



# Live Your Strengths

Welcome to the June 2009 edition of *Live Your Strengths*, the monthly e-newsletter from In Search of Excellence.

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## ***Thriving in a Financial Downturn***

I recently read an article in *BusinessWeek* about the staffing agency Robert Half International (RHI), and was interested to learn that this company has always gained market share in each recession.

Since RHI is a major provider of temporary workers, one would think that a recession would be a difficult time to profit since many employers are laying off employees, not hiring them. However, RHI seems to be able to pick up on trends that others may not have noticed.

For example, in this recession, there is a growing pool of highly skilled and experienced employees now looking for work (including temporary work) after being downsized from their companies.

This new pool of workers can expand RHI's human resource offerings, creating opportunities to provide premium temporary employees to non-traditional clients such as technology, law, and marketing... and by doing so, increasing RHI's bottom line.

Only time will tell whether this new strategy will prove to be a profitable one for RHI. However, it does beg the question, "***what are you doing to ensure your organization will come out ahead when this recession ends?***"

Have you noticed that some of the greatest discoveries are the result of asking a question and being open to learning something new? The common factor is that the process starts with having a *beginner's mind*.

The best inventions and ideas have come, not from people who found the right answer, but from people who asked the right questions. For example, how would the world be different if Mary Kay Ash had simply asked the question "How do I start a cosmetics company?" rather than "How can I build a business that will change the lives of women?" Likewise, what if Henry Ford had asked "How can I build great cars?" rather than "How can my company democratize the automobile?"

Many of us approach our work as if we have all the answers, especially if we have been doing the same job for a while – we are the 'experts' in our fields and know the 'right' way to do things. But what would happen if we approached each aspect of our lives and businesses with the curiosity of a child?

Instead of trying to rush to the solution, what if we just spent some time playing with the

questions we asked? For example, have you stepped back lately to take a 'big picture' look at the work you do? Could you answer the question "what is the *real* benefit I provide to my clients?" Or, "could I improve this benefit for my clients if I radically changed the way I provide my products/services?"

Your question could even be a simple one looking at your client interactions – the next time you are assisting a customer, rather than asking yourself "How could I provide good customer service for this person today?" you could ask yourself "How could I delight this person today?" Do you think your interaction would be different as a result of this changed question?

As a species, we are blessed with an unlimited capacity to learn new things. By approaching each situation with a beginner's mind, we not only learn new information to help us develop better businesses and relationships; we also regain a fascination and passion about life in general.

Has all the negative talk about the state of the economy caused you to stop asking these important questions? If you are ready to develop a beginner's mind and focus on **thriving** through this recession, join me in taking this month's *Live Your Strengths* challenge.

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### ***Women Entrepreneur Productivity Series – Registration deadline June 19!***

The Summer is a time of renewal and refocus for many entrepreneurs.

Imagine spending 3 Fridays this summer at a local winery from 11am-3pm, enjoying lunch, sharing experiences with other women entrepreneurs and learning how to stay focused on business and achieving results.

Meeting Focus #1: Goal Setting – June 26

- Master effective goal setting
- Document important goals and the relevant measures of success
- Define expected results when goals are kept alive and relevant

Meeting Focus #2: Personal Productivity – July 17

- Distinguish between essential and time-critical tasks
- Tips for avoiding procrastination
- Deal with interruptions productively

Meeting Focus #3: Managing Stress – August 14

- Manage your own stress and help others respond to their stress productively

Secure your spot by Friday June 19th by contacting Denise Cornfield-Furlong at 519-923-9968 or [denise@insearchofexcellence.ca](mailto:denise@insearchofexcellence.ca)

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### ***Live Your Strengths Monthly Challenge: Adopting a Beginner's Mind***

As you start to approach life with a beginner's mind, notice the questions that you ask yourself and others as you move through your day. Then try asking some different questions and watch

for the change in response from others. Here are some questions you may want to begin with:

Questions to ask yourself:

- How else could I view this situation?
- What possibilities exist for me to improve my business as a result of changes in the economy?
- Where are the seeds of opportunity in this experience?
- What is fascinating about this person I'm speaking to?
- Why do we do it this way? (hint: 'because it's always been done this way' is not the answer you're looking for!)

Questions to ask your customers/clients:

- What did you like best about your experience today?
- Imagine that we could deliver/make the perfect service/product – what would it look like?
- How could we build on the strengths of our existing service/product to produce this ideal?

Questions to ask the special people in your life:

- Tell me about the best part of your day.
- What is the best way I can support you right now?
- You certainly think differently than I do about this issue. I want to really understand your point of view – can you tell me more about why you believe....?

Could you use some guidance to achieve your goals? Call Denise for a free 30-minute coaching session to make 2009 your best year yet!

Cheers,

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"Creating the Path to Your Potential"

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