

# Rebuild Your Backbone

## TOPIC OVERVIEW

### Leverage your strengths, rewrite your stories

#### Week Three, July 13

Thank you so much for your wonderful emails and posts this week! The play lists are the best, I really want to create one page with all of them listed, so we have a source of joy and inspiration in one click!

Please note that all recordings and homework are now posted on:

<http://www.escapefromcubiclenation.com/backbonerecordings>

This quote sums up a lot of what we have been talking about so far:

""When you surrender and stop resisting and stop trying to change that which you can't change, but be in the moment, be fully open to the blessings you've already received and those that are yet to come & stand in that space of gratitude ... and look at where you are and how far you've come and what you've accomplished - when you can claim THAT and SEE that, the literal vibration of your life will change."

-Oprah

This week, we talked about describing your strengths, naming your superpowers (or medicine) and rewriting tired country songs in your head that make you spiral down into a bad place.

- **Strengths are the cornerstones of life design.** By strengths, I mean things that you naturally do well, and also get great joy from while doing them. Marcus Buckingham wrote "Now Discover Your Strengths" that is a great book on the subject, and there is also an online assessment you can take for about 20 bucks:  
<http://strengths.gallup.com/110440/About-StrengthsFinder-2.aspx>
- **You can get stuck and trapped from moving forward if you let old stories and patterns take over.** The first step is acknowledging that you do have an old, tired story like "I will never make any money," or "I always get behind" or "I have no idea which strengths I have!" The key is to acknowledge it is a rut, and rewrite the story to get back on track.
- **Part of building your backbone is getting used to tough feedback.** The more you get "out there," the more thoughts and opinions people will have about what you are doing. Some will be tremendously useful and will build your strengths, and other will be unproductive and drag you back into your old story. Practice sifting through the feedback to get to the good bits, and drop the rest.

Now, let's get to your homework!

## HOMEWORK

This week's homework is intended to clarify your strengths and rewrite your unhelpful stories.

### Instructions:

#### Part One:

Think of times when you have done highly effective and energizing work. Notice:

1. What were you doing? (building/designing/speaking/evaluating/etc)
2. How were you being? (intuitive/organized/creative/funny/etc)
3. What "super power" or "medicine" did you use?
4. Describe these strengths and superpowers in as much detail as you can

#### Part Two:

(This exercise is borrowed from Martha Beck, and described in detail in her book *Finding Your Own North Star*.) Identify one common thought or story that runs through your head and makes you feel crappy, in addition to keeping you stuck and distant from your vision of success.

1. **Write your version of the story how it currently plays in your head.** This can be something like: "Ever since I was in grade school, I was always late turning in my assignments. I am such a loser and I will never learn to do anything on time."
2. **Write an alternate version of the story, casting yourself instead in the role of a hero, with courage and a positive outcome.** "For 25 years, I struggled against a system that gave no value to creative thinkers. I am now at a point where I am ready to find a way to get things done that respects how I think and operate. I am so glad that I learned the powerful lesson that forcing myself to do things in a way that isn't natural does not work for me."

I realize that this part of the exercise may not be totally comfortable putting out there on the site. It is great if you are comfortable with that, or as an alternative, you could send it to me to review personally. Either way works for me, just trust your instinct!

#### Part Three Bonus:

Create and post a picture of your superhero shirt. Or medicine shirt, as it were. 😊 A slogan is great, or just an image, as in Rebecca's example of "legal contract zen."

## Resources

Post I wrote on the topic of “dealing with difficult feedback”:

<http://www.escapefromcubiclenation.com/2006/05/15/developing-your-entrepreneur-chops-get-comfortable-with-tough-feedback/>

After reading this post and information, if you get stuck with the homework, put a post on the Posterous site calling for input and help.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR POSTING

You have two options if you want to share your homework:

- 1) **Post it publicly** by sending an email with your content (audio, video or just text) to [post@rebuildyourbackbone.posterous.com](mailto:post@rebuildyourbackbone.posterous.com)

You can check to see if it posts by visiting: <http://rebuildyourbackbone.posterous.com/>

- 2) **Share it with me privately** by sending an email to [pam@pamelaslim.com](mailto:pam@pamelaslim.com) with the subject line: **Backbone homework**

If you have any trouble with either method, send an email to [support@pamelaslim.com](mailto:support@pamelaslim.com)

Feel free to comment on other posts on the Posterous site – it is your place to connect with each other!

Thanks and talk soon!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam".