

Trombone Player Wanted

An Informative Review of Marcus Buckingham's 6 DVD Series on Strengths

This booklet includes a Bonus Review of Tom Rath's StrengthsFinder2.0

A Free E-Book Resource

Created by David Zinger, M.Ed.



www.davidzinger.com

dzinger@shaw.ca

The Original Source of Reviews

[Joyful Jubilant Learning](#) (*A community with a passion for lifelong learning*)

June 2006

Except where otherwise [noted](#), content on this site is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License](#) (See the last page for more information)

The Reviewer

[David Zinger](#) has been an active proponent of strength based work and he writes a [strength based leadership blog](#). David also writes a blog on [employee engagement](#). He plans to keep writing and working in on strengths and engagement until we move from 2 out of 10 using their strengths to 8 out of 10 being strong and vibrant in their life and their work.

Visit David's professional site at: www.davidzinger.com to learn more about David and his services.

Introduction

Are you strong enough at work? Do you know how to identify your strengths? Do you know how to compensate for your weaknesses? Do you know how to go beyond listing your strengths to living your strengths? The video series you are about to read will help you list, develop and leverage your strengths, and draw out the strengths of others.

The reviews originally appeared over 6 weeks on the [Joyful Jubilant Learning Blog](#).

This review will guide you through the videos with extra material and comments from the author. It can be used in conjunction with the videos or used to determine if you wish to use the videos for yourself or your workplace.

This E-book also includes a bonus review of [StrengthsFinder2.0](#) by Tom Rath.

Note: This review is independent of Marcus Buckingham and communicates this authors views and learning from this video series.

Video Information.

Go to www.marcusbuckingham.com to learn about ordering the video series.

You may also want to read Marcus Buckingham's related book: **Go Put Your Strengths to Work.**

Trombone Player Wanted

A 6 Set DVD Series by Marcus Buckingham.

Video 1: So, **What's Stopping You?**

(Running time = 15:06 mins.)

Do you play the trombone? Do you want to play the trombone? Were you ever forced to play the trombone when you really wanted to play drums?

Marcus Buckingham has created and narrated a savvy well designed and



informative DVD series on strengths that parallels the book: **Go Put Your Strengths To Work**. You can work with the book or work with the DVD series, but they work powerfully together to

reinforce the message of being part of the minority of people who put their strengths in their work and put their strengths to work.

The DVD series is an exceptional resource for people who are interested in learning more about strengths but lack the time and energy to plow through the 270 pages of the book. The DVDs are engaging with the majority of shots being close ups of Marcus Buckingham sharing personal stories and interesting anecdotes.

Woven through the whole series is a story about a young boy who dreams of being a drummer but is cast as the trombone player in his school band. Often as Marcus is talking we will see images of the boy, the band, and the band's development. Unfortunately, you never hear any vocals or music from the band but the background music on the DVD is captivating.

The DVD appeals to a very diverse audience. My 17 year old son caught some of it while I was watching and said , "cool." Now that's a compliment from the next generation for the workplace.

Marcus Buckingham exudes charisma as he appears to gaze right at you as he looks into the camera. He shares examples ranging from the competitiveness of his young son Jack to how Marcus worked and worked on his confrontational weaknesses and eventually went from being terrible to really bad! He firmly believes a much better use of his time and energy would have been on his strength development.

So What's Stopping You is an overview of the strengths perspective in the workplace with Marcus Buckingham encouraging you to be in the 2 out of 10 people who use their strengths at work. He believes what is stopping you are 3 common myths:

1. As you grow, your personality changes.
2. You will grow the most in your areas of weakness.
3. A good team member does whatever it takes to help the team

Watch the video to learn how these myths undermine a strength approach and how you can replace these myths with 3 strength-based truths.

Marcus is on a mission to get you to play to your strengths. I think the child images woven through all the videos is to encourage us to be young at heart and find the inner strength that has always resided in us. The video ends with Buckingham encouraging us to put more of our precious minutes around our strengths not our weaknesses.

The video has a link to the [simplystrengths](http://www.simplystrengths.com) website. You can get a handout for each DVD that offers powerful questions to prime your strengths quest.

Action: The series makes an ideal 6 session lunch and learn program at work.

Photo Credit: [Jordan makes light music by - http://flickr.com/photos/jasoneppink/80772526/](http://flickr.com/photos/jasoneppink/80772526/)

Video 2: **Do You Know What Your Strengths Are?**

(Running time = 14:58 mins.)

*Each time we face our fear, we gain
strength, courage, and confidence in the doing. - Unknown*

In this video Marcus Buckingham uses his charismatic and gentle tenacity to encourage viewers to develop crystal clarity on their strengths. Too often our strength focus is bland, vanilla, or vague.

