

## Claiming Her Strengths

Amanda is a project manager for a religious non-profit organization. Much of her day is occupied by calendars and spreadsheets. Amanda is required to spend large amounts of time planning and emailing. I've known Amanda for several years. As it relates to work, I've always sensed Amanda was frustrated.

She graduated from college with a four-year degree in Music Performance. I've seen her on a stage—she is at home there. Recently, Amanda managed a project for which I was responsible. She had to recruit and organize volunteers to carry out an intense effort. Amanda did more than recruit the volunteers. She became their friend. In fact, in every case, within days of meeting these new acquaintances, she knew their deepest needs.

Amanda asked me to coach her in her strengths. I was so glad to be part of her journey. She identified WOO, Restorative, Includer, Communication and Context as her top five. I knew that I needed to be sensitive to the fact that Amanda may struggle with *claiming* her strengths, but I also knew that once she claimed them, she would soar in whatever she did.

For Amanda, daily life was most thrilling when she could employ her Restorative theme. She first notices people's hurts and is compelled to figure out a way to lessen or remove the hurt. She digs deep into people's lives to gain Context and gains access because of her WOO. She is immediately trusted as a close friend. Amanda is amazing at finding just the right words to reach the marginalized, bring them close, and get them involved.

When Amanda heard this description of herself, it was about the same time she thought she might lose her job. She asked doubtfully, "Are any of those strengths employable?" I respectfully laughed and said, "Amanda, your strengths are amazing. Universities struggle to train people with your natural ability and way with people." I asked her if she'd ever considered being a Resident Director for young women at a University. I said, "Do you know how many insecure, afraid young ladies would benefit from your amazing strengths? Do you know how many universities are eager to find a person like you to help their new students transition to University life?" I also said, "There are hundreds, thousands even, of 18 year old girls dying for you to dig into their lives and give them hope." Amanda smiled, and then cried. She was overjoyed that what she thought were worthless talents were, in fact, real and valuable strengths.

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Communication | WOO | Includer | Connectedness | Input