

Maximizer

What are you good at? What flows so naturally for you that when you do it, it's like riding a bike down a big hill...you just hang on and enjoy the breeze? When you play to your God given talents, you do things effortlessly that others around you find hard or unexciting. When you can put yourself in a situation to focus on those things, you excel and can take yourself to great places.

Here is a little history on how I started understanding my strengths:

For as long as I can remember, I was focused on making money and achievement. It started out small...odd jobs and mini business endeavors such as lemonade stands, buying and selling comic books, pumping gas, cleaning out barns, washing dishes, and painting houses. I even made clown shoes! (get the scoop on this in a future blog)

Around the age of 12 I started a job as a newspaper boy. I was fascinated with the concept of figuring up my profit after collecting money, earning tips, and deducting the cost that went to the newspaper company. The anticipation excited me, and superseded all other typical childhood interests like sleeping in and watching cartoons. The calculations would run through my head after every delivery, until the end of my route when I had the final number (which was never as high as I'd hoped!)

Even then I was constantly racking my brain for how I could make more, by either cutting cost or earning more money to gain more profit. Over time, I learned that this desire, this motivation, was called Entrepreneurism, and that it was truly my calling in life. I took these ideas and ran with them, and have since consumed my mind with maximizing (I choose this word purposely) business, making it better, more productive,

smoother, less complex and more efficient.

About 5 years ago I took a test called StrengthFinder after buying the book *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham. After giving much thought to my adult life, and the things I was good at or not good at, I was curious to see what it would say. How it works is you purchase the book, and the book contains a code to log on to the website and take a test. The test takes about 20 minutes, and the result is your top 5 strength, in order, out of a list of 34. My 5 are Maximizer, Relator, Strategic, Learner, and Self Assurance. Most interesting to me was my first strength – Maximizer.

Maximizer: “This person is interested in taking something that works and figuring out ways to make the most of it...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.” (*Now, Discover Your Strengths*, p. 108)

That couldn't be more accurate. As a child, I wasn't fixing broken radios...I was taking existing ways of making money and finding ways to alter them to make more money.

I found it interesting that one of my other strengths is Strategic, which “enables you to sort through the clutter and find the best route. This perspective allows you to see patterns where others simply see complexity.” (*Now, Discover Your Strengths*, p. 115) Does this sound familiar...anything to do with Dyslexia...maybe? (see previous blog entry!)

It was very fulfilling to learn that the strengths that the book identified as mine are the very activities I utilize daily in running my business. Trying to fix your weaknesses is an ongoing pedal uphill, but if you can learn to utilize your strengths it can make work seem effortless, like taking that cruise downhill. The people that make this happen are the ones

that rise to the top and excel in their environment. Do you know what your strengths are?