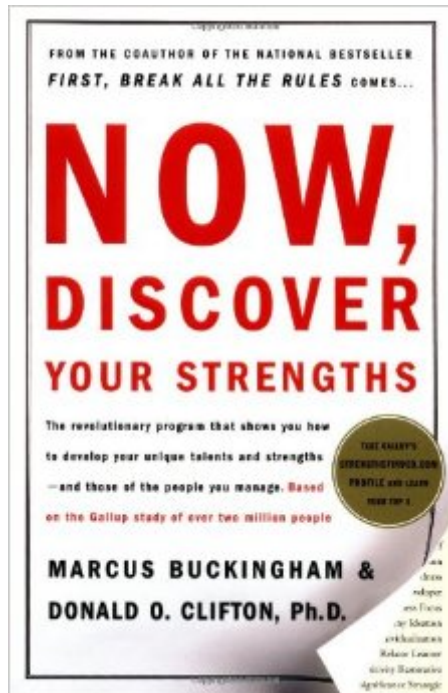


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Now, Discover Your Strengths



Synopsis

Unfortunately, most of us have little sense of our talents and strengths, much less the ability to build our lives around them. Instead, guided by our parents, by our teachers, by our managers, and by psychology's fascination with pathology, we become experts in our weaknesses and spend our lives trying to repair these flaws, while our strengths lie dormant and neglected. Marcus Buckingham, coauthor of the national bestseller *First, Break All the Rules*, and Donald O. Clifton, Chair of the Gallup International Research & Education Center, have created a revolutionary program to help readers identify their talents, build them into strengths, and enjoy consistent, near-perfect performance. At the heart of the book is the Internet-based StrengthsFinder® Profile, the product of a 25-year, multimillion-dollar effort to identify the most prevalent human strengths. The program introduces 34 dominant "themes" with thousands of possible combinations, and reveals how they can best be translated into personal and career success. In developing this program, Gallup has conducted psychological profiles with more than two million individuals to help readers learn how to focus and perfect these themes. So how does it work? This book contains a unique identification number that allows you access to the StrengthsFinder Profile on the Internet. This Web-based interview analyzes your instinctive reactions and immediately presents you with your five most powerful signature themes. Once you know which of the 34 themes -- such as Achiever, Activator, Empathy, Futuristic, or Strategic -- you lead with, the book will show you how to leverage them for powerful results at three levels: for your own development, for your success as a manager, and for the success of your organization. With accessible and profound insights on how to turn talents into strengths, and with the immediate on-line feedback of StrengthsFinder at its core, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* is one of the most groundbreaking and useful business books ever written. (Please note that the code for the Online Strengths Finder Test is found on the inside of the dust jacket or in the sealed sleeve bound into the book just before the endpaper)

Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Gallup Press; 1 edition (January 29, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743201140

ISBN-13: 978-0743201148

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (708 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #8,862 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 inÂ Books > Business & Money > Human Resources > Human Resources & Personnel Management #30 inÂ Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure > Organizational Learning #71 inÂ Books > Business & Money > Job Hunting & Careers > Guides

Customer Reviews

Trying to overcome your weaknesses is a waste of time, according to Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., of the Gallup Organization, and authors of the book NOW, DISCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS (Free Press, 2001). "Casting a critical eye on our weaknesses . . . will only help us prevent failure. It will not help us reach excellence," they write in their thought-provoking book, the follow-up to the outstanding and best-selling Gallup work, FIRST, BREAK ALL THE RULES (Simon & Schuster, 1999). Most organizations fail to achieve excellence, the authors contend, because they also fall into the "overcome your weaknesses" trap. Companies do a poor job of tapping the potential already present on their payroll because they try to make employees into something they're not-at the expense of exploiting individuals' innate talents. Furthermore, Gallup researchers conclude that most of the energy, time, and money that organizations place on trying to hire, train, and develop well-rounded employees is wasted. "When we studied them, excellent performers were rarely well-rounded. On the contrary, they were sharp," the authors quip. Internet Connection. To actually discover your strengths, you cannot rely on the book's pages. You must go online to complete an innovative web-based assessment that identifies your top five individual talent-strengths (and provides you with a brief custom report that you can print or email to someone, like your spouse or boss). Oddly, if you like the assessment, you cannot purchase additional assessments for your staff, spouse, kids, or anyone else. For them to access the assessment, they must each buy another book. Other Weaknesses.

This book presents an interesting description of personality that describes 34 different types of strengths that a person may have. Based on measurement of these strengths (discussed below), it is possible to identify dominant strengths that help to determine personality. The focus of the book is on describing these strengths and then arguing that it is best for individuals and managers can best develop and build upon individuals' strengths. The book makes the interesting point that it is most effective trying to build on these strengths rather trying to identify and improve upon weaknesses. A key to this book is an internet-based test that allows an individual to obtain a measurement of their

top five strengths. To take this test, you log onto a specific website and type in the unique password that is printed in the inside cover of the book. (This means you only take the test once -- your friends will need to buy the book to take the test!). The test is based on work that the Gallup Organization has done and has (according to the book) been administered to 2 million people in a large number of different type of organizations. Once on the site, you answer 180 questions in which you are asked to make a two-way choice as to what word better describes you, which action you would rather take, and so forth. It takes about 20-30 minutes in total to get through these, but once you do, a report is generated on screen (along with an with the same information) that lists your top five strengths and provides a description of what they are. Many of the strengths involve how you deal with people, how you process information, and how you see yourself in the world.

I read "First, Break All the Rules" and found its advice sound and useful. The key finding is that the best managers work hard to understand what their employees true *talents* are and then shape the job to allow the employee to perform to their maximum. It doesn't pay to focus on people's weaknesses; focus on their strengths. The message to the individual is the same, find your talent and grow it rather than spend all of your time on your weaknesses. Unfortunately, "Now, Discover Your Strengths" makes the same point but without all the loads of useful management advice. "Discover" has you take a web based quiz to find your top 5 strengths. What if you have more than 5 strengths? Too bad, for you won't be told how you scored on the other strengths. Does "Discover" help you discover that you should focus on your artistic or writing talents? NO. Your talents in this book are "Deliberative" or "Woo" or "Context". Basically, if you want to get a take on the way you approach life and work, then this book may help you and tell you how to get your manager to treat you, but it won't find your *talents*. I fully recommend reading the first book and thinking hard about what you do well at and enjoy doing. Save your money and don't buy this book. I see this book as an attempt by Gallup to position themselves as an integral part of the review process at major corporations and make money from every employee taking the quiz. This wouldn't be a bad thing for employees, but managers and you'd be better served by the first book by itself. I found the quiz a bit confusing and marked an awful lot of the questions with "no preference".

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