



Leading from strength

- Clive Wilson, Primeast, UK

One of the most significant books on personal effectiveness that I have read in recent years is "Now, discover your strengths" by Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton. And for some bizzare reason it is currently being offered by Amazon at a givaway price. Actually, I lie: I didn't read the book, I listened to the three CD audio-book version en route to visit a client – what a great way to learn!

The book is based on millions of interviews with successful people over a twenty-five year period and unveils a set of powerful lessons. These lessons are not specifically related to leadership but as I had my leadership hat on that was how I engaged at the time.

I offer one or two key thoughts below but please, in no way does this reflect the full treasure offered in this book.

Some activities energise us and others sap our strength!

The brain is the one organ that "shrinks" as we grow. We are born with a brain of immense complexity with more wired connections than we will ever need. During our childhood and teenage years our brain works out which of these connections are useful and strengthens them. The rest are allowed to wither and ultimately break. The net result is that there are some things we are instinctively good at and others that "we just don't get".

As someone who originally trained as an electrical engineer, I know that it doesn't take much voltage to pump current down big wires! Whereas trying to get current down broken or inadequate wires causes heat and distress. At last, a logical explanation as to why some activities energise us and some drain us of our energy.

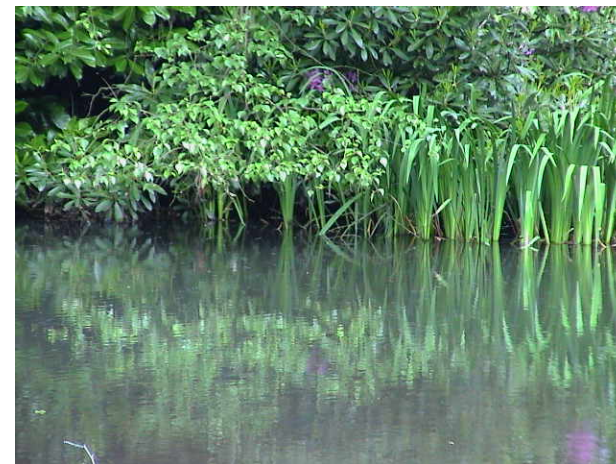
Talents are latent strengths

The nature of our hard wiring dictates our natural talents. However, these do not become strengths unless we work at them. And so often people fail to nurture their talents because they are encouraged to focus on their weaknesses. Certainly, some weaknesses need to be managed – but managing may be as much about working with others whose strengths compensate for our deficiencies. Successful people are those who turn talents into strengths and play to them.

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The implications for leadership are significant. If leading is what we do, we need to work out what our talents are and use them. Are we sociable, charismatic, quietly convincing, empathetic or strategic? What do our talents say about how we engage with others? Do we see the challenge and opportunity of the future or the issues of today? And of course once we understand the implications of all this for ourselves, what about all those who work or lead in our organisations? What about our children?

"Now, discover your strengths", also gives you a pass-key to a web-based diagnostic to highlight your key areas of talent. If you decide to use it, please let us know what difference it makes to you.



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