



Podcast „Z pasją o mocnych stronach”

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Tytuł: Podcast 044 – Rozmowa z Jimem Collisionem

Hello, Jim!

Hi! Greetings!

Probably in the beginning of that interview I will play the beginning to the *Gallup Theme Thursday* show. You know the saying: “Hey, I’m Jim Collision from Ohio.” People in Poland know you from that phrase.

It is funny that the intro that we do is an old radio trick. In the United States for a lot of years radio dominated the air waves for the 50., 60. and 70. And radio announcers would literally do the same thing and it is actually a preparatory thing that I used to help people get prepared for the moment. So when I say: “Hello, I’m Jim Collision live from the Gallup Campus here in Nebraska” that is actually a mental trick for people listening to podcast to know that they have found the right place and they are now comfortable with it. It is very intentional that we go into each of the broadcasts with the same opening.

Are you doing it live? It is not pre-recorded?

Yes, every intro is done exactly the same way although I read them live every single time. The first couple once were a little rough but then I get into kind of a rhythm. And they work themselves out. So if you go back to the early episodes at some of our webcasts, I feel like I am saying them really slow. But after you have done them six hundred times, they come up pretty fast.

When I listen to your podcast on the speed one point five or twice, it is really, really fast.

That is a great way to consume podcast. When we started the Gallup podcast it was three or four years ago and in those days nobody really knew what a podcast was. So one of our marketing folks says: “Why don’t we call them webcasts?” Now we try to switch over to podcasts to that as well.

The podcast become so popular in the last few months .

Yes, for sure.

Please introduce yourself for those people in Poland who do not know what StrengthsFinder is.

I have been in Gallup for ten years. My first introduction to StrengthsFinder was actually twelve years ago in an organization here in Omaha. Basically StrengthsFinder is the assessment tool that you can take that will give you the opportunity to discover these top five talent themes. Discovering those themes for me for the first time was kind of life changing. It was the first time that I realized: “Oh, I do a lot of crazy things and I do them spontaneously. And I like to be super busy and active.” But I hang out with people who did not appreciate those talents. When for the first time I read those things and saw them as potentially positive and what I could do and what I was best at, it really begin the journey for me. It starts me walking through that I tried always to be something I was not. I always tried to be disciplined or responsible. I was the guy who was trying to be better at things I was not good at.

StrengthsFinder gave me the excuse, ability and opportunity to embrace what I am good at. I say on our webcast all the time: “I am a better firefighter than I am a farmer.” But for a lot of years I tried to be a farmer: plant seeds, wait for them to grow, nurturing along the way. I was not built that way. I needed excitement. I needed to go out when something is on fire and take care of it. I wanted high activity, high action. That was not always welcomed from the group I was in. So over the last decade I have tried to put myself out into roles where those kind of things were appreciated. Also when I was a student in high school, I got a comment on my grades: “Jim is an excellent student but he talks too much”. I have this Woo communication theme combo in my top five. And I saw it as a negative – I talk too much. What should people who talk too much do? They should go into the roles that they can talk all the time. And here I am – talking to you – I have done six or seven hundred podcasts over the last three or four years. It is a really great role. Over the last decades, StrengthsFinder helps me kind of really strike my career in a way that it would be beneficial to me and put me in the place where I can be most successful. So for that I run a technology internship program for both college and high school students. I love working with students. There is a great fit in there, there are a lot of moving parts, there is a lot of action in there. It is that high energy that fits well. And then I do all the webcasts available for most folks if they go to coaching.gallup.com. That is our coaches blog and all our webcasts are out there. It is a great opportunity for folks to get involved. That is a little bit of my story of getting where I am today.

Your top five theme talents are Arranger, Woo, Maximizer, Communication and Activator.

Yes, a really scary top five for a lot of people. They always look at it and goes: “Wow!” For me it is exactly what it is. It allows me to have high energy. Every group I go into says: “Wow! I wish I had your energy!” I love to be in front of people. I love to influence. Four out of five of those talents are of influence domain. So I love to influence and inspire people. It is a perfect role to be in and talk about podcast.

When I read about you I was not surprised that you have another podcast called *Home Gadget Geeks* – you can find it on the *Ask the Podcast Coach*.

