

The **FLiP** guide to
Your Talent™

Turning Weaknesses into Strengths

Discover, enjoy and share your natural talent



Gabor Holch

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The Flip Your Talent Guide to Turning Weaknesses into Strengths

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Before you start...

People who harness their natural talent are easy to spot. They burst with positive energy and find fun in difficult undertakings. They volunteer to solve hard problems for others and dismiss praise or reward — after all it was their pleasure to fix your computer, do your taxes, organise your birthday party or create a resumé for your job application.

How lucky are the talented ones, we sigh.

But talent is not a rare gift of nature handed out to some and denied to others. It is present in every human being.

I first suspected this as a student, then found scientific proof in political, economic and psychological models that explain and predict people's behaviour. Flip Your Talent is inspired by twenty years of work with talented people as a diplomat, consultant and lecturer, some of whom were aware of their gifts and some of whom were not.

“Every so-called weakness is the flip-side of an unused talent.”

This sentence is the foundation of this booklet as well as the blog, workshops and coaching I do under the Flip Your Talent brand. It is a life philosophy with profound practical implications.

Human talent is overwhelmingly diverse and complex, like many other life functions. All people are born with talent, like we are born with the ability to feel our body, become aware of our thought and learn new facts.

But in a civilised society, we often ignore those instincts, sometimes for our own good (we ignore an itch, dismiss a disturbing thought or stop before we smash something in anger), at others we act against our best interest (like when we ignore hunger on a busy day, or stay in a hated job).

Talent is the natural instinct to seek out activities and people that inspire us. It is the ability to spot tasks we enjoy, problems we can solve and causes we cherish. Following one's talent is one of the greatest things that can happen to a person, and their community.

This booklet is designed to give you a gentle first nudge if you consider your personal talent for the first time, new ideas if you have already followed that journey for a while.

Why bother with this?

Everybody hopes for a better tomorrow. If you currently struggle with an unpleasant situation, like conflict with a colleague or a squeeze in your budget, you may feel there is not much you can do about it. But I assure you that applying your natural talent just a little bit better can mean that proverbial first step of a thousand-mile journey.

Or perhaps you feel that things are fine as they are right now. Believe me, soon you will want to raise the bar a bit higher, and then this book will give you a couple of first ideas.

In either case, all of us have hidden potential that we haven't realised yet. Talents, like instincts, are born with us and often guide our behaviour without our knowledge. Becoming aware of them, and harnessing them to build a better life, is an enlightening, fun and cost-free way of improving life for ourselves and others.

People are different

The technology we use every day makes things easier by standardising. But while we benefit from the same roads, credit cards, entertainment, groceries and workplace rules as millions of other people, we are all different.

As [TED.com](https://www.ted.com) celebrity speaker Sir Ken Robinson pointed out, even identical twins have different preferences, habits and dreams. A negative side-effect of modern society is forgetting that people can do things their own way and still succeed — that there are hundreds of ways to the same destination.

Unused talents

Sadly, many smart and committed people question themselves because their world view doesn't seem to fit the default. They beat themselves up for not being tough enough, or having too few friends, or settling for second best. This booklet addresses such worries and helps with turning them into self-discovery.

Weaknesses and strengths

In today's business jargon, speaking of strengths and weaknesses has become such a cliché that we hardly question what they mean. Managers tell their team members to 'work on their weaknesses', and team members agree. They have little idea what to do next, but they understand that something is wrong with them.

But discussing weaknesses needn't involve judgement. Like age, taste or financial status, the topic of personal strengths and weaknesses is possible to discuss constructively. However, in order to do so we need to understand what they are and what differentiates one from the other.

What are personal weaknesses?

Personal weaknesses are patterns in our personality or natural behaviour that limit our success and happiness, or that we simply dislike.

Everyone has them. The best way to recall them is to remember the last time you were angry at yourself. What did one half of your personality do to upset the other half? A manager I have coached hates it when he interrupts people. He hates it, but he still does it. My mother gets upset at herself when she says yes too easily to people who want to borrow something. For me, throwing a tantrum is something I don't like about myself.

Knowing your personal weaknesses is essential, because knowing is the first step to overcoming. Without awareness, there is no change. Think for a minute: do you know someone who has no sense of humour? Or someone who cannot take criticism?

Now, do those people know that they have no sense of humour or no patience with criticism? If they do, their reactions are much more agreeable. A friend of mine with no detectable sense of humour simply says, "Come on, you know I can't detect sarcasm."

But if the person you have in mind has no idea about their shortcoming, the personal weakness can become unbearable to others. A good example was my uncle László in Hungary, who insisted on being funny without any sense of the borderline between banter and offensive comments.

I also know that in modern language, especially in a work environment, people prefer to replace 'weakness' with euphemisms such as 'growth area'. I don't think that is a wise practice, because facing weaknesses boldly is an essential step towards dealing with them.

When a Human Resources Manager says “At XYZ company, we don’t like saying ‘weaknesses’,” I know that the improvement process will be longer and harder than at teams where people openly discuss their differences.

In other words, exploring your personal weaknesses involves no judgement. Approach the following exercise with curiosity, and you will have as much fun as the hundreds of people I have guided through it over the years.

The Flip Your Talent Weaknesses Inventory

Take a look at the words below and circle no more than three of them, choosing the ones that best describe what you consider your personal weaknesses. Keep your judgement to the minimum and don’t worry about what you ‘should’ pick or what other people would think. Choose the ones that ‘ring the bell’.

Try not to think too much. In such exercises, the longer you chew on your pencil the more confused you will feel. Listen to your gut and pick three words as fast as you can.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

Question: What if I can’t pick?

It does happen that someone stares at the inventory with blank eyes and can’t choose. My advice would be to put the book aside for a day — perhaps your mind is preoccupied with something else. If you still feel stuck, consider the following questions:

- Is there one kind of situation in life where you often experience failure?
- What are situations that make you lose control (e.g. cry or throw a tantrum)?
- Do people often criticise you, or seem upset about something you do?

Question: What if I cannot limit myself to three?

Some people struggle with the opposite dilemma and wish they could choose half of the words. If you are one of them, start with a larger selection and then narrow down to half, eliminate a few more and so forth, until you end up with a set of three.

Question: Why did I have to do this?

This was just the first step. Please don't draw any conclusions from this inventory yet. (It's hard to do that, more so in the case of the weakness inventory than the next one.) Simply move on to the next exercise.

What are personal strengths?

