

# Play to Your Strengths

**Leverage Your Personal  
Leadership Brand  
To Attract Your  
Next Opportunity**

with Kathy McAfee  
America's Marketing Motivator



AMERICA'S MARKETING MOTIVATOR 

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## Play to Your Strengths

### **Welcome to the Strengths Movement**

This workbook has been designed to help you discover, shape and leverage your personal leadership brand to your career advantage. It contains three important exercises to help you learn more about who you are and how you want to be known. If you commit to actively managing your personal brand, the right opportunities will present themselves to you. This will make it easier for you to identify the “perfect-fit” job, which is the one where the responsibilities and environment allow you to use your strengths every single day.

*“We actually have a choice in how we want to be known.”*

Arthur Samuel Joseph

### **Identify Your Best and Use It**

Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D. (1924–2003) was known as the “Father of the Strengths Movement” and the “Grandfather of Positive Psychology.” Dr. Clifton authored and co-authored many bestselling books, including *Soar with Your Strengths*, *First, Break All the Rules*, and *How Full is Your Bucket*. His thought-leadership continues to teach and inspire workers and organizations worldwide. His work and legacy revealed his long-standing interest in helping people identify and utilize “their best.” This is a core underpinning to the concept of the personal leadership branding.

### **What is a Personal Leadership Brand?**

There are many ways to define a personal leadership brand. They include ideas such as:

1. The embodiment of the leader I aspire to be
2. What people have come to expect from me
3. How people connect with me
4. What makes me unique and successful
5. My reputation

Rahna Barthelmess, who is a personal branding expert and author of *Your Branding Edge*, explains, “A brand is a promise of future experience. It works the same for people too.”

I know that you will enjoy the process of discovering and leveraging your personal leadership brand.



Kathy McAfee, America’s Marketing Motivator

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## Exercise #1: Twenty Assets Personal Inventory

### *What are Your Natural Gifts and Talents?*

Each of us has unique talents, individual style, and special knowledge and abilities. However, most of us spend the majority of our time and energy focusing on what needs improvement rather than putting our strengths into play. Take the opportunity to draw out, fully develop and leverage your personal assets to become a fully actualized professional.

This exercise is designed to raise your awareness of and appreciation for your strengths and personal assets. This is an important step in building and maintaining your confidence as you face the challenges of a job search.

**EXERCISE:** List at least 20 personal assets or traits that you have been blessed with and that could be leveraged in your job search. *For example, you are honest, funny, organized, insightful, competitive, compassionate, responsive, and creative.*

**Step #1:** By yourself, write down a list of 20+ personal assets.

**Step #2:** Read it out loud. Feel what it's like to acknowledge your strengths. With each, use the set-up phrase, *I am...*

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____  | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____  | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____  | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____  | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____  | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____  | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____  | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____  | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

**Exercise #1, continued**

**Step #3:** Share this list with people whom you trust and who have earned the right to give you feedback. Listen openly. Do not minimize or defend. After you reflect on their feedback, you can add these additional strengths to your master list.

**Step #4:** Select three or four personal strengths that you think you could leverage in a future event, perhaps in a job interview, presentation, or networking event. Use your creativity to think of ways in which you could showcase that strength in a natural and authentic way.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_

**Step #5:** Keep the complete list as a reference sheet for when you need to bolster your confidence prior to major event. It will help to get you into a powerful frame of mind and body, one of the keys to your success in a job interview, networking meeting, or presentation.

## Exercise #2: Your Persona Statement

**You have a choice in how you want to be known.**

This exercise known as the *persona statement* will help you to understand your personal leadership brand at a deep level. In this context we are using the word *persona* (noun) as opposed to the word *personal* (adjective). In general usage, *persona* is used to refer to the personality that an individual projects in public. Please see the book *Vocal Leadership* (Chapter 3) for more insights on this language and this exercise.

**Step #1:** Answer the following question: How do you believe that you are presently perceived? You may have different adjectives depending upon the person/group that you interact with (e.g., immediate family, spouse, clients, boss, peers, neighbors, volunteer groups, golf buddies, etc.)

**Step #2:** Answer the question: How do you want to be known? Please use complete sentences, not bullet points or keywords.

**Step #3:** Create a visual representation of each of your two personas that you captured in steps #1 and #2. You will not be evaluated on your artistic ability. We merely want to access other parts of your brain through creativity.

**Step #4:** Write your Persona Statement in sentence form, replacing the phrase “I want to be known as” with the words “I am.....”

Source: Arthur Samuel Joseph, author of *Vocal Leadership*

*“The secret of Communication Mastery is taking charge of how you are perceived – known – not just by others but also to yourself.”*

Arthur Samuel Joseph

## Exercise #3: Your Defining Paragraph

Another very helpful step to help you shape your personal leadership brand is the Defining Paragraph. Created by my business coach Mark LeBlanc, the defining paragraph is a powerful way to position yourself quickly and effectively.

