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*“A problem is a chance for you to do your best.”*

*~Duke Ellington*

*“Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent.”*

*~Eleanor*

*Roosevelt*

## Are You Hiding Your Strengths?

*Do you own your strengths?*

In the last two editions of *Live Your Strengths*, I have written about the importance of building on strengths to achieve goals and identified tools to help you define your own unique set of strengths. However, it is not enough to just *know* which talents you possess, you must *own* them. Let me explain what I mean by owning your strengths.

From the time we are little, we are told it is important to be modest and to avoid bragging about our accomplishments. While the people who give this advice mean well, the effect over time is that we learn it's wrong to acknowledge what we do well. Combine this advice with experiences when we might have actually been ridiculed for demonstrating our strengths and we learn that it is sometimes easier to not use our strengths to their fullest potential.

However, to be truly successful in any endeavour, we must be willing to fully embrace our talents – they give us our power. While I'm not advising that people should become shameless self-promoters, I believe that

every time we hide our talents we are diminishing our personal power and the fuel that feeds our journey towards excellence.

How many times have you received a compliment and responded by playing down your accomplishment or giving away credit for your success?



How many times have you been in a position to help someone by using one of your strengths, but decided against offering the assistance? Perhaps you could have assisted by drawing on your empathy, intelligence, experience, or contacts, but were afraid of being seen as a 'show off', or as interfering, or numerous other excuses for hiding your power.

Have you ever considered how the situation might have been different if you had really owned your strength?

What if you had stepped into the spotlight for a moment, knowing that each of our actions (no matter how seemingly insignificant) feeds into our concept of who we are and what we are capable of? What different results could you create in your life?

This concept of owning your strengths is at the forefront of my attention as I write this newsletter. I thought I had mastered these elements of being comfortable with my own strengths long ago. When someone pays me a compliment, I now smile and say "thank you." When I see opportunities where my gifts can be of use to others, I almost always put myself out there with the hope that my contributions will be taken in the spirit with which they were given.

However, this week I had the opportunity to see myself on video as a group facilitator and I realized that through my body language, I am still downplaying my skills. They were subtle cues – a shoulder shrug, a certain shift in posture at critical times – but together they diminished the power of the information and research (...cont'd on page 2)

*Back by Popular Demand!*

## **Featured Teleclass: Managing Stress Effectively**

4 part teleclass series: Tuesdays in August, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. (Aug 1, 8, 15, 22)

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](mailto:denise@insearchofexcellence.ca)

### ***Are you hiding your strengths? (cont'd from page 1)***

I was discussing. Since this realization, I have been paying closer attention to these cues in my interactions with friends, family, and colleagues and have caught myself giving the same nonverbal cues in these interactions too.

To achieve our greater purposes, both in life and in business, we must become aware of how we are subtly diminishing our power and truly *own* our strengths. I encourage you to begin this process by joining me in this month's *Live Your Strengths* challenge.

### ***Live Your Strengths Monthly Challenge***

Your challenge this month is to fully embrace your talents, passions, and strengths by identifying how you are hiding your power and replacing those behaviours with more positive ones:

- **Accept compliments gracefully.**

When someone pays you a compliment, smile and say "thank you." Period – no justifications needed. It is also not necessary to say something nice back to the person who complimented you – often this is just an attempt to re-focus the conversation away from your own achievements.

- **Offer to use your strengths.** If you find yourself in a situation where you feel that you could use your strengths to help someone, do it! This may happen at a business networking function, a family gathering, or with friends. You might be surprised at how grateful people are for your assistance!

- **Ask for help.** Ask people who are close to you if they see instances where you

hide your power. Often those closest to us are very aware of how we downplay our strengths and are also willing to hold us accountable when we make the decision to change these behaviours.

- **Call in the professionals.** The seminar I attended that brought this issue to my attention was called *Facilitation Skills Development: A Workshop in Authentic Communication*, offered through Constellation Learning Inc. ([www.constellationlearning.ca](http://www.constellationlearning.ca)) While this seminar focuses on facilitation with groups, it provides insight into your communication skills that can be used in almost every situation. I also appreciated the focus on developing each person's own authentic style rather than trying to replicate someone else's approach.

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

**"To change one's life:**

- start immediately
- do it flamboyantly
- no exceptions."

~William James

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

Contact Denise [denise@insearchofexcellence.ca](mailto:denise@insearchofexcellence.ca)