Personal strengths are also patterns in our personality or natural behaviour, but in this case they enable us to easily notice, understand and do things that other people find hard. And of course, we love our strengths.

Everyone has strengths, just like everyone has weaknesses. Awareness about them is as important as knowing your weaknesses. But (and there is a twist) most people have no clear idea what their natural strengths are. Just like my uncle László, who would list 'sense of humour' as one of his personal strengths, you may have the wrong idea about your natural talent.

What happens when we are wrong about our strengths? The answer lies in our personal history. You can be good at many things because you learned them as a skill from your family, teachers, friends and colleagues. In that case, you confuse your strengths with your knowledge or skills. It may also be the case that, although you are not exceptionally talented at something, people around you are much worse. Finally, you may simply wish to be good at something — like my uncle László.

In a sense, awareness about our natural strengths is it is even more important than knowing our weaknesses. We draw more energy, passion and motivation from positive than negative thoughts. That's why so-called 'strengths-based' management systems (among others the one designed by Gallup) gain millions of fans among business owners and managers all over the globe.

Discussing our strengths is much easier than discussing our weaknesses. But as I have found out from my workshops, it is not without any hurdles. If the main challenge of facing our weaknesses is fear of judgement, the reason why we are uncomfortable with strengths-based comments is the competitive nature of human beings. You don't need to think hard to remember the last time you felt that praising or congratulating someone

would take away from your own status. Sadly, this win-lose thinking is hardwired in our brains.

During the next exercise you needn't worry about competition. You are on your own with this booklet, and you have already done the hard part — selecting your weaknesses. The next exercise should be easier and more fun.

The Flip Your Talent Strengths Inventory

Take a look at the words below and circle no more than three of the following words, choosing the ones that best describe what you consider your personal strengths. Keep your judgement to the minimum and don't worry about what you 'should' pick or what other people would think. Choose the ones that 'ring the bell'.

Try not to think too much. In such exercises, the longer you chew on your pencil the more confused you will feel. Listen to your gut and pick three words as fast as you can.

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Question: What if I can't pick?

It does happen that someone stares at the inventory with blank eyes and can't choose. My advice would be to put the book aside for a day — perhaps your mind is preoccupied with something else. If you still feel stuck, consider the following questions:

- Have you ever won any kind of competition with little or no effort?
- Do people often comment on something you do well?
- If I asked your friends why they like you, what would they say?

Flipping your talents

The selection of words might not mean too much at this point, but think of the inventory as raw material for the rest of the process. Let's jump right into understanding what your selection of words means.

Let's interpret your choices

Okay, now you have circled three words in each inventory, and hopefully you haven't driven yourself completely mad. The outcome should look similar to this:

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

There are a couple of benefits to even do this much. Reflecting on your top strengths and weaknesses is a mental process that most people don't experience often enough. Apart from that, there are probably no big surprises so far. But as we are rolling out the

inventory step by step, the levels of personal strengths and weaknesses will reveal themselves one after another.

Traits and types

The origin of the Flip Your Talent inventories is the theory of personality types, and resulting theories of human behaviour. Due to differences in our biology, human beings are born with certain hardwired preferences, and they form more such preferences as they develop into fully functioning adults. Your attitude towards lemons, kittens, horror films, washing dishes and Microsoft Excel are some of the great examples that we encounter in daily life.

Behind the strengths and weaknesses inventories is a matrix of four basic factors of human personality, which come from assessment systems mentioned on page 34. For now, it is enough to note that a trained psychologist or psychometric assessment specialist can see signs of the dominance of such personality factors. I don't want to bore you with the details here, but there are two things I would like to explain at this point, because they are the foundation of building awareness about your natural talent.

Traits are patterns of human personality that guide our behaviour. Most of the adjectives in the inventory are linked to a psychological trait, although experts prefer to use nouns (for instance 'decisiveness' instead of 'decisive'). The circled inventory example is my own. You can see that I consider 'restless', 'selfish' and 'impatient' my weaknesses, but I regard myself 'energetic', 'independent' and 'stimulating' on the strengths side. Each of these can be called traits.

Types are closer to everyday language than traits, like when you describe an acquaintance to your friend and she says 'I know the type'. In the language of the psychological systems where the inventories originate, types are groups of traits bunched together. For instance, 'selfish and impatient' is one type but 'selfish and patient' is another. This is a bit simplistic, because most types consist of traits grouped according to the four factors of human personality. But further details would take us too far at this point.

Even if you are not an expert, I encourage you to notice two things about traits and types. First, your choices are different from those of your relatives, friends and colleagues. If you have any doubt, ask them to complete the two inventories.

Welcome back! I told you so! People make different choices even if they are otherwise quite similar to you, like your sibling or best friend.

Secondly, if you take a glimpse at someone else's inventory choices, you will have a basic insight into their type. The combination of chosen words communicate traits and types very strongly, because they are based on theories that reveal how someone's personality type manifests itself in their communication and behaviour.

Take a look at these two weakness inventories. I'm sure you have a first impression about the kind of people they are, perhaps a friend or family member even jumps to mind as you look at them:

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

The participants of my Flip Your Talent workshops have been using these inventories for years, and one of the most frequent comments on seeing someone else's results is: "Aha, you are the kind of person who..." We are born with the necessary instincts to size up fellow human beings in seconds, but civilisation also teaches us to hide our true nature. The inventories are one of the fun ways to dig deeper and bring it to the surface again.

The flip-side of personal weaknesses

As I mentioned before, being aware of your personal weaknesses is the first step in overcoming them. What are the further steps?

First, I need to explain the connection between the two inventories, which is the core of the Flip Your Talent method. When I designed the tables, first I collected typical strengths and weaknesses from workshop participants and people who follow my blog. In a few years the lists became a bit repetitive, which is great news for a researcher. Each inventory is a fusion of words I collected and terms in major psychometric assessment systems: basically, they are my participants' choices in psychological vocabulary.

But that isn't all. You might have noticed that placed side by side, words in the two inventories correspond with each other. That is because human talent is a double-edged sword: our talent is a natural gift, but sometimes we apply it at the wrong time or place. We love our funny friends, but cracking a joke at a funeral is taking it a bit too far. Serious people are reassuring, but at a barbecue you slap your accountant on the back and tell him to loosen up.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering | serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy | responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial | organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent | analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable | kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical | well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Thus, each weakness is the flip-side of a strength, and each strength can flip into a weakness in certain situations. And then flip again, and around, and around. The two inventories are essentially the two sides of the same inventory, or 30 coins of human talent that have two sides each.