It is interesting because I actually have my own network called *The Average Guy Network* at theaverageguy.tv. We do two podcasts there. One is called *Home Gadget Geeks*. It is all about the technology things that you can put in your homes – digital systems, computers, phones, the home automation. Then I do *Cyber Frontiers* which is all about data, cyber security. I have a friend who helps me with that. But then I partner with Dave Jackson on *Ask the Podcast Coach*. So on Saturday mornings at nine thirty a.m. Dave and I do a life show and we take questions from podcasters. I always like to give back. That is an easy show for me. Again – Woo and Communication. And the show started because I was activating. Dave was messing around with some technology and I wanted to help him out. He said: “You wanna start a show?” And what does the Activator say? “Sure! Let’s do this!”

It sounds a little bit like a Developer. Do you have it as well?

Positivity, Individualization, Relator, Developer down at these six themes that work with people. I like doing that.

The last bit of information that I was surprised when I googled you was that you are a former Microsoft MVP.

Yes, former and actually current. Their MVP program is going through some changes but I am Windows insider MVP which means that I test out Microsoft build for Windows just to make sure that they get a good feedback.

Can you just say what the MVP stands for?

Most Valuable Partner for Microsoft. It is a little hobby that I do. It is just the fun thing to have. It is something to do when I have nothing else to do.

Can you say how *Gallup Theme Thursday* started?

We had actually been doing *Call the Coach* that had been about six months into that. We had those coaches that we trained around the world. And I had been podcasting in technology for about two or three years to that point and I thought: "Hey, I got this great way to communicate with coaches all around the world, keep them up to date on what they are doing." So we started the podcast first with *Call the Coach*. Curt Liesveld was on the *Call the Coach* program. And he said on the program: "Wouldn't it be great if we did something like this for each and every theme? And we would dig into them in the chartroom?" We do our podcast live. And the chartroom went crazy. Almost like I have never seen it before or after. Everybody just said: "Yes, yes, yes!" So I met with Curt right after the program. And then we started to line down the ground work for this idea of doing a webcast around themes. It has not been done before in that form – like a series. And that is how the *Theme Thursday* was born.

And are you doing it already for three years?

Actually for three seasons which is four years. The first season took us almost two years to get through. We were doing them every other week, actually every third week for a while. Then we sped them up to every other week. We started doing them weekly right before Curt passed away. We got twenty four episodes in when Curt passed away in May. And then we took the rest of the year and I got the other ten scheduled and follow up. So we finished them at the end of that year. One of the folks that helped me up finish that season was Maika Leibbrandt. I ask Maika if she would stay on for season two. And season two of the *Theme Thursday* which we did in 2016 is all about the themes but it is just Maika and I and we take it from the theme dynamics perspective. Curt wrote a book called *Expanding Your Strengths*, where he talks about theme dynamic. This book is available internationally and if you go to our website coaching.gallup.com and look at the resources tab, there is a link for this book. Season two was based on that book. Season three is this year and we have just wrapped a couple of weeks ago, thank Goodness for that, because Maika had a baby literally last week and we had to cancel our final episode. So those are the three seasons – four years – a whole bunch of episodes.

And that is one of the most beloved resource to learn about themes/talents.

Yes, it has been received well. It is a little bit of a surprise. I do not think we anticipated it being as popular as it was. It probably does two or three times the download that we get from *Call the Coach*. I get massive amount of feedback on it. It is loved.

And you have a copycat in me, because I do something similar in Poland. Do you know if people do it in other languages as well?

There are other versions. We have created our own Spanish version of it. There are four hundred and forty-five million Spanish speaking people around the world. We have some resources that can help us

with this. So we have *Theme Thursday* in Spanish, just seven episodes, it is taking us a while till we get there. But I hope we get there. Getting all those resources lined up has been difficult. Those are the official once. There are other like you, I am sure. I really appreciate that because it is hard for us to scale up for each and every language. From a number seeing point, Chinese would be the next I would need to move to. So I always appreciate when folks step up and create these kind of webcasts.

We will talk about what is coming in the future for Gallup StrengthsFinder or should I call it CliftonStrengths now?

Yes, it has been interesting because we have been slowly changing the brand name StrengthsFinder. That terminology had some problem of its own. Because of Don Clifton, the founder of StrengthsFinder, we really wanted to get the legacy with his name on it. And we began to switch that over to CliftonStrengths. It is referenced either or. It is gonna take us a while to change the name from StrengthsFinder CliftonStrengths completely. But both still work.

