CHAPTER 7

Personally Sound: Tapping into Your Talents
One of the first principles of consulting that professors drilled into my head when I entered the master’s program in organizational development at Pepperdine University was that “the more personally sound you are, the better consultant you’ll be.”

At first, this only made intellectual sense to me. Later, after weeks of “T-groups”—sensitivity training where I got to know more about myself—the message about being “personally sound” truly began to sink in. Images of my life and the feelings attached to them kept coming up, and I didn’t like everything I saw, nor was I comfortable with what I felt.

As I began the process of discovery, however, I slowly began seeing myself in a different light. I began to see strengths, courage, beauty, and intellect hiding behind a persona I created that projected confidence and authority. I slowly allowed myself to try new ways of thinking without fear of failure. I tapped into something I couldn’t define at the time. Two things became a driving force for me: Learning more about myself and realizing that I needed to separate my personal and professional issues from my clients’ challenges. It would be easy but not professional to transfer and project my inner thoughts, emotions, and perspectives onto my clients. I must be capable of maintaining objectivity during a coaching session, team building activity, or analyzing results from an assessment. Understanding me is the key to achieving this mature level of self-awareness.