Example: Jill

When you pick words from the weakness inventory, you basically highlight situations where you tend to over-apply your core talent. To illustrate this, let's look at the choices of Jill, who was one of the examples for types above. A first look at her weakness inventory gives you a good guess what kind of person she is. What is not apparent at first sight is that each choice highlights underlying talents.

Jill took a long time to complete the weakness inventory. That is in line with what she found out from her fellow workshop participants: she is essentially a perfectionist. Once she was done, she was horrified at her own choices, which is understandable if you are

someone who wants everything to be perfect, including yourself. But a brief discussion with workshop peers pointed to strengths that Jill cherishes in her own personality, and considers them the secret of her professional success as a senior accountant.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

Choice of weaknesses

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious ✓ | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | ✓ accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised ✓ | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Underlying strengths

“Aha, so you are the kind of person who arranges all her clothes in the wardrobe by colour,” one participant commented during pair work. “Nonsense,” Jill replied, “I sort them by season.”

Example: Jeff

Unlike Jeff, who didn’t seem to arrange anything by colour, season or any other guiding principle. He was done with both inventories in ten seconds and looked around quizzically, wondering why everyone else took so long. He wasn’t the least bit worried about the results, and responded to honest feedback with a hearty laugh.

As it turned out, Jeff was a serial entrepreneur with irons in a dozen different fires. He had brilliant ideas (and loved asking ‘Why don’t champagne glasses have handles’ kind of questions), but delegated them as soon as ideas were supposed to become solutions, moving on to further ideation about a new business venture.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

Choice of weaknesses

| | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive ✓ | thorough |
| organised | decisive ✓ | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious ✓ | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Underlying strengths

Note that the word ‘sensitive’ is present in both inventories. I decided to leave it that way after my research, because I’ve noticed that people use it in two different senses. When they list it as a weakness, they refer to oversensitive, overemotional behaviour. When they list it as a strength, it refers to a high level of empathy. I also think it’s a fun repetition that often serves as a conversation-starter at workshops.

The revelation that each weakness points at an underlying strength is a profound and liberating one. Since we start primary school, the dominant feedback about our personal weaknesses is that we need to change. Shy children are nudged to play with others and restless ones are told to sit still. Future Einsteins are scolded for being know-it-alls and future Magic Johnsons are assured that they would get nowhere in life without math.

In sharp contrast, the strengths-based method claims that you are fine the way you are, except in some situations you need to refrain from extremes. Being smart is fine, but only if you notice when your intellects starts intimidating people and create resistance. Being restless is okay as long as you don’t fail at school and don’t ruin other people’s games.

In companies, where most of my Flip Your Talent workshops take place, we develop this concept into management, leadership and communication methods, and resolve conflicts that have undermined mood and productivity for years.

The flip-side of personal strengths

You might have guessed that we can do the same with the personal strengths inventory. But why would we want to do that? Shouldn't we be happy with our strengths and leave it at that?

Well, not exactly. As we saw above, our natural talent is a source of risk as well as a gift. If you have ever climbed a mountain together with a group, for instance, you know that there are always a couple of people who run ahead. The same happens in many situations in life, and it can be damaging for the team (family, community) as well as the talented person herself. My friends trained in mountain rescue tell me that fast climbers get cut off from the group and lose their way more often than average ones.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless ✓ | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish ✓ | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring ✓ | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

Possible excesses

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Choice of strengths

My inventories above highlight possible excesses, and if I am smart enough I will use them as a reminder. I am an energetic person, but that also means I can get restless. Sitting through a long business dinner is torture to me, and my clients may interpret my fidgeting

as dislike. The fact that I am independent often comes through as selfish stubbornness, and my talent as a natural motivator makes me prone to push others over the limit. When people around me show signs of fatigue, it's time to give my beloved high energy a rest.

Gaps between the weakness and strength inventories

Finally, it's worth noting that the words picked in each inventory often overlap, but almost never show exact correspondence. For instance, how would you interpret the following inventory, with only one overlap of strengths and weaknesses?

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Once again, the secret is not to see our choices as right or wrong, but as markers in the process of understanding something deeper. Let's call the owner of this inventory Kate. When she completed the weaknesses inventory, Kate chose 'naive', 'indecisive' and 'dependent'. Like before, we have a general impression about her type. But if we do the flip back and forth between the two inventories, the result will be a set of five traits in each one.

I think you see where this is going. At a Flip Your Talent workshop, Kate would make a few interesting discoveries. A first glance would suggest that her team-player nature

(‘cooperative’) can make her over-reliant on others in certain situations, but she has known that already. She is the kind of person who has an arrangement with a colleague to pick up each other’s kids from school, which creates an awkward situation if both of them have urgent business every now and then.

On the other hand, during pair work she would be surprised to hear that while she often tells herself to be tougher in decision-making situations, others experience her open-minded nature as tolerance towards diverse viewpoints. “No, Kate, don’t become tougher — we have enough pushy go-getters in our team already,” she could hear from a colleague at the workshop.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | ✓interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible ✓ | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

| | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly ✓ | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant ✓ | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Following the direction backwards from the strengths to the weaknesses inventory, Kate could discover that while she takes pride in being equally nice to everyone (‘kind’), not everyone is equally nice to her. “I think Bob often takes advantage of your kind heart to wiggle out of overtime,” a fellow participant could tell her. Kate could take a mental note and start keeping an eye open for Bob’s grandmother, who seems to have an eightieth birthday party every other month.

Awareness to improvement

With that, we have crossed the line between analysis and action. Kate's mental note to keep an eye on Bob for the benefit of teamwork and his own future doesn't come from the inventory: it is a decision she makes herself.

This is true about all analytical tools. They provide us with data, but however complex and complete the data are, decisions need to be made by humans. Think of the inventory results (or results from your personality assessment) as data in a GPS system. Once you punch in your destination, the system can show you the way there. But no matter how smart your gadget is, it won't guide you to a healthier restaurant if you chose a burger place the day after you decided to lose weight.

A few principles to bear in mind

There are hundreds of ways to follow up the Flip Your Talent weaknesses and strengths inventories, but I need to limit the volume to a few pages here. First, I will share a few general principles that will help you no matter what you do about your findings. Then, I will share a few concrete suggestions to turn your awareness into useful skills and habits.

