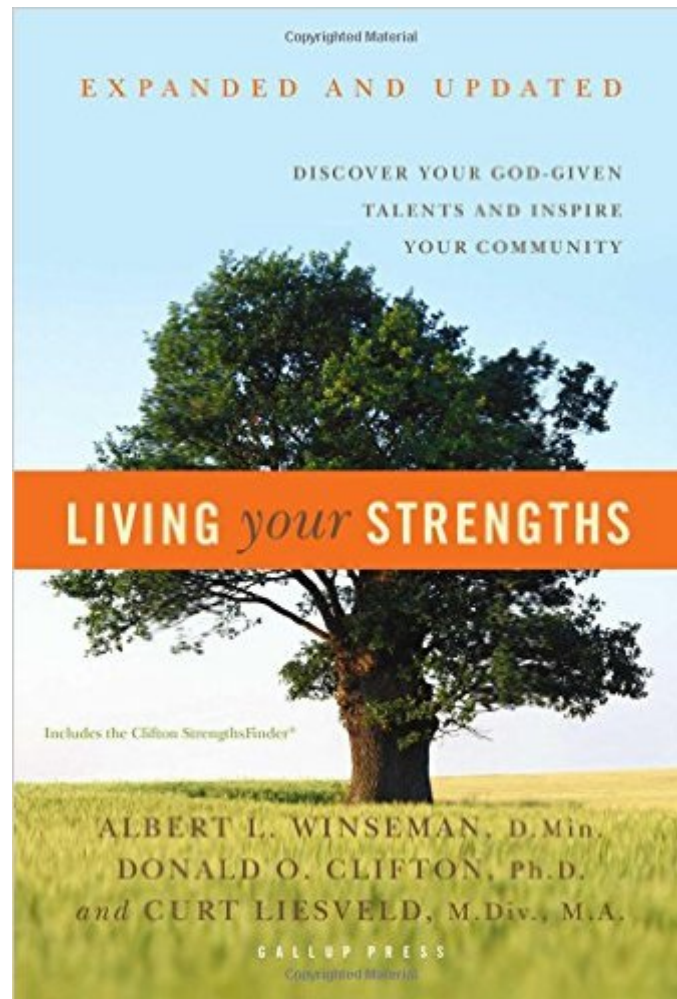


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# Living Your Strengths: Discover Your God-Given Talents And Inspire Your Community



## Synopsis

Personal stories and actionable advice for the spiritually committed, all rooted in a decades of research. Even in a country as religious as the U.S., many people feel disengaged from their faith communities. More than half report that they really don't get the opportunity in their congregation to do what they do best. People just feel disconnected. Maybe it's because those faith communities make unwitting missteps: Pastors ask shy people to be Greeters, or recruit innately disorganized people to coordinate church events. The problem is simply this: Too many people's talents are going unappreciated. But it doesn't have to be this way. *Living Your Strengths* shows readers how to use their innate gifts to enrich their faith communities. The book --- written by onetime pastors Albert Winseman and Curt Liesveld, and Donald O. Clifton, co-author of the national bestseller *Now, Discover Your Strengths* --- shows people how to identify and affirm their talents, and how to use them for growth and service. Most importantly, *Living Your Strengths* helps people discover their true calling. The book includes an ID code that gives readers access to [StrengthsFinder.com](http://StrengthsFinder.com), a personality assessment that reveals user's top 5 talent themes. Spiritual enrichment begins with turning talents into strengths. *Living Your Strengths* is an indispensable guide to help readers to just that.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

We have just begun to use this text and accompanying workbook and video at our church for a seven-week study to determine our God given talents and calling. Apparently this material is also used in business for the same purpose. The initial process is to go online and take a strength finder

assessment (approx. 30-40) minutes. This assessment then provides the user with a ranking of their top five strengths. Note: Each book has a unique code that can be used only once to take the assessment. The results from that assessment is then the basis for the remainder of the study, e.g., six weeks in the workbook. I have not read through the entire book. Most of the content is concerned with describing the thirty-four "themes" (e.g., strengths). I would not recommend purchasing the book without the accompanying "Journey" workbook - and I would think that doing this on your own (with the book and workbook) would be valuable but not as valuable as doing it in a small group.