Crystallize your strength clarity by responding to the following questions:



1. What do I yearn to do not just do to earn?
2. What am I very curious about?
3. What activities put me in "the zone" when I engage in them?
4. What activities leave me feeling refreshed and renewed?

Marcus elaborates on 3 of his strengths to help the viewer recognize how to describe their own strengths. You don't have to be good at something for it to be a strength and sometimes the things you are good at do not strengthen you.

Become an inner strength expert. Do not look outside of yourself for your strengths. A strength is an activity that makes you feel strong. The old definition of strength as something you are good at is too anemic for the future. You may be good at activities but they may leave you empty, cold, and weakened.

Nourish your strengths by focusing on your workplace activity appetites.

In this, the second of six videos, the young trombone player is seen going through the motions of playing the trombone but without passion or appetite.

He stays late after the whole band leaves to play the drum and you can tell he loves to create the beat and the beat in turn both nourishes and strengthens him.

Each video is linked to a colorful PDF handout that you can access if you purchase the video. The handouts at www.simplystrenghts.com will help you review and use the key ideas and questions from the video.

Here is a short personal example of a strength focus.

Humor is my core signature strength: I look forward to engaging in it. I feel in the zone when I write it and I feel good after I have created a humor post. I invite you to read [Zingers](#) - my humor blog. Read a post on aging, development and parenting: [A Sign of Aging: Sith Happens](#). For me, humor is a strength, a resource, and a way of working. This is why I illustrated the start of this post with the picture of strength.

Photo Credit: **Strength** by http://flickr.com/photos/the_art_of_me/271265293/

Video 3: **How Can You Make The Most Of Them?**

(Running time = 13:12 mins.)

This video begins with the familiar theme music. Our young trombone player approaches the band leader but the band leader appears unsympathetic to his



desire to change instruments. Marcus Buckingham begins his part of the video talking about having a stutter as a child yet his inability not to engage in public speaking.

He talks about the, *I can't help it* quality of strengths. He encourages the viewer to free up and focus the strengths that already reside within. You need to seek out situations to call upon your strengths. Once you "find" your strengths you need to find ways to maximize your find.

Be detailed and specific about your strengths then seek out situations that call upon them.

Marcus states that this so basic yet uncommon for so many of us.

Start small. Begin each week by determining two things you could do this week to live your strengths and put them to work.

Our young trombone player becomes tenacious in trying to play the drums. The band leader does not acquiesce to his request but the indefatigable trombone players writes out a sign on the band door: *Trombone Player Wanted*.

Take Note:

How much are your strengths wanted and can you get the **Help Wanted** to free up more time and energy to give the best that you have to give at work?

I encourage you to leap from a quiet life of desperation, stated by Henry David Thoreau, with the song stuck inside you to taking flight with your strengths like the skateboarder who doesn't let gravity bring him down. Watch out!

Photo Credit: **Watch Out!** Flickr creative commons by <http://flickr.com/photos/skuper/209230440/>

Video 4: **How do you cut out your weaknesses?**

(Running time = 14:47 mins.)

I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free. ~ Michelangelo

Can you carve away your weaknesses until the spirit of your strengths soar free?

When you cut out the weaknesses from your work you bring shape, form, and



strength to your contributions and value to your organization.

Far too much time and energy is devoted to our weaknesses.

How much time during the week do you spend on activities that weaken you? Perhaps you cannot devote all

your time to strengths but can you strive to reach the point where a maximum of 1/4 of your time is spent on activities that weaken you?

Marcus Buckingham's perspective echoes the advice of Peter Drucker who advocated the avoidance of focusing on weaknesses in the late 1990s.

Marcus Buckingham implores you to purge weakening activities from your work and also purge the guilt about not spending your limited time and precious energy on weaknesses.

Ask around, look, observe. Who might find strength in doing what weakens you? Look for someone who might love doing what you loathe.

In the video, our young trombone player looks tired and bored with the trombone. He has placed notes all over the school: *Trombone Player Wanted*. One young girl looks at the note and seems interested. We must await the next video to see how this plays out.

Buckingham outlines the following tactics to lessen weaknesses in this video:

1. Find a partner.
2. Perform so well with your strength that your organization wants more of it and requests that you spend more and more time on that activity and less time on your weaknesses.
3. Change your perspective on a weakening activity using the lens of your strengths. How can you use your strengths to work on this activity to perhaps even transform it to a strength?

People who are highly effective also are masters of cutting away weaknesses and focusing on strengths. In conclusion, edit out your weaknesses by finding out what you don't like doing and stopping it.

