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1. Quotable Quotes

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"Great talents are a rarity, and it is rare that such people recognize themselves for what they are." – Goethe

"We are the hero of our own story." – Mary McCarthy

"You are the one who can stretch your own horizon." – Edgar F. Magnin

"To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts." - Henry David Thoreau

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2. STRENGTHS ... Personal or Professional - Aren't They One and the Same?!

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I have a passion to know and discover my top strengths and more important to know them so well that when I need them it doesn't take much effort to pull them forth. And maybe, like me, you have taken a variety of assessments all to discover your top 5 or 10. I have even devised my own worksheet and exercise to support others in the discovery of theirs. What I probably find more interesting is that when I mention "strengths" the first question that someone asks is whether I am referring to personal strengths or work (professional) strengths?

My typical answer is Yes and YES. There are assessments that speak to "personal strengths" and a few others that use a "language of work" to describe the strengths - different words, different definitions. In reality, whether I show up in my personal or professional (work) life, I truly want to show up as the best "ME". Those strengths really aren't so different when they show up in the two general areas of my life. It is often how I apply them to manage my personal or professional activities that really is the difference and then often the approach is not that different.

Ahhhh...but what if you don't believe you know your top strengths. Well, we actually have a bit of all the strengths identified - even those held more obviously by your friends, family and neighbors. They may certainly not show up often in your life, because they don't feel as natural or comfortable, but they are there. More often it your choice not to use a specific strength because it just isn't the best of "YOU."

What is the best of you? Can you quickly identify your TOP 5? More importantly, can you also put some language to what those strengths look like/feel like or sound like for you? Remember, your strengths carry your own personal definition and that characteristic adds to your uniqueness.

"Know Your Strengths" Exercise:

If you believe you can't identify your top strengths, then here is simple exercise for you to try with a little help from your friends.

1. Contact 5-7 people who know you well (via phone or email, so as not to put them on the spot in the moment)
2. Let them know you are doing a personal exercise
3. Ask if they would be willing to help you out .... and when they say yes...
4. Request that they consider sharing with you what they believe your top 5-7 strengths are
5. Let them know they can get back to you later with their list

So...now be surprised at how quickly they can provide this information to you!

When you have the lists, compare and see what comes up as common words or themes from these responses. Can you separate out those that only show up in work or in your personal life? I am guessing not!

Oh, and let's not get hung up on the weaknesses ("overdone" strengths) - that is another topic in and of itself. 🤪

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3. CHOOSE ... to Combine Your Strengths & Be Prepared for Amazing Results

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Choose to know your top 5 strengths ... use the words to describe your best talents to others... rediscover a strength you haven't used in awhile ... exercise the Strengths' muscles ... identify the strength you used most often today ... Choose to use (from your top 5) the strength you haven't used in the last week and use it tomorrow ... Describe the results using the language of the strengths you have combined ... Choose to believe in the power of your strengths and turn every challenge into its own opportunity...

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4. CHOICES to CHECK OUT

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[www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org) - Take the VIA to discover in their language your personal top 5 - validated in over 80 countries worldwide

[www.personal strengths.com](http://www.personal strengths.com) - inexpensive profiles to discover your personal strengths, overdone strengths and help those in your organizations provide feedback and expectations

"Now, Discover Your Strengths" by Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton - a book with an online offer to help you identify your top 5 workplace strengths

"The Versatile Leader" by Bob Kaplan with Rob Kaiser to "make the most of your strengths without overdoing it..."

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## 5. JEAN'S LATEST CHOICES

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A saunter through Ireland (the biannual trip abroad) with dear friends ... volunteering on my alma mater's Alumni Board - wonderful reconnections ... stepping back into teaching again ... moving forward with the doctoral studies ...renewing my energy in the season of fall - a time for reflection and combining the old with the new. (and you might ask - what strengths here - 'relator', 'learner', 'leader')

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### My Constructive Choices AUDIENCE:

- \* Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- \* New Managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- \* Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, lift their voices and
- \* Coaches who choose to step out, show up and say "Yes, it IS all about YOU."

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*Blessings,*

*Jean*

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*"Positive Strategies Moving to Practical Actions"*

Affiraction: "I acknowledge the surprises in each day and smile ... yes, it can be a challenge, and it lifts my heart." (copyright 2006, Jean Strosinski)