Flip weaknesses into strengths, not the other way

Our nature, education and current habits make us focus on problems rather than the good things we have. In psychology, they call this 'the missing tile syndrome', because when entering a bathroom with 9,999 on the wall and one blank spot, most people's attention would shift to that single gap.

The missing tile attitude is hardwired into our brain for reasons of survival, which is why it's so hard to ignore a pimple on someone's face or a tilted picture frame. Schools reinforce such thinking, focusing most didactic energy onto equalising students rather than nurturing their uniqueness. This approach helps us acquire basic skills that everyone needs to have, but then it turns against us. The guiding idea of primary education is to fit in, but the driving force behind olympics, doctoral programmes and finding the love of your life is to stand out. You can only achieve that if you build on the talents you have rather than the ones you lack.

Therefore, do your best to avoid the natural mistake of trying to ‘develop’ the talents you cannot honestly choose in the inventory. My coaching and workshop participants keep falling back into that fallacy as often as I do. It’s literally in our blood. But whenever you start musing about the talents that gape back at you like a missing tile, remember where positive energy comes from: flipping our perceived ‘weaknesses’ into real strengths, not the other way around.

Awareness to skills, skills to habits

In the following pages I will suggest a few of the most successful methods to follow up on a new-found awareness about some of your natural strengths. But I am sure this is not the first time you’ve read a book that made sense and tried to put it into practice. Let me guess: then you got busy with other stuff, and in a few months couldn’t remember what those brilliant action points were.

You aren’t alone with that. Every year, I work with hundreds of managers in my workshops, and I like asking them to name previous training courses they found useful. Stephen R. Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* often comes up. Indeed, both the original book and the resulting workshop are built on solid theory of personal development and many companies enrol their entire management in 7 Habits certification programmes. “Which one is the most important habit out of the seven,” I ask my workshop participants. Only half of them remember their preference. “What are the seven habits?” Most certified participants cannot name all of them.

That’s because most of us read a great book, take a course or watch a video on self-development, congratulate ourselves for the effort and expect things to improve. But unless you turn knowledge into action, your investment will be like an exercise machine you use for drying socks: it won’t make you fitter because you didn’t give it a chance.

However ambitious or modest it is, create an action plan around your awareness. If Jill decided to use her talent in meticulous planning to improve her diet, she can download an app and use it daily, or paste her meal plans onto the fridge. If Jeff realises the value of his speed and crazy ideas in running his business, he can schedule a brainstorming hour once a week with his team. Kate, who wishes to be more decisive but her core talents are tolerance and inclusion, can make it a habit to ask for suggestions before she makes tough decisions.

Whatever it is, it needs to be regular enough to become a habit, otherwise your commitment becomes yet another unfulfilled promise filed together with New Year wishes, well-intended purchases of gym memberships, online language courses and many a sigh to the mirror about self-improvement.

Flip Your Talent for yourself

The most obvious reason to harness your natural talent is to improve your own life. Doing so is one of the keys to happiness and an important secret to success. That's why people who do what they love are so easy to spot, and often become role models. Doing things your own way reduces stress, generates lots of positive energy and gives you a competitive edge.

This may sound a bit selfish, but it isn't. People who find their passion and calling are less of a burden to others, and actively make other people's lives better. Multinational companies have consistently proved with data that people who do a job out of passion work longer hours and make more money, but also take less sick-leave days, need less medical care, share improvement ideas instead of complaining and motivate others better. The Gallup Institute, after they had used the StrengthsFinder assessment in large firms for years, has developed an entire consulting practice around the resulting concept of 'wellbeing', saving companies billions of dollars and their people a lot of head- and heart-ache.



If you have any doubts about this, just try to remember who among your colleagues, friends or family members seems to love their life the most, and ask them for a chat. If you want, you may use the Flip Your Talent inventories as a conversation-starter. Either way, you will be surprised how much such people know about themselves, and the amount of inspiration they draw from acting naturally.

Flip Your Talent for others

Of course, you may be one such person yourself. In that case, good for you, and you probably already knew most of what you found out from the Flip Your Talent inventories. Please remember that most people walk life in completely different shoes. As education guru and TED.com speaker Sir Ken Robinson put it, too many people live their lives waiting for the weekend. Reach out and share the creative power of personal talent. It costs literally nothing and can change someone's life from 'okay, I guess' to a rewarding journey of self-fulfilment.

You may also find out in the process that people around you are in dire need of the very talent that you have taken for granted all your life. Do you have a lot of empathy?

Someone around you is stuck trying to figure out why clients don't use her new website, or trying to connect with a teenage son. Are you amazing at arranging and organising? You will enjoy helping others with messy wardrobes and birthday parties. Are you a party animal with hundreds of friends? Why not help someone find new friends or spread word about someone's new restaurant? This is just the beginning of an infinite list, of course.

Ways to put Flip Your Talent to best use

Discovering personal talent is a great start, but without a more specific topic it won't capture people's attention and passion for long. Fortunately, there are countless ways to adjust your talent-discovery activities so that they help people with their most pressing problems, or help them grow where it makes the largest possible positive impact. The applications below are a few examples, but if you need further ideas you can always browse through www.flipyourtalent.info.

Breaking bad habits

If the ultimate goal of Flip Your Talent is to build better habits, some of your current habits provide the best starting point. Whether it's a stressful daily routine, conflicts at work or a silly mistake you keep making, shedding light on your core talent is a great nudge towards understanding the causes and making improvement.

Becoming more productive

Sometimes our struggle is against own nature: perfectionists spend hours on trivial decisions, great communicators cannot sit still in an office chair. Your choices in the Flip Your Talent inventories highlight your core talents so that you can harness them to arrange your time, keep your focus and cooperate with others better.

Praising and motivating others

Before we become clear on our talents, we tend to think we're right and others are wrong. Awareness about the diversity of human talent enables you to spot the natural value in others even if it's very different from yours, and motivate them to excellence in their own way instead of hoping they would imitate your preferences.

Building and improving teams

Great teams are diverse by nature, but it's hard to reach agreement and dedication among people who see the world differently. In addition, most professional teams are too busy to discuss their differences. Flip Your Talent exercises enable team members to assign tasks and roles according to natural talent, improving both morale and results.

Talent-based leadership

People who become leaders face a tremendous challenge: while tasks and projects can be standardised, people cannot. The method used in Flip Your Talent enables new and experienced leaders to harness the true interests and motivations while they work with their people.

Managing your career

Whether your next step is a great first job or a Board membership, you need to take a step back before you leap, and measure your trajectory carefully. Awareness about your natural talents helps you avoid poorly chosen 'default' options and choose paths where you have a natural advantage.