My podcast in Poland is called *Gallup Test*, as it was one of the most frequently asked phrase in Google when people searched for StrengthsFinder.

It is interesting. In English we separate the term *test* and *assessment* to be used as two different ways of taking the discovery tool. So a *test* would have right and wrong answers while the assessment shows ones abilities or discovering things. This happens a lot – people call it *testing* in English - and we are trying to change that. We prefer more the term *assessment*. With the CliftonStrengths there are no right or wrong answers – just the once that are yours.

Can you tell listeners in Poland what Gallup organization is. Because most people know Gallup only because of the assessment StrengthsFinder.

Which is interesting as well because in the United States it is mostly knows for a polling. If I ask people around the US: “What do you think Gallup does?” nine out of ten times they say: “Polling.” When I have students applying for a job here that is one of the first or second question I asked them. Many times they say: “Polling”. That is what we are known for. If you look at our website gallup.com we are known for analytics and advice. We ask a lot of questions and we turned those questions into a great answers and we consult back on those answers. In the two areas – strength is one of them - but we are really more known for employing engagement practices than we are at strengths. We have had more than twenty-five million people take our Q-12 assessment in enterprise. We have had organizations like Stryker Inn, Exeter Inn and big companies like Walt Disney Corporation that take either our employment or strengths or selection tools. We also have a tool that folks can take that help you selecting the right employees for the right job. We called that *Selection*. Those are the three things that we do. We also do a role poll every single year that represent ninety-eight percent of the world’s population. That is a representative sample not whole population. There is no way we could ask all of those questions. But it is a representative sample. We plan to do that for the next hundred years. So if you think of Gallup – *analytics* and *advice* are great two words to use. *The analytics* is asking questions and figuring out answers, *the advice* is the consulting back on it. We do that with CliftonStrengths. The model is that you come to our website, purchase the assessment, take it – the hundred and seventy-seven paired questions all about you, no wrong answers – and at the end we give you a report. Not just your top five but a theme insight report. A report that has some five thousand statements available to you that really describe you. That is *the advice*. And that is all just for the price of the assessment.

Then we have a globe full of coaches, now about eight thousand trainers and four thousand certified coaches. That if you want to go deeper, you can do that with a coach. You can hire a coach. The intermediate step of course is that we have a huge community like you around the world whose creating professional development content that you can hold on to at first. But we really think that strength engaged with the coach is the most productive.

I went to London to take the certification course. I am also certified Gallup coach. I know that some time ago you were not that open for external coaches and then you started to train and certify coaches from external world. Why did that happen? I remember that you have some strategy to have some big number of coaches there in the world helping people to get to know their talents.

Yes. Five years ago was the time when the organization began to change. And we began to see that we have the opportunity and we are in the right place. Before we did all the work. We think that there is probably a billion people who could take StrengthsFinder. Today there are about seventeen and a half million so we have a long way to go. So if you think about a billion people, they will gonna need coaches. And there is no way as an organization that we can scale out in large companies, medium sized companies, small companies and maybe even one-on-one coaching are independently consulted. And so they said: "You know what we can do? We can begin to train coaches." And folks like you came and take a week long course – eight hours a day, it is forty hours' worth of training – very condensed, intense week. It is a lot of fun – I get a lot of great feedback on that as well – but it is a very intense week. Like I have mentioned before in the last four years we have done about eight thousand coaches around the world and about half of them – so four thousand – is certified. It is just a fundamental shift. The number one question I always get: "Jim, you say a billion people – how is that gonna scale?" We do not know. It is gonna happen someday. A billion people is a lot – we got a lot of work to do. I do know however it is gonna have to be exponential growth to get there. It cannot be one to one, it has to be one to ten. We got to have one person reaching ten. Those ten have to take CliftonStrengths. It is the only way it will happen.

That is a great goal. When I talk to people that took the assessment and worked with themes, they get to know what are their talents, how to work with them and how to develop them, how to move from their role to match to mature, how to build their strengths out of talents – it is transformational for them. And they really start to be different people. When you experience it on yourself, you are willing to do it for others. And I experienced it first hand with all the people I have worked with. And I can confirm that this week-long training is forty hours of really hard work but a lot of fun. I think it was the best training I have ever underwent because I learned so much and there were people from all over the world.