Photo Credit: :: f/luXography I :: Ψ /cut - (Psi/cut) by <http://flickr.com/photos/pixotropic/206731603/>

Video 5: Why is it so hard to talk about this?

(Running Time = 10:30 mins.)

Are you talking to me? I hope so. I hope you are talking with all the people you are connected with in your workplace about your strengths. I especially hope



you are talking with your leader and if you are a leader I hope you are holding conversations with all your direct reports on their strengths.

Be like the elephant who never forgets. Never forget to hold important conversations about strengths at work.

In this video, Marcus Buckingham implores us to engage in conversations around our strengths and weakness. Not to brag about our strengths or whine about our weaknesses but to give voice, power, and connection to who we are and what we bring to our team and our organization.

Here is some research he cites on conversations about strengths and weaknesses in organizations:

- 40% talk about weaknesses
- 20% talk about strengths
- 35% don't talk about these things

If this was the same in a family of 5 it would mean 2 people are talking mostly about weaknesses, 2 family members are not talking, and only 1 is talking about strengths --- and if it was just one person, who would he or she be talking to? How well do you think this family would be doing?

In the trombone playing subplot of the video our young trombone player is talking. He has found a girl who wants to play the trombone, he brings in the other drummer to team up with him, and the three children go tell their band

leader about their plan. The band leader appears reticent but can see the gumption of the children to get this done.

We owe it to our teams and organizations to talk about our strengths, to be vivid on what we are good at and what we like to do, on where our teams can rely on us, and where we might need help.

Talk 5: Let's make some strong talk:

1. When was your last conversation about strengths?
2. When is your next conversation about strengths going to occur?
3. Who can you talk to today about your strengths?
4. Who do you need to talk with this week about their strengths?
5. How many strength-based conversations can you hold in the next 30 days?

Be strong, don't wait, hold these conversations today.

Picture credit: **Elephant talk** by <http://flickr.com/photos/ginable/325235488/>

Video 6: Why Can't This Last Forever?

(Running Time = 11:05 mins.)

If you uncover your strengths, can you keep them in focus and can you ensure that you live a life that plays to your strengths?



This is the last video of the 6 part series being reviewed.

The video opens with the familiar background music and lyrics proclaiming, "we are different kinds of people...I'm waiting for you..." The young girl gets ready to play the trombone. The scene changes to a tight shot of Marcus Buckingham declaring that he is one of the 2 out to 10 who plays to his strengths.

He states how fortunate he feels. He also acknowledge the contributions of Don Clifton (a central contributor to the strengths movement). The Strengthsfinder used by Gallup is often referred to as the Clifton StrengthsFinder because of Don. Marcus had the opportunity to work with and learn from Don Clifton while he was at Gallup.

Marcus confesses that he fell off his strengths path a few years ago but he managed to get back on track --- to leave his weaknesses behind and reunite with what strengthened him.

He encourages us to always remember these 3 strong certainties:

1. We have wonderful and powerful strengths.
2. No one else has the identical configuration of strengths that we do.
3. We'll make our biggest contribution to our organization and ourself when we play to our strengths most of the time.

Marcus has an awesome sense of belief and conviction that you can bring your strengths to the foreground of your life. Yet he also prepares you for possible

"strength relapse" when you veer off of your path. Use the tools of the video and the book to get back on track and live your strengths

The risks of not using your strengths are greater than using them and Marcus Buckingham states it is our responsibility to use our strengths. He is very vocal about his belief yet states that it is what we believe that really matters.

The video ends with a smiling band leader leading the band through a piece of music with our former trombone player now experiencing and living his strengths by playing percussion.

I was disappointed that we never actually got to hear the music of the children in the video. The video is very well crafted and produced yet for someone who believes so strongly in the strength movement it was an oversight not to let us hear the voices and the music of the children --- the strength of our future!

Will you compose your own symphony of strengths? Will you let others hear the music?

Don't let your strengths be silenced, thwarted, or ignored by yourself or others. Get the video, watch the video, and live your strengths. I will be thrilled when instead of the 2 out of 10 using their strengths we flip this around and have 8 out of 10 playing to their strengths.

On a personal note, one of my core strengths is humor and playfulness. While writing these 6 reviews I challenged myself to live more of this strength. The results of this challenge is a new humor/spoof leadership blog: [Dr. Z's Leadership Institute](#). I ask for your support of my strength by reading the blog and encouraging others to read as I live my strength of humor. If we can laugh, we can last.