Starting and running your own business

Finally, if you dream of running your own show, Flip Your Talents helps in confirming whether you are the entrepreneurial type to start with, which business model suits you the best, what kind of lifestyle you should build around your business and where to find partners whose talents complement your own.

The next steps in your Flip Your Talent journey

The strengths and weaknesses inventories are the first important steps in potentially long journeys towards rewarding new awareness, skills and habits. Sometimes I have a single chat with someone, ten minutes of which is spent on the two lists of traits. At others I work together with a person or team for a year, elaborating on the process through workshops and coaching.

I keep in touch with hundreds of people who have followed up on their first discoveries. Hearing from anyone, whether for the first time or the twentieth, always inspires me. Only this morning in 2017 when I am writing this, I got news that a European reader, who first signed up to my blog as a recently fired manager, started in a new career a month ago. I am certain that he will share his tips with someone who is a bit out of luck right now.

I still remember people who helped me out with nothing more than ideas and inspiration in hard times, and I am sure you do too. A simple chat can make a great difference for someone in your environment. The best part is that you don't need to be a psychologist, coach or any other specialist to help. You have got what it takes: talents that differ from your friend's, an external perspective and a bit of time.



You can also take it to the next level and bring the inventories to your colleagues, class, club or community. At the end of the book you will find a printable version of the inventories that you can use right away. Circling and comparing in pairs is a great conversation-starter, and you may lead the discussion afterwards in any direction you wish. I included a few ideas on pages 21-22.

Finally, I list a few ways of bringing this method to your people in various forms that you don't need to facilitate yourself. Since the inception of Flip Your Talent in 2012, I have worked with hundreds of people all over the world to make their work and life more talent-friendly, rewarding, productive and fun.

As I mentioned before, hearing from people who work on talent development for themselves and others is a great source of joy and inspiration for me. If you have tried and succeeded in making life better with Flip Your Talent, please drop me a line and let me know how it went. If you tried but found the challenges overwhelming, drop me a line and I will be happy to help out.

Okay, let's get to work!

6 Great ways to start

Rolling out the Flip Your Talent method can happen on any level, from a solitary hour to activities involving an entire organisation. The secret of success always lies in the transition from awareness to habits: meaningful changes in a single person's life are more valuable than an entire management team going through the motions.

Therefore, I suggest that you start on your own or with a few people, and see if the method works for you. If it does, you can bring it to a few trusted colleagues or friends. If it still does the trick (and it often gets more entertaining at that point), you are ready to involve larger groups.

Flip your talents on your own

The most basic application of Flip Your Talent is to dedicate two hours on a lazy weekend afternoon to circling words on the inventories and drawing a few practical conclusions. I suggest that you prepare the printable versions on pages 35-36, make yourself comfortable, switch off your mobile phone and TV and make sure you respond to the inventory naturally.

Once you have your choice of words in both sets, flip back to page 10 and start interpreting your results. Remember *not* to do that after you have made your choices in the first inventory – it would distort your natural choices in the second one. The examples in this book will help you with basic conclusions that you can turn into skills and habits.



However, our opinions of ourselves are always a bit distorted. If you can, involve a trusted friend or colleague from the very beginning. That can be as much as a second opinion on your conclusions. People whose talent set is different from yours often see things in your choices that you didn't spot at first.

Turning this into a quid-pro-quo, and asking your friend to do he inventory herself, is a fun way of practicing another round.

Bring Flip Your Talent to your community

In my experience, the real fun begins when there are at least five people who do the talent-flipping. The presence of others loosens up our mood. People keep each other up to speed and since they are curious what everyone else chose, participants will trigger discussions spontaneously. Once conclusions emerge, it is also easier to help each other follow up.

Here is a suggested way of a Flip Your Talent activity taking no longer than an hour or two.

Warm up

Slapping the inventories at people who have just entered the room never works. Spend ten minutes on breaking the ice, whether it's a mutual introduction, casual small-talk or a warm-up exercise. If you are in need of ideas, websites for teachers, trainers and community leaders swarm with great icebreakers for all ages, cultures and topics.

Complete the inventories

The next step is to ask people to complete both inventories one after another, without any discussion or review in-between. The instruction of the printable version on pages 35-36 should be clear enough, but feel free to reiterate them if you feel the need.

Kindly ask participants to work on their own silently at this point, without any communication. I have found this harder with young audiences and in some cultures with a strong sense of community. Adjust your facilitation accordingly. In East Asia, one challenge is that people hate sitting in silence, so I play background music or nature sounds. In some parts of Europe, people hate sitting still for long, to which the solution is putting the inventories on clip-boards and allowing people to walk around.

You will notice that the personal speed of people varies wildly. If you want this part to yield good results, you have two important tasks: to keep the speedy ones away from interrupting others, and to make sure perfectionists don't drive themselves mad in search of 'the perfect six'.

Arrange an intimate discussion

Now it's time to see what choices mean. Most people are a bit shy about their choices at this point, which makes a ten-minute discussion between 2-3 people the ideal way to proceed. But if you do Flip Your Talent with a bunch of outgoing people such as youth camp leaders or sales people, feel free to turn this part into a forum. You know your people better than I do, and the options are limitless.

Use pages 10-18 as a guide to facilitating this part. Remember that action-planning will come later – the goal at this stage is to discuss everyone’s choices in a non-judgemental, open-minded manner, with a clear focus on discovering talents rather than judging weaknesses.

From awareness to skills and habits

The transition from simply *knowing* your talent to *using* your talent is the reason you took time to go through this process. Read pages 10-18 before you start, and use its steps as a general template. People almost always need each other’s support to turn awareness into action, and there are many ways to encourage mutual support between your participants.

The simplest one is what SCUBA-divers call the ‘buddy system’ – two people look out for each other and ensure that both stay motivated. Especially in groups of relative introverts, the intimacy of pair-work makes sharing, reminding and encouraging easier than working in a large public forum.

In groups with little or no stage-fright, each participant can present the way to turn their findings into action. Public commitment often strengthens individual determination to follow up, and groups whose members care for each other may come up with creative ways to help each other.



Finally, I also suggest to turn commitment into some kind of visual representation.

This may take the form of a personal action plan, which can be confidential if people wish so. Senior managers in my workshops often prefer this option, as do participants who want to work on something as personal as weight-loss, family issues or health.

