

# Maximizer

Excellence, not average, is your measure. Taking something from below average to slightly above average takes a great deal of effort and in your opinion is not very rewarding. Transforming something strong into something superb takes just as much effort but is much more thrilling. Strengths, whether yours or someone else's, fascinate you. Like a diver after pearls, you search them out, watching for the telltale signs of a strength. A glimpse of untutored excellence, rapid learning, a skill mastered without recourse to steps -- all these are clues that a strength may be in play. And having found a strength, you feel compelled to nurture it, refine it, and stretch it toward excellence. You polish the pearl until it shines. This natural sorting of strengths means that others see you as discriminating. You choose to spend time with people who appreciate your particular strengths. Likewise, you are attracted to others who seem to have found and cultivated their own strengths. You tend to avoid those who want to fix you and make you well rounded. You don't want to spend your life bemoaning what you lack. Rather, you want to capitalize on the gifts with which you are blessed. It's more fun. It's more productive. And, counterintuitively, it is more demanding.

## Action Items for This Theme

Seek roles in which you are helping other people succeed. In coaching, managing, mentoring, or teaching roles, your focus on strengths will prove particularly beneficial to others. For example, because most people find it difficult to describe what they do best, start by arming them with vivid descriptions.

Devise ways to measure your performance and the performance of your colleagues. These measures will help you spot strengths, because the best way to identify a strength is to look for sustained levels of excellent performance.

Once you have identified your own strengths, stay focused on them. Refine your skills. Acquire new knowledge. Practice. Keep working toward mastery in a few areas.

Develop a plan to use your strengths outside of work. In doing so, consider how your strengths relate to the mission in your life, and how they might benefit your family or the community.

Study success. Deliberately spend time with people who have discovered their strengths. The more you understand how marshaling strengths leads to success, the more likely you will be to create success in your own life.

Be ready to:

Make your weaknesses irrelevant. For example, find a partner, devise a support system, or use one of your stronger themes to compensate for one of your weaker ones.

Explain to others why you spend more time building on strengths rather than fixing weaknesses. Initially, they might confuse what you are doing with complacency.