

## ARTICULATING GOALS THAT USE DEPENDABLE STRENGTHS

People who are productive and passionate have goals and plans that enable them to use their Dependable Strengths. You can increase your own productivity and passion for what you do if you take time to articulate goals and plans that are clearly based on your knowledge of your Dependable Strengths. When articulating goals and plans that emphasize your strengths, you increase the *quality time* in your daily life.

Study each of your most important Dependable Strengths and recall one or two Good Experiences related to each DS. Then think of possible future activities that would enable you to use that DS. Many of these possible activities will resemble aspects of past Good Experiences, and some of them will be creative activities you had not previously considered. The important characteristic of the possible activity is that you use one or more Dependable Strengths.

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### Example:

One of my Dependable Strengths is facilitating individual development and productivity in small groups. The purposes of the small groups are usually to improve the quality of lives of the participants or of others.

Several years ago, I started looking for more of these opportunities. I now meet on a regular basis with several small groups. These groups include:

1. A group of 8 people who have been meeting monthly for three years. We each write a memoir and read them at our monthly meeting. We plan to continue for several years.
2. I have been the chair of a Worship Planning Committee at my UU church for several years. About 6 to 7 of us meet monthly to discuss previous services and plan future services. We often deal with philosophical and theological issues.
3. Eight members of my UU church meet at my home two mornings a month to discuss books with spiritual and philosophical themes. We have been meeting for over three years.
4. I meet one morning a month with three other members of a philanthropic board. We consider proposals from 501C3 agencies for social services and environmental projects. I helped set up this board nine years ago. We give away about one million a year.
5. I meet monthly with the Executive Board of the Center for Dependable Strengths. This seven-member group has been working together for four or five years.
6. I meet monthly with a board of 6 to 8 members of 501C3 organization devoted to the concerns of teen parents (including pregnant teens). We also put on conferences and workshops.
7. One Sunday a month, I meet with about eight people for a *salon*. During two hours we discuss current issues that are submitted in the form of questions by each participant. From an intellectual standpoint this is the most stimulating two hours of my month.
8. Prior to this year, my favorite seminar each quarter during the past ten years was a seminar where approximately ten counseling interns gathered once a week to talk about their experiences at their internships. We often had these seminars in my living room.

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*Suggested Activity:* For each key Dependable Strength, write one or more goal statements that describe activities wherein you are using that Dependable Strength. Try to elaborate each goal by describing specific plans that will help you implement the goal.

A Goal Statement based on the example discussed above:

I want to initiate or join small groups that have purposes of increasing the quality of the participant's lives, or the lives of others. These groups will be made up of caring, intelligent and liberal people who have qualities that enable them to collaborate and enrich each other.

## PRINCIPLES GUIDING AN ORGANIZATION THAT FOCUSES ON DEPENDABLE STRENGTHS

People in the organization:

### THINK ABOUT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS IN TERMS OF STRENGTHS.

Everyone in the organization looks at others in terms of their strengths. They are eager to find out about the positive experiences and the strengths of others. They are also eager to reflect on and share their own positive experiences and strengths.

### KNOW HOW TO ARTICULATE THEIR DEPENDABLE STRENGTHS AND HOW TO HELP OTHERS ARTICULATE THEIR DEPENDABLE STRENGTHS.

Everyone in the organization is knowledgeable about principles and practices of articulating Dependable Strengths. They are aware of the dynamic and evolutionary qualities of Dependable Strengths, recognizing that anyone can continue to articulate more complex patterns of Dependable Strengths as they mature and develop.

### APPRECIATE DIVERSITY.

They recognize that our society is very complex and multi-layered. They know that an organization is strengthened by having a wide variety of backgrounds and characteristics represented by the people making up the organization. They see that a tapestry of different talents, beliefs and values creates a fabric of a strong community. A community made of people with different kinds of strengths is able to thrive because threats from different directions can be handled by people who are particularly suited to certain kinds of threats. Diversity helps because problem-solving works best when there are many different solutions. Homogeneity limits creative problem-solving.

### COOPERATE AND COLLABORATE IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE DIVERSE STRENGTHS AVAILABLE WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION.

Individuals making up teams in these organizations learn to cooperate and collaborate so that individuals can use their best strengths, while others use strengths that are quite different. These teams are more productive and team members are more satisfied because everyone on the team has a better chance of doing what they do best. People are more likely to do what they enjoy doing.

### SOME ASSUMPTIONS

1. Each person has dependable strengths. Ownership and acceptance of those strengths increase the likelihood of higher self-esteem.
2. Each person will benefit from higher self-esteem.
3. Self-esteem increases the likelihood that a person will address learning deficits and other weaknesses with a more positive attitude and greater resolve to make improvements.
4. When participants accept and appreciate the diverse strengths of others, they are better able to recognize and value their own strengths, which in turn enhances their self-esteem. People with higher self-esteem are more likely to accept and appreciate the diverse qualities of others.