

Doing What You Do Best Every Day

1.) Quick Quote To Consider

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes.” William James, Father of American Psychology

2.) Doing What You Do Best Every Day!

Take a minute and think of a time in the last two weeks that you were in The Zone. You were doing something that was effortless, fulfilling and fun. And the outcome was successful. Maybe you even excelled at it.

My bet is that you were doing what you do best — using those talents that you were born with! These are behaviors that you naturally and consistently employ. I would also bet that when you’re using them you are the most content and happiest.

In First Break All the Rules, the Gallup Organization identified 12 Employee Satisfaction questions that are predictive of productivity, retention and profitability. One of them is: At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day? If someone can answer yes to this question, he or she has a higher likelihood of excelling at the job and be more satisfied in the position.

In the past three issues, we have explored the power of self-awareness, its impact on understanding your own behavior (May/June issue), techniques for practicing self-awareness (July/August issue), and taking action on what you’ve learned from your self-awareness (September/October issue).

Now we’re going to share some tools you can use to increase your self-awareness of what you do best.

Strength Finders

The Gallup Organization has identified 34 talents or patterns of behavior that 2 million people from different industries and professions demonstrated and attributed to their being successful in their work. Talents are different from skills or knowledge. Skills are steps in an activity that can be taught. An example of this is learning how to use a software program. Knowledge is lessons or facts that you’ve learned. For an accountant, for example, it would be learning the tax code.

“Talent is any recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied,” according to the Gallup Organization’s definition. It is hardwired into your brain and is an enduring trait.

Gallup has created an on-line instrument for identifying your top five strengths or talents. By purchasing Now, Discover Your Strengths, you are given a unique code that allows you to access and complete the instrument on-line. It then provides a report with a description of your five strengths.



Self-Awareness

Whether you use the Strength Finders instrument or not, you can learn a lot about yourself by simply observing your behavior. Try the following self-awareness exercise to learn about what you do best.

1. For two weeks, observe your own behavior both at work and at home, and mentally review each day.

- What are you doing when you're enjoying yourself the most?
- What skills or talents are you using when you're the most content and happy?
- What about the activity is enjoyable?
- Where was your energy level?

At the end of each day, write down the patterns in your behavior that you observed.

2. Review your notes at the end of two weeks.

- What patterns do you see in your behavior?
- What were you doing when you enjoyed yourself the most?
- Did you have an opportunity to do what you enjoyed each day?

These two activities will help you identify your unique gifts. If you found few instances in which you were doing what you do best every day, then your job is probably a bad fit for you and drains you of energy.

But, if you discovered that you do have the chance to use these gifts each day, you are probably more successful, more content, and better able to contribute to the success of your organization than if you were not.

To find out more about exploring your unique strengths and what you do best, Northwood Consulting, Ltd. can be your guide. Just contact us at 301.990.6331 or mail@northwoodconsulting.com.

3.) A Manager Discovers What He Does Best Each Day

One of my coaching clients started questioning if he was in the right job. Although he was financially successful and had a prestigious title, he didn't feel fulfilled. He had met with a career counselor and completed assessments, but still wasn't sure about his career direction.

His approach had "involved diagnosing what's wrong and remaining focused on that." When I described to him the approach of building on your strengths, he was intrigued. He completed the Strengths Finder, observed his own behaviors and got feedback from friends and colleagues. To his surprise, he learned that he'd been ignoring what he does best, because he wasn't considering his activities outside the office that were fun and fulfilling. He expressed his passions only when he was with friends.

Now that he has a better idea of what he does best, he's looking for opportunities to use these talents at work and exploring other careers that combine his talents with his passions. One challenge in doing this is facing his fear of leaving something he knows and that provides security. A bigger challenge is seeing himself differently.

Despite these fears, he has rediscovered being excited again and feeling energized.