



## Live Your Strengths

Welcome to the February edition of \*Live Your Strengths\*, the monthly e-newsletter from In Search of Excellence.

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### Happy Coaching Week!

2008 marks the tenth year for International Coaching Week, February 3-9.

The purpose of International Coaching Week is to provide a week each year in which the public have the opportunity to learn more about personal, business and executive coaching. It also provides an opportunity for coaches and their clients to acknowledge their results and progress made through coaching.

What is coaching? How could it be of assistance to *you*? Trained coaches assist men and women in a wide variety of areas, such as goal-setting, action planning and successful follow-through; business growth and management; career transition; and leadership skills.

If you are curious how a coach can support you in your life or business, please visit my [website](#) or get in touch at 519-923-9968 or [denise@insearchofexcellence.ca](mailto:denise@insearchofexcellence.ca).

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### Your Big Goals for 2008

Can you believe it's February already? How are you doing on your New Year's Resolutions? For many people, the novelty of those resolutions has now worn off and they may have fallen back into the behaviour patterns they wanted to change.

To help give an extra boost to your goals for 2008, here are some quick tips to help you bridge the gap from where you are to where you want to be:

**Write down your goals.** I know, I know... you're groaning at this point. But be honest - despite the number of times you have heard this advice, have *you* ever actually written down your goals? There are a number of reasons why this step is so important. First, this action forces you to clarify what specifically you are trying to achieve, so it's not just a fuzzy idea in your mind. Second, it signals to your brain that this goal is something that is important to you and not a fleeting thought or a wish. The importance of the goal is further reinforced in your mind when you write and review your goals on a regular basis.

Still not convinced? In February 2003, USA Today ran an article looking at New Year's Resolutions. The year before, the authors had interviewed people about their resolutions for 2002. They then divided the people into the categories of those who had written their goals and those who had just thought about them. When they did their story one year later, only 4% of those who had just thought about their goals had made any changes or progress. However, 46% of those who had written their resolutions had followed through on them.

**Be willing to try new ideas and behaviours.** In my experience, the people who have been most successful at achieving their goals are the people who treat life as a big, fun experiment. They are eager to try new things and learn new information. Some of these new ideas work for them and others don't. It's all part of the process. However, if you just keep doing the same things you've always done, you will keep getting the same results you've always gotten.

Don't feel like you have time to dedicate to learning new things? Try using your car as your university. Books on CDs (or MP3) are now available on every topic you can imagine and you can use your drive time productively by listening to them. Even if you spend ½ hour in your car each work day, over the course of the year that adds up to over 120 hours of 'learning time' – you've

just earned yourself the equivalent of 3 full weeks in a classroom and all you will have missed are advertisements on the radio.

Looking for other sources of inspiration? Put yourself in situations where you can meet people you would never normally encounter in the course of your regular activities. Take an interesting class in a subject outside of the field of your work and look for ways you can incorporate some of that new learning into your work or personal growth goals. Invest a minimum of 3% of your income back to yourself in the form of personal and professional development: books, trade publications, coaching, courses, and seminars. While this may seem like a big investment for some, it often only takes one or two good ideas to completely change and improve how you are currently doing things.

**Use your strengths.** Research from many fields has shown us that we are more successful when we spend time in our 'strengths-zone'. Perhaps the most convincing research in this area comes from 3 decades of studies carried out by the Gallup Organization. They have found that the top performers in every field are those people who have consciously and consistently looked for ways to focus on their strengths.

What are the strengths, talents and passions you can draw on to help you reach your goals more quickly? If you consciously look for ways to incorporate your key strengths into your goal-setting activities, you will not only be more successful at meeting those goals but the process will be much more enjoyable.

Could you use some guidance with these ideas? Call Denise for a free 30-minute coaching session. *Start living your strengths!*

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#### **Live Your Strengths Monthly Challenge: Adopt a Village**

Although the monthly challenge usually involves tips and tools to help *you* become more successful, this month I am challenging you to help improve the quality of *other people's* lives by getting involved in Free The Children's *Adopt a Village* campaign.

Free The Children is the world's largest network of children helping children through education. More than one million youth are involved in its innovative education and development programs in 45 countries. *Adopt a Village* is a unique holistic development program that supports every aspect of community development so children and their families are truly empowered to break out of poverty.

**Seven Shores Trading Company** (a fantastic small business located in Kitchener, ON) has set a very ambitious goal of raising \$20,000 for this program. To help meet this goal, they are selling "Be The Change" T-shirts and donating 100% of the proceeds to the cause. For more information, please visit their store or their website: [www.sevenshorestrading.com](http://www.sevenshorestrading.com).

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Do you know someone who would be interested in receiving the "Live Your Strengths" newsletter? Please feel free to pass it on to those in your network.

Cheers,  
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