



Creativity @ WORK & pLaY!

Issue #2

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Celebrating Strengths!

As the calendar year comes to an end, many of us start looking toward the New Year and what resolutions we will create. In our race to BECOME, we often forget how great we ALREADY ARE, especially at this time of year, where we are playing host or party guest, dressing in our finest, putting on our best face for relatives we haven't seen in years, and trying to give the most perfect gifts.

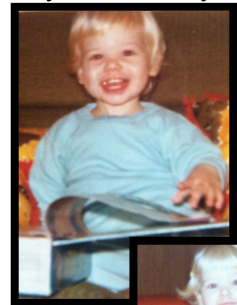
Don't forget to take the time to authentically celebrate everything that has happened to you throughout the year, the great moments as well as the learning experiences. Amidst the bad moments, find the GOOD. Amidst the things you want to be different about your life, express GRATITUDE for the things you want to KEEP. Gratitude and celebration are always a great way to begin . . . the year, the day, and really any moment you choose to pause and reflect.

Strength: Being a Fast Reader

CREATIVITY @ pLaY: Memory Lane

Make yourself a warm comfort drink like tea or hot chocolate and embrace yourself with this fun exercise - even if you let your creativity pLaY for just a few minutes!

1. Cuddle up with your favorite blanket in your favorite chair with a photo album from your childhood, an old journal or notebook, school papers you once drew or wrote, or simply your own imagination.
2. Wander through you memories and write down any that are significant to you.
3. As you explore that memory, write about the strengths you see in yourself and those around you.
4. **pLaY:** Create a quick collage of photos that illustrate your strengths, from birth to now. Or paint an image of something that exudes STRENGTH (like a tree). As you paint or collage, express gratitude to God for all the things that make you uniquely YOU.



Strength: Driving Around Happiness

Challenge yourself to see your strengths underlying even the funny haircuts, the crazy clothes you wore, your impractical ideas and even the embarrassing expressions in photos. This is a big step toward embracing and remembering who you TRULY are! Put that intention and energy into your art!

Another fun idea: Make a Strength Collage for someone you love.



What is a STRENGTH?

Just because we are GOOD at something, does not mean it is our innate strength. We may have started out on a path in life and just gotten better at it because of practice. Consider the administrative assistant who has years of experience organizing and keeping others organized. She may have started in that job because it was her best hope at that time of making a good salary out of college. Yet perhaps it

doesn't play to her true strengths, and she now secretly wishes she could change her career.

Likewise, we may feel drawn to certain activities. It may feel like all time stands still when we do them. But because we are not good at them yet or others have told us we are not good at them, we feel they are NOT our strengths. THESE are the very activities in life that we should invest more energy into learning and growing, because when we do them they make us feel strong and more like ourselves than anything else. THESE are our strengths.

What About Our Weaknesses?

Many times, especially in business and in schools, we are told to focus on our areas of weakness because they could use the most improvement. While there is no arguing that we want to avoid failing grades and bad work reviews, the truth is that without passion we will only be able to take those weaknesses so far. If we find that we are investing MORE energy into overcoming weaknesses than in growing our strengths, we may be missing huge opportunities for living a life of purpose.

Our Greatest Gifts . . .

The greatest gift we can offer ourselves, and the world, is to truly build upon our natural strengths, the things that make our heart SING! A key to finding and living your passion is to identify your God-given strengths, and to use them as often as you can . . .

Creativity @ WORK: The “Playing to Your Strengths” Experiment

1. Look back on your week and write down the activities, tasks or projects that made you feel strong, excited, or full of possibilities! You may also look back on the list you made in the previous exercise “Memory Lane.”
2. Make a plan to build MORE of that activity into THIS WEEK, even if just a little, whether it’s leading, creating, organizing, singing etc. . . .
3. Look at an area or activity in your life that you are the least excited about. How might you use your strengths THIS WEEK to improve your joy in that area? (example, SING while cleaning or filing)
4. Each week journal about your results and feelings as you continue to use your strengths more and more. Are you starting to see the passion come back into your life?

In Summary:

Want to increase your creativity? . . . Embrace your strengths!

“You grow most in your areas of greatest [strength](#). It sounds odd, but you will improve the most, be the most creative, be the most inquisitive, and bounce back the fastest in those areas where you have already shown some natural advantage over everyone else—your strengths.” – Marcus Buckingham

- **You were created as a unique person, with strengths all your own! Acknowledge them and celebrate them!**
- **Draw them, collage them, paint symbols of them. Even the simplest process of creating art, such as quick doodles or fast collages, will engage your right brain and create ENERGY around your strengths.**
- **Once you acknowledge your strengths, purposefully invest time into USING them, GROWING them and SHARING them with the world!**

Don’t stop here – we are committed to helping you live the life you want!!

**Find out about our monthly Vision Board workshops and the
ARTstarters creativity coaching program.**

**Engage in art exercises that will bring you closer to
your vision, motivation and inspiration:**

www.theARTbar.net