• Purpose• Meaning



Strength Inventories

- Strengths Profile, www.strengthsprofile.com
- VIA Institute on Character, www.viacharacter.org
- StrengthsFinder 2.0 (CliftonStrengths) by Tim Rath
<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/strengthsfinder.asp>

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Questions or Comments?

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