

**TIP #30 – SEPTEMBER 2008**  
**STRENGTH-BASED FEEDBACK ACTIVITY**  
**CONTRIBUTED BY LILLAS HATALA**

**Objectives:** This activity supports the development of one of The Five Leadership Practices®: Encouraging the Heart. Participants must truly experience Encouraging the Heart in order to understand it and, therefore, this is not an intellectual exercise of PowerPoint demonstrations and talking heads. Rather, this is very hands-on. I like using this activity toward the end of a The Leadership Challenge® Workshop as it leaves people, just before they depart, squarely in the place of their hearts.

This activity is designed to help participants:

- Practice story telling
- Practice listening for strengths and giving strength-based feedback
- Learn things about their co-workers they would never have learned otherwise and, as a result, strengthen the relationships forever!

**Audience:** All audiences. Particularly suited for colleagues, teammates, co-workers and any group of people that works together.

**Time Required:** one hour -1 ½ hours depending on the number of people in each small group. Plan for approximately 10 minutes per person.

**Materials Needed/Setup:** Mailing labels (blank, adhesive-back, peel-off; one full sheet per person); one piece of colored paper per person.

**Process:** Set up small groups of five to seven people. Individual participants within each group are asked to reflect on one success in their life (e.g., a success with people, in relationships; an interest such as sports, music, or hobby; a project, task, or event that is work or volunteer related). After five minutes of reflection, one person in each group begins to tell his or her success story. The others in the small group listen for strengths underlying the story and write down those strengths on the mailing labels provided (one strength per label; a minimum of three identified strengths/three labels per person). When the storyteller has finished, each listener in the group-one by one-provides positive strengths feedback. The storyteller places all completed 'strengths' labels on the colored sheet of paper. The process is repeated with the remaining members of the group as storyteller.

**Debrief:** Five minutes in small groups discussing what each participant learned from this exercise about Encouraging the Heart, followed by five minutes as a large group reviewing and considering some of the themes that surfaced as a result of the small group discussions.

**Facilitator Tips:** The facilitator needs to model this activity by telling a success story, asking the group to listen for strengths underlying the story, and then hear a sampling of a few strengths the group heard.

Instructions for this exercise need to be followed exactly. Everyone needs to complete the exercise-both receiving and giving strength-based feedback.

It is a good idea to ask one person in each of the small groups to be a time keeper: five minutes for each storyteller and five minutes for the group to provide positive feedback.

**Variations:** none

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