Let's now talk a little bit about globalization because you are an American company and you started in English. I know that there are many languages that you can choose from when you are taking the assessment, including Polish, but then the reports and all the best resources you get after the test are only in few selected languages: English, Spanish, Chinese?

Yes, there are nine languages if you go to gallupstrengthscenter.com and roll down to the bottom of the page, you will see link to those nine languages across the bottom. We make it available in twenty-nine languages, so there are twenty that we are leaving out from a report theme point. It is a very frustrating thing for our folks. By the way, in Poland you are not alone, our French speaking friends – there are a lot of people speaking French around the world in Europe and in Africa – and they do not have it as well. We are working as fast as we can. We can get those languages translated and the roles

when the numbers make sense for us. This is a question I feel all the time when in the role that I am in – because I talk to people all around the world about this. It is a difficult task. It is not just about translating because if that was the case, it would be easy. It is translating it right and there is a whole bunch of places it has to be updated to make that piece work. What we have found, we have done some translating early that did not really capture the heart and soul. And I do not know how well that will translate into Polish but this idea of – in United States it is represented in two ways: the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. The letter is the exact translation when we think of it – how does it translate literally, how does it go from this word means that and this word means that. But strength is something that is very emotional. It is felt. So it translates differently. What we have found in different cultures, for example in German culture, their language is very exact in a lot of way, we find sometimes that no two German can agree on the same word for a feeling. A lot of languages, even in English, when we first built CliftonStrengths, there were a lot of discussion what these words means. I think for the first three, four or five years some of the theme names got changed. *Fairness* became *Consistency*. We even struggled in English language. A lot of people come and ask: “Can I just translate it?” And we are like: “Well, it is not that easy. There is a lot of feeling that has to go into this.” It is a little bit of a chore to get it translated and pretty expensive when we do it the way that we need to do it. So we continue to work on those languages. We have every language that is available from the assessment kind of stocked up and as the teams has priorities and get those done, the translations are gonna get released. French is up next. We are just waiting for a few things to drop so that we can get that out the door. But we definitely put you guys in a difficult situation to take the assessment in that language and struggle to find resources outside of that. But you are helping with that, right? The work that you do is very helpful. I guess that you would like to ask me a question: “How can I help?” You are already helping. You have podcast that is done in a language that is helping people understand these things. That is part of the process.

Do you prioritized the translation on the number of people speaking the language or the number of assessments taken in that language?

Both. We look how many people speak the language and how well it has been represented in the assessment that we are taking. And there are probably a few other things as we are starting to make decisions. I would love to say it is easy: “This, this, this and it is kicked out.” A lot business decisions are not made that way. We kind of get a feel for what we are doing, how it is working in that area and how many resources we have there. It is a little complicated how exactly we figure this out.

When I checked last time I had the report about the number of people who took the assessment from March in Polish. It was thirty-five thousand people. Not much. It is 0.1 person of the population.

Do not be afraid though. As we move forward, we are taking all those things into account. We are going to need folks in those languages to continue to do great work, like you are doing, to help roll these things forward. What is particularly helpful – we love the podcasting stuff because it is spoken language, it has emotional and feeling side. What we find when we translate things from English to other languages and it is written, it could scrutinized like it is scripter. It just gets torn apart. But when we do it in spoken language, like the webcast that you do, people feel those emotions. It is just different. It get less scrutiny from a certain structure or form of a word. People are more willing to forgive people when they hear the spoken language than when they read things. I will be honest – spoken words stuff, way more powerful that written stuff. So keep doing what you are doing. I think it is much more valuable.

I can see that there are different places where you put translation because when you take CliftonStrengths for students and you set the language Polish, you will get the general descriptions in Polish. But when you take the CliftonStrengths for adults, you get the general descriptions in English. So maybe you can at least check whether you do not already have those translations.

