

# Thriving in Your Genius Zone

*by Dr. Debbie Phillips, CPM®*

Have you ever participated in a meeting in which everyone in the room seemed to add value by virtue of their strengths and personal passion? The most positive outcome of any project is often a combination of clear objectives, timing, resources, and team synergy. Synergy isn't always a given. There are times when turf guarding, information hoarding and internal strife interrupts success! When individual team members are using their natural gifts, abilities and inner spirit working in tandem with other team members, momentum increases, and success is more likely. In real estate, we talk about the highest and best use of an asset. I believe the same is true for an individual – when a person recognizes their strengths and natural abilities and offers a meaningful contribution to a team or project, this person is playing in their “genius zone.” Don't confuse your Genius Zone with “being in the zone” or as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi refers to as a being in the “flow,” a mental state of being fully immersed in a feeling of energizing focus. In fact, this is often a by-product of what happens when someone is in their Genius Zone. When your work is your calling or your vocation is your advocacy, it is easy to get lost in your work.

People often ask me, “how does one identify their strengths or know when they are in the zone?”

1. **Utilize various assessments and look for common themes.** Recommendations include: Strengthfinder 2.0 by Gallup.com; Sparktype at [www.goodlifeproject.com](http://www.goodlifeproject.com); Strengths Based Assessment & Evaluation by Catherine Simmons, Ph.D.
2. **Collect your thoughts and journal.** Journaling can have a positive effect on your behavior and well-being. It is a personal experience and can be a valuable reflection tool. After journaling for sixty to ninety days look for common themes or topics that bring the most pleasure and produce positive energy. Identify

powerful thoughts that resonate with your identity and spur you on to future work.

3. **Join a mastermind group and collaborate with others.** Associating with like-minded professionals that share similar interests can be extremely motivating. As Susan Scott points out in her book, *Fierce Conversations*, treat conversations as a beach ball and listen to others as they represent the bands on the beachball. When you hear creative ideas, you can expand on those and create something of greater value.
4. **Pay attention to where you spend your time.** If you want to know what is important to you, look at where you spend your time. It's amazing that when you love your work, you can get lost in research and discover another extension of the topic you are most passionate about. Before you know it, you've invested valuable time in expanding your body of knowledge around a subject or project.
5. **Classify your activities or work into three buckets: drainers, neutral, and fillers.** There are people and projects that absolutely drain your energy and suck every ounce of your positive mental mojo out of you. Guess what? That is NOT your work or your tribe! In life, everyone has the obligatory events and activities that come with serving in a role or meeting a commitment. These necessities end up being a zero sum activity and your goal should be to delegate these responsibilities or eliminate as much of them as possible. The fillers, this bucket is where you strike gold! These activities or people energize you, strengthen you and motivate you to be better than you were the day before! This is truly where you get the most satisfaction and enjoyment from and it doesn't always have to be for money! There are tangible and intangible benefits that are found in this area of your life. In fact, one way to confirm that you are in your Genius Zone is when you receive feedback from others like "you make that look so easy, how do you do that?" What are those activities that you would do even if you didn't get paid for them? The majority of us have to work, so we owe it to ourselves to

enjoy the projects and people that add value to our lives and fill our emotional tank. Martha Friedman says, "Success based on anything but internal fulfillment is bound to be empty."

As a real estate professional with over 30 years, I have been unusually blessed to work in an industry that provides a basic necessity in life: housing. Experts predict that over the next ten years, 4.6 million new apartments will be needed to meet demand as more Millennials choose renting over home ownership and retiring baby boomers prefer a maintenance free lifestyle. It is my hope that others find the joy and fulfillment that comes from doing something that they absolutely love and provides personal gratification long after the pay check. As Theodore Roosevelt remarked, "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." This can be found when people identify their strengths, give up the need to be "needed" for everything and consciously focusing on the very specific work that creates extreme joy. When that happens, a person can truly live and play in their Genius Zone!

*Dr. Debbie Phillips, CPM® is a real estate professional with over 30 years of experience in diverse property types. She is a thought leader, industry advisor, career coach, author and nationally acclaimed speaker. Debbie can be reached at [Debbie@TheQuadrillion.com](mailto:Debbie@TheQuadrillion.com) or 404-787-4409.*