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## *a MESSAGE from SYLVIA*

### **When Your Strengths Become Weaknesses**



Too much of a good thing is NOT a good thing. Perhaps you haven't considered that your strengths and weaknesses are two sides of the same coin. You need to manage your natural and acquired strengths so they don't mushroom into faults, irritants, defects, and deficiencies that drive other people crazy.

A couple of years ago I served a client who, as a result of her fierce determination to avoid micromanaging them, allowed her employees to work autonomously on a regular basis. By essentially letting them do what they wanted to do and rarely asking for updates, she eventually got herself into the position of being blindsided in a way that embarrassed her in front of her Board as well as in public. This was not a good situation. In fact, overnight it poked a few holes in her professional reputation.

You don't want this happening to you. It's one thing to trust your staff; it's another thing to be totally (or mostly) out of the loop. Any of your strengths that are carried to the extreme may come back to haunt you. Awareness is one of the keys to staying out of this trap. Read my feature article below for more specifics.

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## FEATURE ARTICLE

### How Are You Harming Your Career?

By allowing some of your recognizable strengths to morph into annoying and even dysfunctional weaknesses, you could be damaging your professional reputation. Take a look at this list of "desired" traits and skills along with their corresponding excesses that can have a negative impact on people around you:

1. Optimism

The other side of this coin is often denial of certain facts and truth.

2. Analysis

Are you bogged down in details to the point of paralysis?

3. Loyalty

This can lead to over tolerance of inappropriate behaviors and performance.

4. Independence

Do you resist functioning as a participatory team player?

5. Responsibility

The other side of this coin can be an unwillingness to delegate.

6. Cooperation

Are you looking the other way when situations call for confrontation because you dislike and fear conflict?

7. Helpful

By spending much of your day assisting others you may not get your own work done in a timely manner.

8. Rationality and Objectivity

Do you demonstrate appropriate empathy when those around you

experience difficult circumstances?

9. Passion

Impulsiveness or over zealousness can be the other side of this coin.

10. Conviction

Are you reluctant to seek other people's ideas and opinions?

Assessing your behaviors at work in an honest, deliberate, focused way can be one of the wisest activities you can choose to embrace. Let's face it: Most of us have a bucket full of strengths that, when used and leveraged appropriately, can facilitate both individual and organizational success. Just remember that the key word is *appropriately*.

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## What Clients Say

*After reading her monthly ezines for quite a while, I signed up with Sylvia because I was experiencing difficulties with staff retention for a couple of years and figured that I was part of a growing problem. During the coaching engagement I discovered that, because I always wanted to see the best in people, I wasn't willing to look at some glaring, deep seated personal limitations that were preventing several of my employees from performing their jobs to a satisfactory level. As a manager, I'm almost embarrassed to say that I was in a state of denial. With Sylvia's insights and guidance I began to look at things through a clearer lens. She helped me to understand that many of these issues could have been avoided from the get-go, so together we revised parts of my interviewing/hiring process. Today I am happy to say that I am at a much better place!*

- Colleen R., Northwestern PA Nonprofit Organization

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## Offers and Opportunities

**A FREE GIFT With the Potential to Change Your Life**

**The first person** to send Sylvia a confidential message describing one of your strengths that has become a weakness at work will receive a FREE PDF downloadable copy of her book, *Learning Leadership Through Loss*. Part 2 of this book includes a chapter devoted exclusively to personal limitations and how they can affect relationships and professional performance. If this interests YOU, simply send an email to: [sylvia@launchinglives.biz](mailto:sylvia@launchinglives.biz).

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## RESOURCES

### Your Best Resource

Surprisingly and unfortunately, there isn't much material out there on the internet or in books about this topic. That said, your best resource is most likely the person to whom you directly report at work as well as professional peers you trust. Ask them to share their observations. Tell them you want to know if they have witnessed you taking any of your obvious strengths to the extreme. Request specific examples. General impressions won't benefit you in the long run.

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## TIP

Pinpoint one of your strengths that you suspect or realize has become a weakness in the work environment. Make a list of the ways this particular behavior negatively impacts individuals, processes, productivity, bottom line results, staff morale, and your overall career. Identify one strategy that, when implemented, will position or equip you to back off a bit. For instance, if you tend to punish people for making mistakes, then consciously decide which types of errors are truly "unforgiveable" in your mind and which ones occasionally can be worked around. The message here is not to minimize or excuse mistakes; it's to let you know that nobody performs perfectly 24/7—not even you.

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## Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On October 22, 2015 Sylvia plans to attend the Central PA Women's Conference at the Radisson Hotel in Camp Hill, PA where she will be honored as a **nominee for the Lifetime Achievement Award** that will be presented over lunch.

On September 9, 2015 Sylvia was featured as the luncheon keynote presenter for a conference at her alma mater, Lebanon Valley College. Fifty professionals representing seventeen other PA institutions of higher learning gathered to hear her ideas around how to influence bosses, employees, and peers more purposefully and strategically.

A sizable write-up and cover photo related to Sylvia's March 2015 book, *Learning Leadership Through Loss*, was published in the Fall edition of The Valley Magazine that is distributed to all LVC alumni and friends.

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*Join Sylvia on these social networks!*

## About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

Back issues are [available here](#). Send an email by [clicking here](#) to manage your free subscription. Sharing content with attribution is encouraged as is forwarding the Ezine email. Include launchinglives.biz in your list of safe senders or friends, depending upon your email software, to be sure you receive the monthly emailed issues.

Launching Lives Ezine is dedicated to "building people ... building businesses." ©2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

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## About SYLVIA

**Sylvia Hepler**, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

**For more information** and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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## ***Launching Lives SERVICES***

**Launching Lives, LLC** is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I

develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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