I was very excited to receive this book, as I had recently been to a workshop at a conference singing the praises of the Gallup-developed strength finder system. I was able to use the code in the book jacket with no problem and it was great to get the results, but I was a little disappointed with the rest of the book from that point. The bulk of the book is just descriptions of the strengths, so of the 30-some-odd most folks will only need to read their five. The rest of the book was pretty much five-point checklists with some ways to be in ministry, which, while nice for the layperson, wasn't the meaty stuff I was hoping for since I am in a church vocation. I am interested in perhaps getting the original (Now, Discover Your Strengths) hoping that it will go into greater detail about how to use the strengths, not just identify them. I'll probably flip through it at a bookstore first, just to be sure. I found the online survey very enlightening and want many folks I know and work closely with to take it! That part was very satisfying.

I had no idea that 4 of my 5 strengths were in the area of strategic thinking! I've done the Meyers-Briggs and Enneagram as well as several other "talent" focus surveys. The Gallop Strengthsfinder is by far the best survey of its type that I have done to date. Out of 34 possible talents, my survey identified 5. You might think it valuable to know your top 10 talents, but I don't think so. I believe knowing the 5 top talents that you possess shines a focus on those strengths. I actually have begun to see myself in a different light. I am adjusting my professional life accordingly. The ideal is to find other people with different strengths. These combinations of different top 5 strengths makes for a much stronger staff. One caveat. I have the Kindle version of the book and had to go through many hoops to get an access number. As far as I know, there is no access number in the Kindle version. I was fortunate to be at a conference with a lady who ran Strengthfinders workshops and she arranged to have me take the test. It was a hassle, but does not dampen my enthusiasm for the book and concept.

The thing I like about this book is its practical and positive orientation about giving voice to one's own set of talents and how this contributes towards community building. The whole orientation of its philosophy is so commonsensical one gets struck that one never thought about talents and skills that way. Nonetheless, this positive orientation seems to take a one-sided approach that diminishes the totally real reality of weakness and failures (or probably that's just me being rather cynical!). Also, the online-assessment is a very good one, although the fact that one has to buy a book to get a one-time, one person access code seems to be motivated more by marketing ideals, rather than pure good intention of helping out people discover themselves. All in all, it's a must read for serious community builders and church leaders.

Are you on the right track? Do you wonder about why you love doing certain things and dislike others? Do you wonder why you react in certain ways? Are you looking for a better way to make right decisions, enjoy peace of mind, and live in harmony with others. This may be the book for you. "Living Your Strengths" is an extension of "strengths" research begun more than forty years ago by Dr. Donald Clifton of the Gallup Organization. Clifton researched the natural patterns of thought, feeling, and action of two million people in more than 25 countries. The result is the Clifton "StrengthsFinder," a tool that reveals a person's top five themes of talent - one's "Signature Themes." A "Strength" is the ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity. This ability is a powerful, productive combination of talent, skill, and knowledge. Talents are naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied. Unlike skills and knowledge, talents exist within you and cannot be acquired. We must first need to identify, affirm, and apply our unique mix of talents then apply them. Clifton's research highlights folly of the widely used "weakness prevention" model - to be successful, we must "fix" our weaknesses. This thinking is wrong. Building a life around one's greatest natural abilities rather than trying to repair weaknesses is the path to success. The book is organized around the use of the StrengthsFinder (provided with the purchase of the book) to identify, assess and affirm our Signature Themes (talents), and how to apply them for growth and life success. There are thirty four identified talents ranging from achiever, maximizer, ideation, individualization, and significance to woo. The Signature Themes are unique to the individual. According to Gallup, the chance of finding someone with your Signature Themes, in the same order, is 1 in 33 million and the chance of finding someone with your top ten themes of talent is 1 in 3 trillion. Finding one's themes and understanding their uniqueness should help one to gain a better appreciation of how special they are and how special the people

around them are - deeper self-respect, deeper mutual respect. Most of us generally are not harnessing the power of our innate gifts. We are not fulfilling our purpose...we do not even know it! "Living Your Strengths" provides a tool so we can assess our talents and harness them in the betterment of ourselves, our families, and the various communities we participate in.

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