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“Your conversations help create your world. Speak of delight, not dissatisfaction. Speak of hope, not despair. Let your words bind up wounds, not cause them.”

~William Martin

Harness the power of your strengths to achieve your goals

Hmm, *the power of your strengths*. Sounds nice, but it goes against what we are often taught, doesn't it? Haven't we all been told that by overcoming our weaknesses we will become better, more well-rounded individuals? In fact, a whole industry has been built on the premise that people have many flaws that need to be fixed.

This way of looking at the world is also entrenched in the business community. If you have ever taken part in a strategic planning exercise for a business, you may have used the traditional SWOT model of planning (identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats).

However, when using this model, it is very common for the focus to be placed on the business' weaknesses and external threats in the environment, rather than its unique strengths and strategic opportunities. Often much 'planning' is actually focused on how to manage these problems and weaknesses.



The common factor with this approach to our lives and our businesses is that *we begin to focus on deficits*. We look for weaknesses in ourselves, in our businesses, and in others.

In fact, many times our narrow view can lead us to overlook or neglect the strengths and talents that have helped us achieve our existing successes.

So why come from a place of strength when trying to achieve meaningful change in your life or business? The short answer is *because it works*. And not only does it work, but it works better, faster, and with wider reaching effects.

Over the last 2 decades there has been increasing recognition in many fields of the benefits of identifying the core strengths of both people and businesses and building on these strengths to achieve goals and (cont'd on pg 2)

Appreciative coaching research update

I am committed to life-long learning and am working towards a graduate degree in Adult Education. My research is examining how coaching facilitates adult learning for women entrepreneurs.

I have had an overwhelming response to the call for participants!

In the coming months, I will give newsletter subscribers updates on the research and the findings.

Thanks again to everyone who volunteered for the research!

Denise

Harness the power of your strengths

(cont'd from page 1)



build successful organizations. The last decade, in particular, has begun to show a significant swing towards 'accentuating the positive'.

For example, in 1998, Dr. Martin Seligman (Past President of the American Psychological Association) challenged psychologists to change the focus of their research.

According to Seligman, over the previous 30 year period, 45,000 studies had been con-

ducted examining mental illness and deficits, but only 300 articles discussed happiness and well-being.

This has led to a whole new branch of the field, called *Positive Psychology*, that focuses on learning about what makes individuals, organizations, and societies flourish.

Isn't it time that you stop focusing on what's not working in your life and **start building on the**

incredible strengths and talents that are uniquely yours?

In the upcoming editions of this e-newsletter, you will be given articles, tips and practical tools to help you identify your key strengths. You can build on this knowledge to start working towards your own goals and dreams.

Ready to begin? Start with this month's *Live Your Strengths challenge* (see below).

Featured Teleclass: Managing Stress Effectively

4 part teleclass series: Every Monday in June, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Registration fee: \$79 + GST

Stress is part of all of our lives and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. However, there are ways to effectively manage stress which will allow your life to be more positive and enjoyable. By taking part in this interactive teleclass series, you will:

- Learn about what stress is and how it affects your body
- Discover techniques to manage stress
- Develop a personalized action plan to allow you to bring serenity back to your life

Because of the individualized nature of this teleclass, participation is limited to 15 people. To ensure your spot, register early by sending an email to denise@insearchofexcellence.ca

Live Your Strengths Monthly Challenge

Visit Dr. Seligman's Authentic Happiness website www.authentichappiness.com and take the free *VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire*.

This is a well-researched assessment that will give you immediate on-line results identifying your top 5 key character strengths.

Your challenge this month is to use your signature strengths in a new and different way each week as you work towards your goals.

For example, if one of your key character strengths is 'authenticity' and your goal is to expand your business by attracting new clients,

think about how many different ways you can use this strength to move closer to your goal. Then implement one of your ideas each week.

Could you use some guidance with this challenge? Call Denise for a free 30-minute coaching session. Start living *your* strengths!

"To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all."

~Oscar Wilde

"How you imagine the world is how you live in it."

~David Suzuki

Do you have suggestions for upcoming newsletters or success stories you want to share?

Contact Denise denise@insearchofexcellence.ca