Productive Conclusions

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I was cleaning out my shelf when I saw it sitting there. *Soar with Your Strengths* by Dan Clifton, I thought it was such a cheesy title when Allisen gave it to me for our eight month anniversary, but I didn't want to be a dick. That was nearly three months ago now. She's still recovering from the accident.

I sat down in my old plaid chair with a broken arm and began reading. The Five Characteristics of Strengths: Listen for Yearnings, Watch for Satisfactions, Watch for Rapid Learning, Glimpses of Excellence, and Total Performance of Excellence. What Amazing ideas. I memorized them all that very night and started spouting them off to the guys at the factory. They said to lay off the drugs, life isn't that easy. Allisen said she could see a new fire in my eyes that had been gone too long. Every day seemed to be better than the last. I even began visiting Mom. I was in control of my life.

I began reading and re-reading *Soar*. I know that Paula Nelson was a co-writer, but we all know she didn't write shit. Dan is just that nice of a guy. I read the book with a pair of gloves and tweezers to avoid getting the book too dirty and to not wrinkle the pages. How can I Soar if I wrinkle the pages? Dan definitely would not approve. I put Velcro on the binding so I could attach it to the wooden stand where I pile my bills. Paying bills is definitely not one of my strengths, so why try to fix my weaknesses, right? It was during this time that Dad was in the hospital. Dad focused too much on his weaknesses. "Often we obsess in our weaknesses in our attempts to correct them" p78. Dad was so driven by his job that the stress gave him the heart attack. If he had realized he would never truly be successful at his career and just quit, he'd still be healthy. I left school, because I never was good at tests so what's the point? I can make it on my own because I have strengths. I am strong and motivated. Allisen got upset with me, but that's just because she's dwelling in her weakness too. The girl can't even walk now.

It was about the time I caught Allisen with Dex that Dan came to town. I was so excited to see him. The Baulder was definitely not an adequate place for someone of his stature, just a low-end bookstore run by hippies. There were about 20...
twenty people at the signing. Dan swelled with an energy that told me I could take on the world. I noticed the water stain on the wall created a ring around Dan’s head if you looked at it just right, a halo. After Dan’s speech, we all were able to talk to him. The Goth girl budged in front of me, so I “accidently” slid my foot along the back of her calf, tearing those ridiculous fishnets. What is with kids today? They need a “New Direction” as Dan puts it in chapter two. I froze up when I shook his hand. He asked my name, but I couldn’t speak. He took my book from my hand and told me he loved the Velcro. I smiled and nodded as he took out his pen and swiftly wrote “Thanks Soar! Dan Clifton.” It was when I walked out that I saw her at the diner with Dex.

There’s a story of Dr. Bob Barkley on page 109. A woman comes to his dental office and asks to have all her teeth pulled because they are too weak and soft. Dr. Barkley doesn’t do it and offers another plan that will strengthen her teeth through diet. She lies and says she needs time to think about it. He later sees her without the teeth and finds his mission in life to help people with self-esteem. This taught me the way.

I needed to cleanse and educate all those around me, especially that slut Allisen and man-whore Dex just like Soar says on p. 34, “Focus on Strengths by Weeding Out Weaknesses.” Allisen was weak and couldn’t control her earthly desires. That’s why I allowed fate to take its natural course by cutting her brake lines at Dex’s house. Dan would be proud of me for helping these two see how they were lost in their weaknesses.

I sent mom flowers the day Dad died. I told her I wouldn’t make it to the funeral because they were auctioning my house in a week, so I had to move my stuff. She threw such a fit. As Dan states on page 149, it was just an “exaggerated response.” Maybe I’ll go see Allisen today and read her some more from the book. The trees are blooming already outside; today really is a good day.