



Building on Employee Strengths for Success

Hawaii Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons:
Primary Care Update

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What does it look like to be working in your area of Strength?



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Outline

- Foundations of Strengths Based Psychology
- Leading by Example
- Impact of Strengths Based Leadership
- Maximizing Team Performance
- Understanding Follower's Needs
- Summary

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Warm-Up

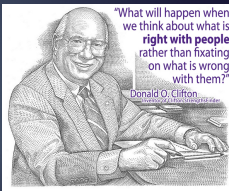
- What describes your areas of strength?
 - A strategic thinker: visualizes what could be; possibilities
 - An executor: knows how to make things happen
 - A relationship builder: brings and holds a team together
 - An influencer: takes charge, speaks up, makes team heard
- What does an engaged employee look like? Impact?
- Think of a staff member who you look forward to working with; who is engaged
- Think of a staff member who you have challenges working with; who is disengaged





Strengths Based Psychology

- Donald O. Clifton: Psychologist, educator, researcher, entrepreneur
- The father of strengths-based psychology, grandfather of positive psychology
- Research question: what distinguishes talented people from the rest of the population?






Clifton's Research Findings

- Methodology: 20,000 interviews with leaders; 10,000 interviews of followers
- Key Question: "Why do you follow the most important leader in your life?"
- Findings: The most effective leaders:
 - Invest in employees strengths
 - Surround themselves with the right people and maximize their teams
 - Understand their followers needs






Focusing on Strength V. Weakness

Clifton was invested in the idea that focusing on strengths was key to success

- Quotes:
 - "... to focus on your weaknesses isn't a sign of diligent humility; it is almost irresponsible.... The most honorable thing is to face up to the potential in your talents and find ways to realize it."
 - ".....you will excel only by maximizing your strengths, never by fixing your weaknesses."
 - "Your weakness will never develop, while your strengths will develop infinitely."





Determining Strengths: CSF V. Life

- Clifton Strengths Finder
 - Published in 1999
 - Measures the presence of talent in 34 themes in four domains
 - Themes determined to most consistently predict outstanding a performance
 - Greater presence of a talent, the more likely to be spontaneously exhibited day-to-day
 - Top five strengths are reported, along with vocations where these are maximized
 - Alternate: "Step back and watch yourself. See how quickly you become absorbed in an activity, how quickly you pick it up. There lies your talent."





Domains of Leadership Strengths

EXECUTING	INFLUENCING	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	STRATEGIC THINKING
People with dominant Executing themes know how to make things happen.	People with dominant Influencing themes know how to take charge, speak up, and make sure the team is heard.	People with dominant Relationship Building themes have the ability to build strong relationships that can hold a team together and make the team greater than the sum of its parts.	People with dominant Strategic Thinking themes help teams consider what could be. They absorb and analyze information that can inform better decisions.
Achiever Arranger Belief Consistency Deliberative Discipline Focus Responsibility Restorative	Activator Command Communication Competition Maximizer Self-Assurance Significance Woo	Adaptability Connectedness Developer Empathy Harmony Includer Individualization Positivity Relator	Analytical Context Futuristic Ideation Input Intellection Learner Strategic





Know Thyself; Lead by Example

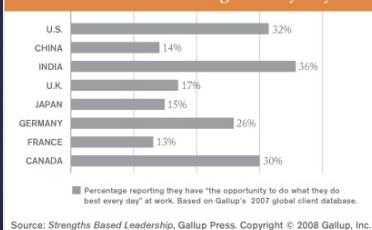
- "I've never met an effective leader who wasn't aware of his talents and working to sharpen them" W. Clark
- Give yourself permission to focus on your strengths
 - Leaders who strive to be competent in all areas become the least effective leaders overall
 - Those who spend life trying to be good at everything will be mediocre
- Give permission to your staff
 - Most people surveyed are not working in their area of strength. What is the potential of correcting this?





Are Staff Using their Strengths?

Do You Use Your Strengths Every Day?





Strengths Based Leadership

- How many of us try to "fix" our short falls? Those of our employees?
- Looking for an employee's strengths gives the chance to find their hidden potential
- Strengths-based leadership increases engagement:
 - Focus on employee strengths: 73% engagement
 - Fail to focus on employee strengths: 9% engagement
- The ultimate test of a leader: not what they are now, but what continues to grow after they are gone





Impact of Employee Engagement

- Work with a passion and feel profound connection to their company
- Drive innovation; move the organization forward
- Higher levels of job satisfaction and income level



Gallup Q12 Survey
Companies on the top quartile on engagement

- 37% less absenteeism and employee turnover (on average)
- 48% fewer safety incidents
- 41% fewer product defects
- 21% higher productivity
- 22% higher profitability





Maximizing Teams

- Cohesive and successful teams possess broader groupings of strengths; through design or fortune
- While the best leaders are not well-rounded in strengths, the best teams are



- Leader actions:
 - Be curious; ask staff about strengths; regularly revisit
 - Move staff to areas of strength when possible
 - Develop candor to facilitate conversations; lack of trust amongst team members is a "deal-breaker"
 - Practice speaking boldly speak and trusting strength





Characteristics of Strong Teams

- Team members don't always agree; focused on results
 - Healthy debate that doesn't lead to fragmenting
 - Knowledge of strengths resulting in different perspectives
- Prioritize what is best for the organization then move on
 - "Commander's top 10" drives commitment of resources
 - Once decision is made, all focus on collective success
- Member as committed to personal lives as they are work
 - Bring same level of energy to family, social, community life
- Highly engaged in work; highly satisfied with personal lives
- Embrace diversity: Both Strengths and backgrounds





Understand Followers Needs

- You are a leader only if others follow
- Followers Four Basic Needs:
 - Trust
 - Compassion
 - Stability
 - Hope
- Followers experiencing these can optimize strengths for success in the workplace



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Trust

- Trust is our currency: followers will not tolerate dishonesty
- Impact on engagement:
 - Do not trust leadership: 1 in 12
 - Trust leadership: 1 in 2
- Increases speed and efficiency
- Key to building trust is authenticity: increased by knowing and accepting strengths

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Compassion

- Synonyms: caring, friendship, happiness
- Staff who report their supervisor cares:
 - Are more likely to stay with the organization
 - Are more productive
 - Produce more profit for the organization
- Standards are high: Staff expect compassion from high-level leaders; caring from front line leaders
 - Importance of leaders having "recharge" so as not to run on empty






Stability

- Followers want to count on leaders in times of need
- Synonyms: security, strength, support, peace
- Transparency gives followers confidence they have best information to make career decisions
 - Transparency cultivates buy-in and ownership so staff can bring their strengths to bear on the problem set
 - Inextricably linked with high-trust





Hope

- Followers want stability for the present; hope for the future
- Employees enthusiastic about the future are engaged: 69% v. 1% engagement if not enthusiastic
- Key area of focus for high level leaders to set the tone
- The degree to which leaders initiate actions, versus reacting to situations significantly impacts hope






Summary

- Strengths based psychology focuses on building talents rather than "fixing" weaknesses
- Employees working in areas of strength are more likely to be engaged, moving the company forward
- While the best leaders are not well-rounded in strengths, the best teams are
- Teams maximize performance by communicating freely, allowing disagreement, and committing to solution
- Understanding followers needs for trust, compassion, stability and trust support success







Questions/discussion