

Path to Purpose

HOW TO USE
AND DEVELOP
YOUR STRENGTHS
TO FIND YOUR
PURPOSE



Your Strengths Are One of a Kind

Every person is a gift from God with gifts to share.

You're no different.

God designed you as a one-of-a-kind person with unique strengths, experiences, passions, and skills. Understanding how to use them to their fullest is your path to purpose.

Some people have a clear idea of their strengths and how to live them out in their work and relationships.

But most people feel frustrated when the topic of “gifts” and “callings” comes up. They struggle to clearly see their strengths. They may even feel like they were shortchanged in the talents and abilities department.

No matter where you land, here's the truth: You are designed with a purpose. And to live it out to the fullest, God's given you a unique combination of strengths the world has never seen.

Path to Purpose is your guide to understanding, developing, and using your skills, talents, passions, and abilities. Along the way, you'll deepen your sense of purpose in your strengths as you navigate the three phases of the journey:

- 1. Awareness – growing your understanding of your strengths**
- 2. Intentionality – developing your skills and abilities**
- 3. Generosity – multiplying your strengths in others**

Ready to dive in and find greater purpose in your strengths? Let's go!

The 3 Phases of the Path to Purpose

The Path to Purpose is a continuum. It moves from awareness of your strengths to intentional growth to generously pouring into others.

Awareness happens early on as you move toward a deeper understanding and appreciation of your strengths.

Most people fall here in the **awareness phase**. They may or may not know what their skills and capabilities are. Or perhaps they don't know how to move beyond awareness to activate them.

People who do move out of the awareness phase are those who know they have strengths they want to nurture, and they're putting effort into developing them. This **intentional phase** focuses on growing skills and strengths.

As intentionality increases, so does generosity. In the **generosity phase**, people use their skills and passions to breathe life into others. They're confident in their strengths and seek to multiply them in other people.

Your Journey Starts Here

No matter where you find yourself on the Path to Purpose continuum—even if it's not where you'd like to be—know that you're right where you're supposed to be. You might wish you were further along. But to move forward, you have to start where you're at.

To that end, let's explore the three phases of the Path to Purpose process. Along the way, you'll discover a practical framework for developing your skills and abilities so you can make a meaningful impact in the world.

Onward!

Phase 1

Building Your Strengths Awareness

To find your purpose, you first need to identify, appreciate, and name your strengths.

This involves reflection, seeking feedback from others, and looking for patterns.

Reflect

Take time to ask yourself:

- **What are my passions?**
- **How have I helped others?**
- **What skills do I use to benefit others?**

For some people, the answers to these questions may not be clear. If that's true for you, simply start by writing down the things you enjoy doing.

Most people have little idea what their strengths are. They're so used to living in their own skin that they're blind to the remarkable skills and abilities that make them unique.

That's why feedback from others is so important.

Ask Your Community

Getting input from others is like having them hold up a mirror so you can see what you have to offer the world.

Ask people in your life to share what strengths they notice in you.

Start with leaders such as older family members, teachers, professors, pastors, and spiritual directors. Also get feedback from friends, classmates, colleagues, and others in your community.

Gathering their input allows you to see yourself through the eyes of others so you can develop a clearer picture of your unique strengths, capabilities, and talents.

Look for Patterns

You've reflected on your unique skills and abilities. And you've asked your community what strengths they see in you.

Now take all these insights and look for patterns. Which strengths keep coming up?

Use this information to create a self-portrait that describes who you are when you're operating in your strengths.

Keep an open mind during this process. You might be surprised by unexpected patterns you find. Don't be quick to write them off. Perhaps a certain strength keeps coming up that you always considered to be a glaring weakness—when in reality it just needed to be developed.

Phase 2

Becoming More Intentional With Your Strengths

After identifying and naming your strengths, you're ready to grow in intentionally activating them.

This phase focuses on finding new opportunities, creating an action plan, taking risks, and finding a coach.

Look for Opportunities

In this phase, look for new opportunities to use your strengths over and over again. This is one of the most important things you can do to build your confidence in your skills and abilities. Push yourself by seeking opportunities you may not have initially considered. You can serve in your church, volunteer in your community, and request special projects or training at work. Look for affinity groups, coworking sessions, mentorship matching, or community projects for opportunities that will spur you on and allow you to share your talents.

Be willing to get out of your comfort zone. You may also need to say no to some things in order to say yes to opportunities that allow you to build your strengths.

Create an Action Plan

Having a strategic plan allows you to develop your strengths and put them into action.

Go through the following steps to draft your action plan:

- **Set your end goal.**
(i.e. "I want to play the drums on a worship team.")
- **Identify the small steps you need to take to reach your goal.**
(i.e. "Step 1: Find a drum set to practice on.")
- **Choose a specific time when you'll take that next step.**
(i.e. "Tomorrow, text three friends to ask if I can practice on their set.")
- **Complete your next step, then schedule when you'll do the next one.**

As simple and intuitive as these steps seem, many people tend to overlook them... and then wonder why they don't achieve their goals.

Take Risks

Tackle challenging projects. Try new things. Stretch yourself. In the process, you'll refine your skills and perhaps even discover unique traits you never knew were there.

Remember that learning to use your strengths requires trying, falling, and trying again.

Give yourself permission to fail. Many people struggle to do this because they believe they need to perform and prove their worth. It can feel safer to only do what you're comfortable doing. But perfectionism doesn't leave room for growth and improvement.

Consider how children develop new skills. Adults don't expect them to do things perfectly. Extend this same grace to yourself as you identify and grow your skills. Celebrate each victorious step and acknowledge the progress you're making as you learn to use your strengths.

Find a Champion or Coach

People who are most intentional about using their strengths often say they had someone helping them grow and develop their skills. In other words, they had people championing their strengths.

Look around in your community for someone who can challenge you, give you feedback, and affirm your God-given strengths. Maybe it's someone you've always admired, whether or not they have the same passions, skills, and abilities as you. Consider older friends, family members, church leaders, educators, and community leaders.

As others invest in you and help you find purpose in your strengths, you'll be better equipped to use your skills generously and invest in others.

Phase 3

Sharing Your Strengths Generously

You've increased your awareness and understanding of your strengths, skills, and passions, and you've worked on activating them and putting them to use.

Now you're ready to stretch yourself further by empowering others to grow in their strengths.

Many people feel overwhelmed by the idea of coaching and mentoring others. Try thinking of it as simply exploring a new context for growing your strengths.

Then look for others who are nearer the beginning of their strengths journey. Start by offering to come alongside them. Share about your own journey with them. Then, using the wisdom you've gained along the way, help them activate their strengths to find their purpose and make an impact in the world.





Your Strengths Are a Gift to the World

As you discover your strengths and put them to use, you'll make a positive difference in the lives of others and show what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today.

Discovering your purpose starts with understanding who God made you to be—not who you think you ought to be or who others wish you were.

See your abilities for what they are—gifts given to you by God. By identifying and developing your natural strengths, you can then offer the gift of yourself to others.

Take the EveryGift Inventory

Dive deeper into your strengths and discover exactly where you currently stand in your path to purpose.

The EveryGift Inventory, developed by Lutheran Hour Ministries in partnership with Barna Group, helps you discover your strengths, abilities, and skills in 12 distinct areas—so you can start sharing them with the world.

Start your inventory now to receive your free, personalized strengths assessment.

lhm.org/everygift