The defining paragraph can be used in many different ways, including as your elevator pitch at networking events, sharing your expertise with company leaders, showcasing your talents on your LinkedIn profile summary, or in a job interview when they ask the general question, “Tell me about yourself...”



### ***The Template***

The Defining Paragraph has a very simple structure with only 7 parts.

1. Your name
2. Your organization, profession, industry or personal brand
3. P – The defining statement for your primary area of responsibility or expertise
4. S – The defining statement for your secondary area of responsibility or expertise
5. Credibility statement (only one needed). Start with the phrase, “*In fact, I...*”
6. Value statement – what is the *real* value of your work? List up to four outcomes/results. Start with the phrase, “*As a result of my work...*”
7. Add a personal statement – share more of who you are in this defining statement. Start with phrase, “*On a personal note...*”

Source: Mark Leblanc, [www.SmallBusinessSuccess.com](http://www.SmallBusinessSuccess.com)

### ***Example of an Imperfect Draft of My Defining Paragraph***

My name is Kathy McAfee and I am known as *America’s Marketing Motivator*.

Training and talent development is my primary focus. As an executive presentation coach, I work with corporate professionals who want to *stop global boring* by reducing their PowerPoint emissions and become more powerful presenters.

I also have expertise in marketing and new business development. I coach people in professional services industries who want to increase their sphere of influence through strategic connections and high value marketing activities, such as blogging for business.

*In fact*, my blog, named after my book *Networking Ahead for Business*, won the *2014 Best Blog of the Year* by the *Women World Awards*. I’m committed to helping people rethink networking, not as an event or activity, but as a strategy for life.

*As a result of my work*, business professionals are able to more confidently communicate their ideas, enhance their individual effectiveness, and enjoy more robust careers and businesses.

*On a personal note*, I’m an ovarian cancer survivor, and feel grateful to have a new lease on life.

## Exercise #3, continued

**Write Your Own Defining Paragraph****Template**

1. Your name
2. Your company name
3. P - The defining statement for your primary area of responsibility or expertise
4. S - The defining statement for your secondary area of responsibility or expertise
5. Credibility statement (only one needed). Start with the phrase, "*In fact, I....*"
6. Value statement – what is the real value of your work? List up to four outcomes/results. Start with the phrase, "*As a result of my work....*"
7. Add a personal statement – bring out more of who you are to create a personal connection. Start with the phrase, "*On a personal note....*"

**Create an “imperfect draft” by filling in the blanks:**

1. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I *run/serve/am known* as \_\_\_\_\_
2. at/in \_\_\_\_\_ (Company, organization, profession, industry).
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the primary focus of my work (primary area of expertise).
4. As a \_\_\_\_\_, I also *lead/support/run/excel at* \_\_\_\_\_ (secondary area of expertise).
5. In fact, I \_\_\_\_\_ (credibility statement).
6. As a result of my work,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (list up to 4 outcomes from your work).
7. On a personal note, I \_\_\_\_\_.

**Next Steps:** Practice sharing this “imperfect draft” of your Defining Paragraph with a partner. Use vocal intonation to appropriate to each situation (networking, job interview, phone conversation, etc.). Ask for feedback. Make changes. Get comfortable with it. Understand the 7 part structure and you’ll find it easier to remember what you want to say to position yourself in any situation



## About Kathy McAfee

Kathy McAfee is **America's Marketing Motivator**, a professional speaker and executive presentation coach and trainer whose mission is to help business and community leaders to more effectively use their talent, energy, and influence to create positive changes in the world. Her company, Kmc Brand Innovation, LLC, has helped thousands of motivated executives, professionals, and entrepreneurs to become the recognized leaders in their fields by mastering the arts of high engagement presentations and effective networking.

She is the author of the books, *Networking Ahead for Business*, and *Stop Global Boring*,

In her role as **Executive Presentation Coach**, she helps clients to increase their confidence, credibility, and influence by reducing their PowerPoint clutter to better engage their audiences and move them to action. A certified Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), Kathy helps her clients to clear their limiting beliefs and instill more effective strategies to realize their full leadership potential.



Over the past 20 years, Kathy has held numerous corporate leadership positions, bringing marketing success to companies such as Levi Strauss & Co., Maybelline, Southcorp Wines of Australia, and ADVO, where she served as Vice President of Marketing Services. Living and working in England for three years, she led European marketing initiatives for an international vision care company. Since 2005 she has pursued an entrepreneurial lifestyle, a path she recommends for anyone with a spirit of innovation and the stomach for uncertainty.

A graduate of Stanford University in Economics, Kathy is a member of the National Speakers Association, a past board member of YWCA Hartford Region, and an active member of Soroptimist International of the Americas. She is an ovarian cancer survivor, and holds a second degree black belt in the martial art of Tae Kwon Do. Kathy and her husband Byron reside in Connecticut.

### Connect with Kathy

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