We are merging those platforms together right now, so there is a lot of work. We have a lot of different styles. The CliftonStrengths for students assessment and Gallup Strengths Center assessment are the exact same assessments but the available reports are different. And we have been working to bring those together. In 2018 you will see a lot of changes like that. Hopefully we become more consistent. It is one place to go. As an example, we just rolled – these are available only in English – out Strengths Based Leadership report. So if you buy the book *Strengths Based Leadership* it has its own reports. You purchase this book, you put the code in the GSC now, those report become available to you. It is the first step to bring some of our separate tools into the platform so folks just have one place to go. It is a complaint that I get all the time: “There is just too many websites to go to. I can’t find stuff!” So we are working on that consolidation.

One last comment about translation and how massive job it is because not everyone knows that you have personalized reports that are based on your thirty-four talents. It is a lot to translate.

It is a lot of time to get it translated and to do it right. We did one language that we really struggled with, and we got a lot of push back on. So we are really sensitive to make sure that we are getting those things right. It is a little more work than that. It can be difficult.

When I talked to you about half a year ago I asked you whether at least we get subtitles for *Gallup Theme Thursday*. And you told me: “Establish the team in Poland that will do this and we can roll it out.” Is it still on?

Yes, it is still on. I think we were talking about the first season of *Theme Thursday Shorts*. We tried doing it initially in German and it did not go exactly how I was hoping for. What I am really trying to avoid is one person doing the transition and then a lot of argument about what words meant. So what I was hoping for was three people collaborating together on each theme. So one does it, another one checks it, then it gets checked again and it is signed off saying: “Yes, that is fine.” In YouTube I can download the files in English, send them to a team. The team will go through them, translate them to the language they work, send back to me in the same exact file form except in Polish. I can upload those to the video fairly easily and we get it done. But I would like to have a group of people working on it to make sure we get them accurate.

The last question about the Strengths. When there is a new person taking an assessment and finding their top five talents or the whole sequence, what is the best thing they can do? How they can start working with them?

Strengths is really a productivity tool. I think that sometimes we forget that it is not a self-assessment for self-actualization or self-realization. It is really about how do I make myself more productive? How do I discover these themes that help me do what I am doing better? What I recommend, get the top five, read through the reports then engage with someone else who has the same kind of strength. It is always most powerful in the context of a relationship with another human being. So do not keep it a secret. Work with someone else. Get a coach. That is the best possible situation. Or meet with someone else, if they have not taken it, have them take it and then spend some time talking about

that: “What do you see in me?” As you are reading through the report you also should think about how you would use these themes to be productive in the past. Do not filter that, by the way. Just start writing things down while figuring things out. This Strengths insight report will be difficult because it is in English but it has also five thousand scripted statements that can help you get somewhere. They have descriptive terms. By the way, they are not always spot on. These reports do not define you. You define you. It is still really important to remember that. This is the frame work. I think that some people take it too seriously sometimes. They think that some statements are not true. Awesome! It is not true but what is true about you? The idea is: “What are these things that make you more productive?” And start doing more of those. Like I mentioned to you, I figured out that I like to talk, to influence. How can I do more influencing things? And where do I have the more success in influencing? And begin to write those things down: “When have I had success?” And then in your current role start asking the question: “Now that I have discovered those themes, how do I take those talents and turn them into very productive things?” It would be a great conversation to have with your manager. By the way, if you manager does not wanna talk to you about this kind of things, it is probably the time for a new manager. You might gonna look for another job, because that is manager’s job to make the most productive version of you.

So take those, begin to think about them and then take these steps to try to figure out how you can be more productive. Really, at the end of the day, that is it. Sometimes we try to make it for more that it is. One of the other thing that I encourage folks to do is to track their productivity. “I am doing this in my role and I need to do this to be successful. I am going to deploy some tactics based on how I am built. Is it making me more productive?” You have to inspect what you expect. So you have to have some numbers to be able to do it. In big organizations we use our Q12 assessment – Employee Engagement assessment – to measure whether the strengths are making a change in organizations. Because strengths and engagement go together. It is like peanut butter and jelly. You need to make sure you are measuring this as well. It is not just to make that difference but how you can measure that difference.

I agree with you. It is not the tool that let us know who we are but it is a starting point to think how we can be more productive and effective. I also took the course High Performance Team Leadership which is about engagement in Q12 and there in the guides how a manger can talk to and employee, strengths are all over in those guides. How can you use them in everyday work, how it helps you to be more productive and how it helps you being more successful in your role. As you said – this is a framework that is used in many places.