On the other hand, teams that feel comfortable to share often come up with amazingly creative ways to commemorate their Flip Your Talent commitment, including murals, ‘mind maps’, ‘rules of engagement’ posted on meeting room walls and online chat groups for mutual support.

Contact me with questions at <http://www.flipyourtalent.info/contact>

Follow the Flip Your Talent blog

Once the nature of your talent becomes clearer to you, there are countless ways to turn that awareness into self-improvement and help to others. I regularly publish ideas and applications we discuss at workshops and online forums. You can visit my blog at www.flipyourtalent.info, or follow it at online networking forums such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and more.

Blog entries fall into the four categories:

Break Vicious Circles,

about frequent challenges in the way of self-improvement and how to overcome them. This topic is based on my ebook [Breaking the Circle – Vicious circles in business.](#)

Work Your Way,

which shows that any work-related task has endless productive approaches depending on individual talent, and can be successfully completed according to individual style.

Communicate,

a topic dedicated to communication situations such as meetings, public speaking, emails, job interviews and others. Tips in this section show how the application of individual talent influences both the style and success of communication.

Talented Organisation,

which contains suggestions to break away from uniformity at the workplace, and create a suitable environment for the diversity of talents across the organisation. If you apply Flip Your Talent in management or leadership, this should be the topic to follow.

Events,

where I announce and summarise Flip Your Talent workshops, speeches and lectures based on topics in all categories. If you plan to bring a Flip Your Talent event to your community, this topic is a great idea-starter.

Sign up now for weekly updates at <http://www.flipyourtalent.info>

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Work Your Way</p> <h4>Happiness without work-life balance</h4> <p>August 1, 2016 Gaber Hoich</p> <p>"Work-life balance" is so popular that some of my clients list it as a core value. Yet, I have never heard a satisfied person mention it without a yawn. Overworked people aspiring to success, on the other hand, love discussing their "balance".</p> <p>In fact, balancing is a tiring act, which only circus performers should do for a living. If you spend your work balancing and can only be yourself at the weekend, you are probably neglecting some of the best talent you have. You may even find that off-balance is the key to your wellbeing.</p>  | <p>Break Vicious Circles</p> <h4>Difficult colleagues: Are you one?</h4> <p>October 3, 2016 Gaber Hoich</p> <p>Colleagues are randomly selected groups. Blood and chemistry held families together and shared interests held friends. Co-workers don't need to like each other to perform, and they often don't. Some of your colleagues might actually become your friends, but must come from opposite ends of personality scales, opinions, lifestyles and habits.</p> <p>The less similar someone is from you, the more likely you label them "a difficult person". Each team has at least one. If you're unsure who it is, it might be you. Understanding how colleagues annoy each other is a key element to success both personally and as a team.</p>  | <p>Work Your Way</p> <h4>Your comfort zone: Get out, get back in</h4> <p>October 9, 2016 Gaber Hoich</p> <p>If you work at an organisation with at least five people, you heard "getting out of the comfort zone" within a week. We live in a world of uncertainty, we hear, and staying in the snug equals falling behind. Beyond comfort lies creativity, innovation and exceeding expectations.</p> <p>But comfort is not the enemy we often make it out to be. The constant chase of creative discomfort can be a dangerous misconception. Highly productive people spend carefully budgeted periods outside of their comfort zones, and get back inside to follow up the resulting ideas. Here is why.</p>  | <p>Talented Organisation</p> <h4>Engage talent, reduce HR waste</h4> <p>December 5, 2016 Gaber Hoich</p> <p>Managing HR is unlike dealing with any other resource in business. Of countless reasons for this, one is that the tech revolution (industry 4.0 if you like) has not reached human resources yet. While in material resources companies work hard to reduce footprint, preserve, recycle and renew, most still attempt to manage HR through uniform processes based on volume.</p> <p>Whenever we manage to cut down resource usage, attitude comes first and technology follows through. This will apply to the highly intangible world of HR to a higher extent than to electricity or water. The so-called talent economy provides specific answers to wasteful practices in hiring, performance and promotion that still dominate today's HR practices.</p>  |
|--|--|---|--|

Arrange a Flip Your Talent workshop

If you have already shared the ideas in this booklet with your team or community and you want to take them to the next level, the best way to proceed is to contact me about a one- or two-day talent discovery workshop.

Flip Your Talent helps people connect with their personal talent, whether hidden or known, currently used or unused.

Flip Your Talent workshops may be arranged all over the world and will be delivered either by myself or one of my associates. Over the years I have worked with more than a hundred companies, non-profit organisations, universities, clubs and a large number of individuals from more than 30 countries.

My philosophy is to match the way an organisation works with people. I usually work with companies for a fee, non-profits free of charge and individuals in a flexible arrangement. Please contact me and we will work out the details.

More information and PDF brochures at the Flip Your Talent event page:

<http://www.flipyourtalent.info/events>



The FLIP Your Talent workshop

One-day: faster, cheaper, more intensive
An intensive single-day introduction into the Flip Your Talent journey for in-house or open groups.

Two-day: deeper with more practice
Two days of Flip Your Talent discovery and exercises, usually for in-house groups. Includes customized feedback sessions.

Take-aways from both workshops

- A discovery list of personal talent
- Personal strengths & weaknesses analysis
- Flip Your Talent workbook
- Practical talent-flipping action plan

The Flip Your Talent workbook:

- 15 pages of discovery and practice
- Designed to inspire discussion
- Easy to customise for your team



The Flip Your Talent journey:

- Re-align success and fun
- Born-with and picked-up talents
- The decision to improve
- Time-wasters and heart-breakers
- Awareness, skills, habits
- Natural capital investment goals
- Analyse why you are "gifted"
- Flipping weaknesses for strengths
- Sharing your gift with others
- Strategy one: Facilitate
- Strategy two: Automate
- Strategy three: Time travel
- Case Studies: Key moments in life



FLIP Your Talent

Flip Your Talent was developed by consultant-entrepreneur Gabor Holch, based on more than ten years of research and consulting related to talent development in large and small organizations.

Its basis: 100s of business cases, scientific personality assessment and applied psychology.

Its aim: talent discovery without fuss and frill. The Flip Your Talent journey is straight, simple and fun. Its impact is instant and lasting.

Flip Your Talent speeches

If you have a limited time and budget to bring Flip Your Talent to a large number of people, a speech is the ideal way to do it. Depending on the topic of your event, you can opt for one of the topics below or [contact me](#) with your specific ideas.