I would be very remiss without a very special bow of gratitude to Rosa Say for working so hard to make [Joyful Jubilant Learning](#) a successful resource for us all, to giving so much of her time and energy to strengthening all people she comes into contact with, and for gifting me with the name Ikaika (strength).

Me ka aloha

Picture Credit: **2 ton** by <http://flickr.com/photos/kazatzka/194099479/>

- Bonus Review -

Note: This review also was posted on Joyful Jubilant Learning. Tom Rath's StrengthsFinder offers a tool to discover talents. Although there are some significant differences between the approach of Buckingham and Rath I believe different learners will find their strengths through the variety of pathways offered.

StrengthsFinder 2.0: **Do you know how strong you are?**

How strong are you? Can you list your top 5 talents? If you know your top 5 talents, can you state 5 ways you act on each talent?



Tom Rath from Gallup has written a new book linked with Gallup's StrengthsFinder. **StrengthsFinder 2.0** adds significant content to the [strength and employee engagement material](#) already developed by Gallup.

According to StrengthsFinder 2.0 my top 5 talents are: maximizer, strategic, positivity, ideation, and empathy.

This fits for me as I naturally want to bring out the best in others through this book (maximizer); figure out how to apply the talents in different settings (strategic); look at the positive parts of the book, website, and strength approach (positivity); create ways to use both this resource and Marcus Buckingham's "appetite" approach to strengths (ideation); and, reflect on how to best craft this review to be reader focused (empathy).

The book maintains the use of the original 34 talents developed in the StrengthsFinder assessment but adds powerful value by being tied in with a new website: <http://sf2.strengthsfinder.com/>.

This new website adds richness and depth to an already useful book. The website includes a personalized guide, action plan, and a variety of other tools - including a forum to discuss the book and your talents with other readers.

As an added bonus to purchasing the book and registering on-line Gallup offers a free 6 month subscription to the informative [Gallup Management Journal](#).

According to Rath, when you look at the world from a strengths perspective you realize, *"you cannot be anything you want to be -- but you can be a lot more of who you already are."*

The central action of the book and website is to uncover your top 5 talents. Your talents are patterns of thought, feeling and behavior to be productively applied. Your talents become strengths when multiplied by your investment of time and energy in practicing, developing skills, and building knowledge connected to your talent profile.

In an [interview](#) about the book for the Gallup Management Journal Rath discussed the strong link between a leader's focus and employee engagement. Here are 3 powerful conclusions from Gallup's research:

1. If your manager primarily ignores you your chances of being actively disengaged are 40%
2. If your manager focuses on your weaknesses your chances of being actively disengaged are 22%
3. If you manager focuses on your strengths your chances of being actively disengaged are only 1%

I believe we are in the midst of the strengths revolution in the workplace. For example, [Peter Drucker](#) in 1999 wrote about the key role of strengths in managing oneself in the Harvard Business Review. [Martin Seligman](#), the former president of the American Psychological Association, demonstrated what an important role strengths played in achieving authentic happiness. In addition,

more organizations are making use of a strength based focus through the process of [Appreciative Inquiry](#).

Strengths are vital to happiness, engagement, relationships, effectiveness, and results. With limited energy and resources meshed with increasing work and other demands it makes sense to put our energy into getting maximum value from strengths as opposed to dissipating away our strength by focusing our limited resources compensating for weaknesses.

...people who do have the opportunity to focus on their strengths every day are six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general (iii)

Marcus Buckingham's, **Go Put Your Strengths To Work** will also be reviewed in [Joyful Jubilant Learning](#). Between these two hot resources for 2007 the mechanisms are in place to find your talents and put your strengths to work.

Don't wait. Begin or renew your strength training today and be as strong as you can for 2007 and beyond. You owe it to yourself, your organization, your customers, and the people you lead.

I was anemic as a child. In 52 years I have transformed into a strong adult. Earlier this month Rosa wrote this comment: *A sharing of Hawaiian for you David; the name given to male children meaning "one who is strong" or has strength, is Ikaika (pronounced ee k+eye ka), and it seems to me that would be a good Ho'ohana Community name for you!*

Be caring, be focused, be strong!

Creative Commons License for this work:

Offering your work under a Creative Commons license does not mean giving up your copyright. It means offering some of your rights to any member of the public but only on certain conditions.

What conditions? [You can find an overview of the Creative Commons licenses here](#). All of our licenses require that you give attribution in the manner specified by the author or licensor.



Attribution. You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your copyrighted work – and derivative works based upon it – but only if they give credit the way you request.



Noncommercial. You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your work – and derivative works based upon it – but for noncommercial purposes only

If you use this work in whole or in part please credit: **Created by David Zinger** www.davidzinger.com
2006