And numbers would say – we count everything in Gallup. In the United Sates the average company only has about thirty percent engagement. So only three in ten actually want to be there. Which is crazy when we think about it. And that number is pretty consistent for a decade. We may be gone from twenty-nine to thirty-two which is not statistically all that different. But in the organizations that we have worked with over the last ten years and that are doing the things that are necessary in the Q12 to measure their engagement, they go from thirty to seventy percent. When they focus on what people do best, when they worry about the thing whether people have materials and equipment. When they focus on friendships at work. When they have recognition programs that actually happen. When people are being recognized for meaningful things. When those things begin to happen, we can see seventy percent. Seven in ten as opposed to three in ten. And of course those numbers translate to real dollars. Those resort to higher stock price, more engagement, people get sick less, people steal less. All those things happen when we are more engaged. So it is really, really, really important that

we think in this philosophy: “Name it, claim it and aim it.” Those are the three steps. Sometimes we just get stuck on “the name it.” We just talk what it is, but we do not own it – that is “the claim it” part. How do I own this individual theme and how do I really take the ownership of it and make it mine? But the most important step – and I think we miss this way too often – is “the aim it.” Now how do I take it and push it forward into something practical? I was really happy to see in your blogs some productivity stuff. That is really what it is all about. How do I make myself more productive? And happier? Because that matters. The more engaged I am, the less sick I am. The more engaged I am, the more I want to come to work. The more engaged I am, the more money I make. Who does not want that things? You got to aim it to get that stuff.

And from my experience of running workshops about StrengthsFinder – “aim it” is always the hardest part because people have hard time at the beginning when they start to learn about talents. How can I use this to be productive? And then when we talk about real life situations from the past where were you successes? When have you been more productive? How can you translate this and apply in a new situation? Then they start to recognize it.

People ask me from time to time if you have any statistics per country. Because in the assessment there are some general questions about your personal data. Do you do research on the results later on?

Yes, in our state of American work place and the state of the global work place – we take that data and when we mash it together with the employment data it starts telling us things. And you will see in those reports that kind of sprinkles it, adds flavor and another dimension. We have to be really careful about these reports because the statistical set that we use, for example you might use two hundred and fifty thousand people like it probably took us in the state of America because we have to measure both their employment and strengths. So when we rolled up the Top 5 of that subset it is different then the global Top 5. And people say: “I thought this was...” Well, we are taking the subset of two hundred and fifty thousand people that was tied together statistical, so that we can make some colorations between those two. So that where those data really comes out, when we can really slice and dice in a lot of our reports. All those reports in a lot of cases are available in gallup.com. Sometimes they are free, and sometimes you have to pay to get them, but they are mostly available in English. If you are a number-junky, gallup.com is the place to be. I got a lot of questions whether we did researches on particular things. If we have done them, they will be in gallup.com. So go out there and search for it.

Do you do any researches on the cultural differences? As for example that *Individualization* in Poland is number two and in the global Top 5 it is thirteenth. *Positivity* is thirty-first in Poland and eleventh in global results. Do you check how that happened?

Not always. It is shown up in some spots but there is so much data there. And there are so many things we could be doing research on. We do the *Call the Coach* in Singapore, Sydney, India and the United States – we often talk about the cultural differences, the nuances that exists within the culture. If there has been any research done, it is done in that form when we are getting actual feedback from coaches on the ground in those cultures as we talk about it. I do not think we have done a single study on culture differences in StrengthsFinder.

Thank you very much for the interview. It was an honor to meet you.

Likewise. The honor is mine I get the opportunity to do this every day to talk into “the ether” which is what I called the internet. I do not see anybody, I do not get to meet anybody for the most of the year. However we do the international conference and I have the opportunity to talk to people. But the rest of the year is just me talking to the internet. So it is always great to meet face-to-face. And I also appreciate the work that you do. We cannot do this unless we get people excited like you who are doing that kind of work. For me it is a real honor to be able to talk with you.

Where people can find you if they want to talk to you or find more about you?

If you want to contact me personally, you can get my email address jim_collision@gallup.com. If you do the Google search “Jim Collision Gallup”, you will see all our things. If you want to see what we are doing from the coaching standpoint and with StrengthsFinder it is on our coaches blog: go to coaching.gallup.com

Thank you again.

Thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

Bye.