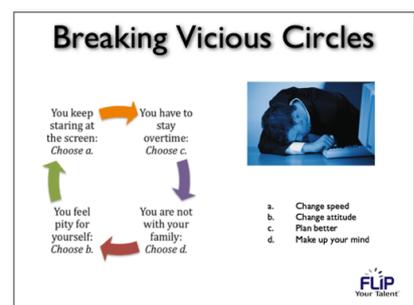
Since I started Flip Your Talent I have spoken to bachelors, bankers and business owners, and something meaningful always came out of the time we spent on discovering personal talent.

Here are a few previous topics as of the beginning of 2017:

Breaking the Circle

A core topic of Flip Your Talent, Breaking the Circle addresses how vicious circles work and how to get out of them. People find themselves in vicious circles that are many and varied: overtime work causes fatigue, low productivity and more overtime; lack of confidence results in clumsy mistakes that undermine confidence even more... the list could go on.

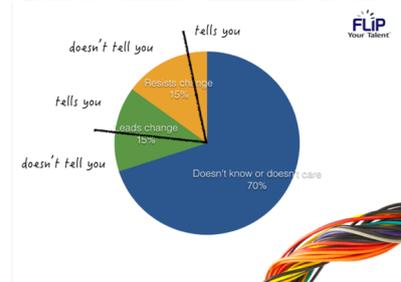
The speech introduces the core concepts and goes on to illustrate their power on a number of pre-prepared examples specific to the speech host's industry or company.



TripWires: Why is it so hard to change?

Flip Your Talent inspires audiences to change, but change itself can be the biggest challenge. The human brain is an amazing manufacturer of excuses when the goal is to break existing patterns, and understanding how it works is essential for overcoming the hurdles.

The speech introduces three necessary stages of successful change and applies them to various situations, including simple personal ones and examples from the speech host's industry or business.



Traffic Lights: Communicate with clarity

Communication is what connects your talent to the rest of the world. And people try to communicate – they really do. But words, mails, speeches and reports that were meant to solve problems often make them worse.

Traffic Lights introduces three essential elements of communication and applies them to a variety of situations. The concept helps connect people, avoid conflicts and get results. Perhaps most importantly, it steers clear of “the right way” and respects personal styles.



 **Red Light: Objective**

Bad habits related to Red Light

- "I am doing what they told me."
- Non-measurable objectives.
- Too general objectives.
- Unrealistic objectives.
- Complex objectives.



Flip Your Talent

Inspiring the title and the whole project, Flip Your Talent is a simple and powerful method for the audience to discover their natural currency, flip it and turn it into a brighter future... for themselves and for those around them. Rediscover long-forgotten dreams, goals, likes and dislikes that make you truly unique, and turn them into success at work and elsewhere.

The speech presents the foundations of the Flip Your Talent method, and illustrates its uses with examples based on the audience host's requests, including business or life in general.



 **Climbing a tree in search of fish**

- Childhood dreams
- Childhood heroes
- Passion, likes and dislikes
- Stuff you are naturally good at
- Your fans and friends
- Family advice and example
- Your education
- Tradition and common sense
- Interests and responsibilities
- Your network and acquaintances



More information and PDF brochures at the Flip Your Talent event page:

<http://www.flipyourtalent.info/events>

Contact me for suggestions about the most suitable speech for your company, organisation or community at <http://www.flipyourtalent.info/contact>

Finally, a few more things

Appendices

About the author

In 2002 Gabor Holch left a diplomatic career, moved to China and retrained himself as a management consultant. Since then he has worked with thousands of people and more than a hundred corporate clients in Europe and East Asia as a consultant, trainer, coach, speaker and writer.

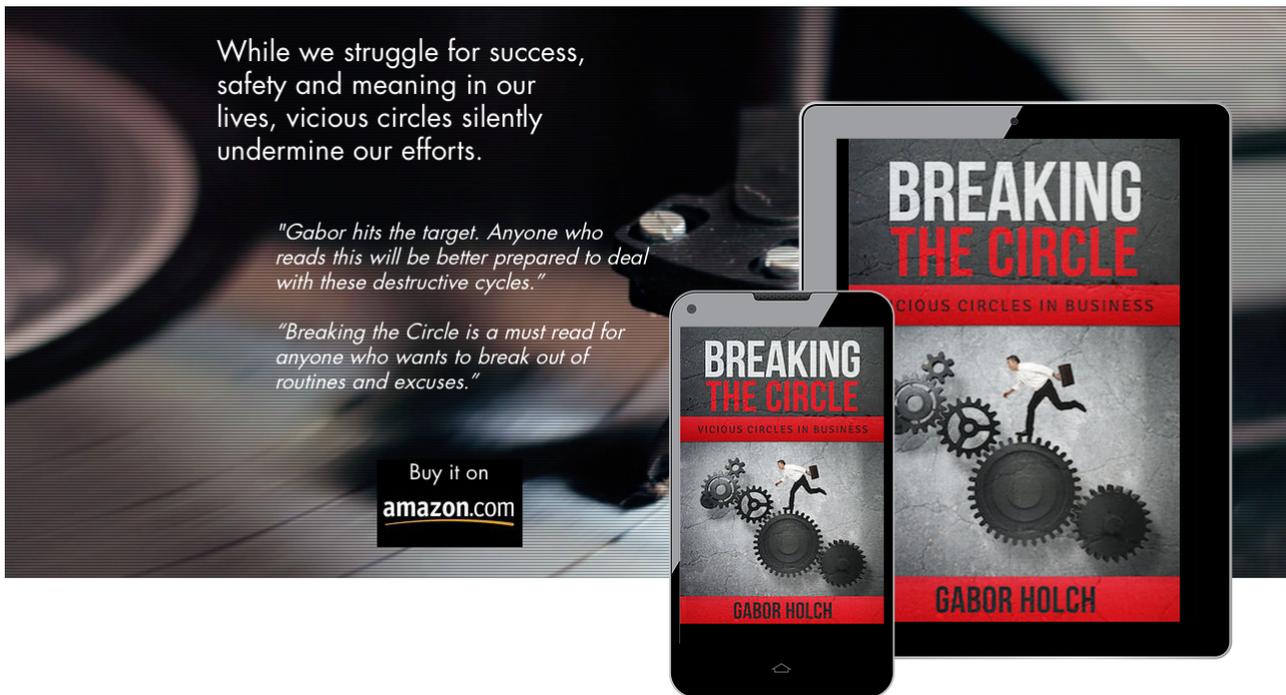
Gabor's work includes corporate leadership workshops, executive coaching, university lecturing and speeches at professional forums. In addition to Campanile Management Consulting, a Shanghai-based boutique firm he started in 2005, he is Associate Partner in the Munich Leadership Group and affiliated with consulting firms in Europe and the US.

