

about this workbook

What is included?

This Workbook is designed to be used in tandem with the book and audio book CD, **Reflecting Strengths: transformative lessons from resilient youth**, by Chris Trout, published by Strengths in Focus, © 2006, 2007, ISBN: 9781933556901. The full Workbook package contains all three resources: the Workbook, book and CD. If you purchased the Workbook alone, have lost any part of the package, or wish to obtain additional copies, you may purchase these materials in hard copy or as digital downloads at www.strengthsinfocus.com. (The book can also be purchased at www.amazon.com.) Please note: The 1st edition of the book, as well as the current (as of this writing) audio book CD, still have the longer subtitle **twenty-one stories and reflections on helping our children know grow and live from their strongest selves**. This simply reflects my recognition that a briefer subtitle was needed, so I took advantage of the 2nd printing to make this change. Do not be concerned, both editions and the CD contain the same chapters and may be used interchangeably.

Important note for group facilitators

Best results will be gained if each participant has their own Workbook. While you are welcome to use this Workbook as a facilitator's guide, reading content and exercise instructions for participants to discuss or complete in their own journals, *only* the materials in Appendix I & II may be copied for participant use. While there are distinct advantages to each participant having a copy of the book and/or CD, excellent training/facilitation can be accomplished using the CD for group listening.

The Workbook, book and CD are copyrighted materials. Thank you for respecting the copyright by copying only those materials for which explicit permission has been granted.

Who will use this Workbook?

One of the most remarkable and unexpected outcomes of writing **Reflecting Strengths** is the degree to which people have applied the lessons in all aspects of their personal and professional lives. It has been enthusiastically passed between parents, teachers, business managers, social workers, mentors, probation officers, administrators, trainers, executive coaches, spouses, advocates, personal development specialists and folks just finding their own way in the world.

To accommodate these diverse applications without creating needless confusion, the Workbook was designed to accomplish four key objectives:

1. Share core strengths-focused concepts in a way that allows the reader to project them onto his/her own circumstances.
2. Use examples that, consistent with the book, focus on youth development, but illustrate life lessons that have application in our work, relationships and personal development.
3. Design exercises, questions and reflective opportunities in a way that allows the reader to personalize and adapt them to his/her own circumstances.
4. Create a design that is equally useful to individuals and to those using the Workbook to facilitate group process.

Let me say up front that these objectives did not always play well together and the attempt to serve them all worked better in some sections than others. Nonetheless, the attempt has been made and I trust that you will find the results useful.

How it is organized?

Rather than mirror the organization of the book, this Workbook has been organized to allow the logical unfolding of key concepts. Along the way, you will be referred to specific chapters in the book/CD, as well as additional articles and materials found in the appendices.

Each section discusses a key concept or set of concepts. This is usually followed by instructions to Read/Listen to a chapter from the book or other reading. (**Note:** Chapter numbers from the book and track numbers from the CD are identical, so are used interchangeably.) This is followed by exercises such as: **Consider** **Write / Discuss** **Do.**

Important note about the exercises: Not all readers will wish to complete all exercises. Some are designed for personal growth and reflection. Some are designed for people living and working with youth. And some are designed for those who wish to focus on a single young person throughout the Workbook. You may complete these for the same child throughout or a different child each time. It is my guess that most readers will mix and match these different exercises. Do the ones you are drawn to do and leave the others for another day. For everything there is a season...

How can I get the most out of it if?

Whether you are an individual using the guide for your personal development, or a supervisor, trainer or facilitator using the guide to work with a group of staff or volunteers, this guide has been designed to provide the maximum possible flexibility. Experienced facilitator's will find them selves using many group techniques to keep the discussion dynamic and fresh. First-timers will find the guidance they need to walk through the material with confidence.

For simplicity, the material has been designed to be used with equal effectiveness by group leaders or individuals. **Individuals** may simply treat the discussion questions as prompts for personal reflection or journaling. Journaling your thoughts will provide a valuable record to look back on at a later time. I encourage you to engage at least one colleague or friend to work with you. I love coffee, so I suggest going out for coffee a lot! **Facilitators** will find below some of the group strategies that will keep the experience fresh. Here again, having the group write their answers or providing time to journal their thoughts after each discussion will provide a valuable anchor to the learning.

I am pleased to work directly with you or your group via phone or email coaching.

Tips for group facilitators

There are many ways to facilitate group learning and discussion. I encourage you to mix and match these strategies to keep the experience fresh and interesting. There is nothing quite so dull as sitting through repeated long “sharing” circles or “report outs.” It is not essential that every participant share their thoughts on every question or exercise. By using the provided journal pages, each participant can create a record of their thoughts, reactions, break-throughs, etc. So here are some ideas. Mix it up!

- Traditional: Go around the circle and have each participant share their response. This can be good for small groups of five (5) or fewer.
- Invite folks to share their responses by asking for someone to begin, then moving organically from person to person as they wish to share. Not everyone need respond each time and the facilitator can move on when the time seems right. Use of a “talking stick” or any object that represents “having the floor” can help manage the group process.
- Have folks pair off and share responses with their partner. You can then...
 - Have each participants introduce their partner by sharing his/her response.
 - Have one of the partners summarize their discussion.
 - Let the partner experience stand on its own, without reporting back to the group.
 - Have 2-3 pairs gather together in a group of 4-6 and share with each other.
- Have individuals gather in groups of 4-5 to discuss their responses.
- Have individuals write their responses first, then share, using any of the groupings above.

In all cases, you can provide the opportunity for participants to summarize their responses or learning on the provided sheets. Alternatively, you may record a summary of group responses on a single sheet. Be creative, mix it up, have folks do some on their own, some in pairs, some in small groups, some in the big group. Keep the discussion animated and let folks express their doubts, insecurities and challenges. Just work through the process and each participant will find their own level of understanding and will implement insights in their own ways. I am delighted to coach you through the process. If you need assistance or clarification, please feel free to contact me. Now go do it!
