

Helping Others Unpack Their S.T.O.R.Y.

Sharing and Listening Exercises:

Step 1: Pair up with a friend – someone that you know – probably from your small group. One person will be the Listener and the other the Story Teller.

Story Teller Role:

1. Tell your friend about a time in your past when you did an activity that you enjoyed doing and feel you did well. Describe *what* you did and *how* you did it. Just narrate what the other person would have seen you doing, as if a camcorder had been there to capture the action.
2. Describe the satisfaction you gained from the activity. Be specific. What was it about that activity that felt so satisfying? (Don't be afraid to "boast" a little when talking about the satisfaction you received from that activity).

Listener Role: Encourage your friend by listening. As you listen to the story, picture the description in your mind. Ask him/her to fill in the picture by asking questions like, "What would I have seen you doing as you _____?" Ask for specific details.

Let the person tell the story and give positive feedback by maintaining eye contact, nodding as you gain understanding, and giving other non-verbal clues that you are focused on him/her. Don't insert your own stories into the conversation, just listen and ask clarification questions. Let your friend know that they have your full attention.

Step 2: Reflection:

Story Teller: Take a moment to write down what you found so satisfying in the activity that you described to your friend.

Now take a moment to write down some of the action words (or verbs) that you used to accomplish the activity.

Listener: Write down in a summary sentence what you saw your friend doing when he/she was in his/her sweet spot.

Step 3: Once you've completed this exercise, then reverse roles.

Step 4: Repeat the exercise above 2 more times so that each person is able to share a total of 3 S.T.O.R.Y.s

Step 5: Take turns sharing what you saw your friend doing when he/she was in his/her sweet spot based on the three stories you heard. Avoid making judgments like, "I can see your perfectionist," or "It's clear that you like getting involved in other people's business."

Instead be specific and avoid generalities – "Your sweet spot seems to be about problem-solving. In each of your stories you solved a problem." Or "Your sweet spot seems to be about completing the job. In each story you stuck with it until the job was completely done and no detail was left undone."

Step 6: Use the S.T.O.R.Y. chart to help one another determine each other's:

Strengths, Topics, Optimal condition, Relationships and Yes!

Step 7: Now complete the Putting Together Your S.T.O.R.Y. worksheet.

Step 8: How would you phrase your S.T.O.R.Y. results in the context of work?

Complete the phrase by using your Strengths, Topics, Optimal Conditions, Relationships and Yes: Avoid occupational titles. Describe your ideal job in terms of your giftedness.

I'd work best in a job where I could use my strengths for _____ (Strengths)

to work on/with _____ (Topic)

under the conditions of _____ (Optimal Conditions)

in a _____ relationship (Relationships)

in order to _____ (Yes!)

Step 9: Discuss what you might do to make your current job a better fit to your giftedness.

Your job could be a career in the work force, your job as a stay-at-home parent, your job as an unemployed person to find ways to use your giftedness as you look for work, your volunteer work now that you're retired. If the job doesn't fit at all, what might be some ways to begin looking for a better fit?

To create a better fit you might:

Add – add a new task or responsibility to your job that you do well and find satisfying

Subtract – try to remove some of the tasks that you do that someone else could do better and find satisfying.

Multiply – find something outside of work that is in your sweet spot and energizes you. This can give you more energy to do your current job

Divide – try to divide the load of a task that you don't do well or find satisfaction in with someone else who is gifted to do the task. They'll take satisfaction in doing it.

Step 10: Now discuss with your friend the implications that your motivational abilities may have in the following spheres of life. How does this understanding of your giftedness affect the things you choose to do, things you volunteer for, your effectiveness in the various roles you play?

___ Relationships

___ Involvement in Church

___ Marriage

___ Parenting

Step 11: Make a lifelong habit of paying attention to your giftedness so you can maximize your giftedness and give glory to God.

Reflect regularly on your sweet spot and how you're using it

Connect with others to tell sweet spot stories.

Project into the future – looking for new ways to live into your sweet spot

Direct your energy toward areas that utilize your sweet spot.

(This resource has been adapted for the CSLI Fellows program and most of this material has been taken from: Max Lucado. *Cure for the Common Life: Living in Your Sweet Spot*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005. & William Hendricks and Richard Wellock for People Management International, Inc. *Small Group Study: Cure for the Common Life* by Max Lucado. Nashville: Nelson Impact, 2006.)

S.T.O.R.Y. Chart

Identifying the Recurring Themes in Your Life

Directions: Read your stories and then underline the verbs and **put a box around the nouns**. Then fill in the chart below.

Strengths: (List the underlined verbs and actions from your stories)	
Topics: (List the boxed nouns and subjects from your stories)	
Optimal Conditions: (Describe what gets your energy started and keeps you going in your stories.)	
Relationships: (Describe what role and relationship to others you take on in your stories.)	
Yes!: (Describe what themes you see in “What felt most satisfying to you!”)	

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Putting Together Your S.T.O.R.Y.

Directions: Use the following sentence starters to summarize what you have learned about your unique gift mix.

The themes in my S.T.O.R.Y. show that God has put me together so that I love to
(insert your **Strengths**)

I particularly like to do that with (insert your **Topics**)

I work best in optimal conditions that include (insert your **Optimal Conditions**)

I am at my best when I'm in the role of (insert your **Relationships**)

All these themes of my S.T.O.R.Y. work together so that I can (insert your **Yes!**)

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