Gabor has authored two books and several professional articles ranging through various topics including international relations, expat life in Asia, professional and personal development.

Follow Gabor on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook or drop a message using the Flip Your Talent contact page: <http://www.flipyourtalent.info/contact>



Breaking the Circle: Vicious circles in business



Almost everyone is caught up in a vicious circle of some sort.

They can be as trivial as stupid mistakes when you are in a rush, or as profound as lasting conflicts with colleagues, friends or family.

Contents

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| Vicious circles are square things | 4 |
| Vicious circles are damaging | 6 |
| Vicious circles in business | 8 |
| Vicious circles waste effort | 10 |
| Vicious circles ruin careers | 13 |
| You must break your circles | 15 |
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In *Breaking the Circle* the author, a management consultant and coach with wide-ranging experience, presents simple explanations of how vicious circles form in our lives, how we can notice the telltale signs when we are in one of such circles, and how anyone can take a grip and regain control of the situation at hand.

Following a simple but surprisingly effective method, the book guides the reader through the process of breaking and reversing typical vicious circles in business, including overtime burnout, personal clashes, getting stuck while managing others and weathering market crises.

For more details, go to: <http://www.breakingthecircle.info>

Buy it on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Breaking-the-Circle-ebook/dp/BooDUHIMBE/>

The science behind Flip Your Talent

My books, blog and workshops make regular references to scientific personality and behavioural assessment. Such systems are the primary source of traits and types mentioned here, but also serve as an important support tool for Flip Your Talent workshops and coaching.

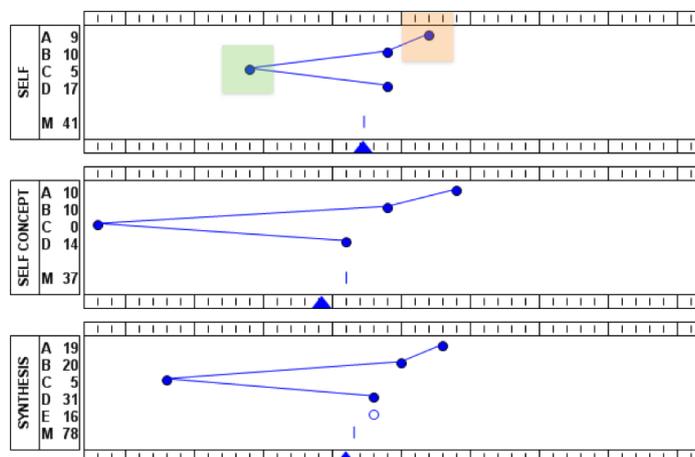
If you use Flip Your Talent in an environment where due diligence is essential, we can combine workshops and coaching with advanced personality or behavioural assessment tools.

The research and consulting work that led to Flip Your Talent often included internationally recognised assessment systems. The findings of the workshop are in alignment with the result of surveys conducted with such products. We have worked with:



I can help you choose the most suitable assessment. If your organisation uses a different tool, it only takes a bit of effort to align the content of Flip Your Talent activities.

Below is an example of aligning the Flip Your Talent strengths inventory with results from Predictive Index, a psychometric assessment system.



| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

The Flip Your Talent handout page 1: Weaknesses Inventory

Take a look at the words below and circle no more than three of them, choosing the ones that best describe what you consider your personal weaknesses. Keep your judgement to the minimum and don't worry about what you 'should' pick or what other people would think. Choose the ones that 'ring the bell'.

Try not to think too much. In such exercises, the longer you chew on your pencil the more confused you will feel. Listen to your gut and pick three words as fast as you can.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| boring | protective | narrow-minded | restless | interfering |
| condescending | naive | pedantic | sensitive | fussy |
| rigid | aggressive | selfish | inquisitive | superficial |
| distant | indecisive | insolent | distracted | dependent |
| gullible | unpredictable | complicated | tiring | unreliable |
| gossipy | submissive | unrealistic | impatient | critical |

Question: What if I can't pick?

It does happen that someone stares at the inventory with blank eyes and can't choose. My advice would be to put the book aside for a day — perhaps your mind is preoccupied with something else. If you still feel stuck, consider the following questions:

- Is there one kind of situation in life where you often experience failure?
- What are situations that make you lose control (e.g. cry or throw a tantrum)?
- Do people often criticise you, or seem upset about something you do?

Question: What if I cannot limit myself to three?

Some people struggle with the opposite dilemma and wish they could choose half of the words. If you are one of them, start with a larger selection and then narrow down to half, eliminate a few more and so forth, until you end up with a set of three.

The Flip Your Talent handout page 2: Strengths Inventory

Take a look at the words below and circle no more than three of the following words, choosing the ones that best describe what you consider your personal strengths. Keep your judgement to the minimum and don't worry about what you 'should' pick or what other people would think. Choose the ones that 'ring the bell'.

Try not to think too much. In such exercises, the longer you chew on your pencil the more confused you will feel. Listen to your gut and pick three words as fast as you can.

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | warm | realistic | energetic | helpful |
| responsible | friendly | accurate | sensitive | thorough |
| organised | decisive | independent | curious | practical |
| analytical | tolerant | honest | outgoing | cooperative |
| kind | ingenious | resourceful | stimulating | flexible |
| well informed | loyal | idealistic | quick | logical |

Question: What if I can't pick?

It does happen that someone stares at the inventory with blank eyes and can't choose. My advice would be to put the book aside for a day — perhaps your mind is preoccupied with something else. If you still feel stuck, consider the following questions:

- Have you ever won any kind of competition with little or no effort?
- Do people often comment on something you do well?
- If I asked your friends why they like you, what would they say?

Flip Your Talent generously

Turning Weaknesses into Strengths is a free booklet intended for general use with no compensation. If you find it useful, send it to someone who may find it useful for herself or her team, community and so forth.



Since its beginning, Flip Your Talent has followed ideas and suggestions from blog readers, event and workshop participants. If you have questions, feedback or improvement ideas about this book, please contact me through the contact page at www.flipyourtalent.info and I will get back to you shortly.

Some of my readers recently suggested new channels where Flip Your Talent could appear, including a YouTube channel, podcasts and some other suggestions I didn't fully understand. If you have any recommendations about that, I welcome any ideas!

