

Celebrate Your Strengths This Jubilee and Beyond!



Written August 2015 by Irene Chia

Talents fascinate me. By scanning Facebook alone, we can observe unique strengths our friends possess. Some are clearly experts in their field; some evidently bring sunshine to those around them; some are discerning and sharp in their insights; some activate others by initiating reunions and gatherings which would otherwise have never taken place – there are just too many to name here. Have you ever wondered what your inherent strengths are and whether you have unleashed them?

Gallup, the global polling consulting company, defines talents as people's naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behaviour that can be productively applied. The more dominant a talent theme is in a person, the greater will be its impact on that person's behaviour and performance. I have a knack for spotting talents in others. By this, I am talking about my talent of *Individualisation*. In the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment, there are 34 most prevalent talents found among people. Examples of these are Achiever, Analytical, Belief, Harmony, Ideation, Positivity, Relator, and Responsibility and so on.

My *Individualisation* helps me distinguish what is unique in people. Indeed, we all should celebrate the talents we bring into the world. Being a Strengths Coach, I work with individuals and organisations to develop their performance, strengthen their relationships, and grow their business.

Having this talent helps me to draw on individuals' inherent resource as a starting point, instead of fixing their weakness. When we build on our strengths, we are making our weaknesses irrelevant. For example, a person who uses *Empathy* in relating to her customers will make her concern about receiving complaints irrelevant over time. Besides, Gallup has shown that people who use their strengths every day are 6 times more likely to be engaged on the job and 3 times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life.

I have the privilege of hearing wonderful stories of how people succeed by using their strengths. A balloon sculptor uses her *Achiever* strength to raise the bar for what she does, not just for passion. She has broken numerous records, including Singapore's Tallest Balloon Sculpture and Largest 3D Balloon in Assist World Records. She also has the strength of *Positivity* to keep her team happy and energised.

Another lady used her strength of *Arranger* when she was the master-of ceremony for a Singaporean friend married to a Dutch. The wedding was held at Giethoorn, a village in Netherlands with no roads. She coordinated for 2 families that do not speak each other's language on complex logistics from arranging boats, food, drinks, cutlery, luggage, baby strollers, fridge, BBQ grills, gas tank, podium, speakers, microphones, wires...you get the idea. Additionally, she helped cook a lunch that suited different diets and organised a hen party during that 5-day event without much manpower. Her *Arranger* strength has helped her to organise and figure out how all the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

We are born with our talents. When we invest and apply them, they become strengths that are mature instead of raw. Entrepreneur and founder of Alibaba, Jack Ma, advocates that if we are past 40, we should "think about what we are good at and just focus on these things as time is running out". It is hard enough to work on our strengths, do not waste time on areas that are not as natural to us. Like diamonds, talents must be polished to make them brilliant.

This Jubilee year, celebrate the fact that you have strengths and liberate them to soar for you!