



Strengths and Staff Development

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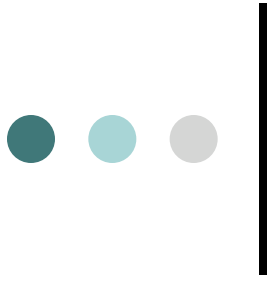
Overview of the Session

- Introduction to Strengths
- Identifying Strengths in our Staff
- Strengths in the Hiring Process
- Managing through a Strengths Lens
- Strengths-Based Approach to Creating Teams
- Resolving Conflict through a Focus on Strengths
- Strengths in Evaluation



A Success Story

- Write on a sheet a paper a time when you remember being successful - a time where you felt like you were “firing on all cylinders.”
- What words come to mind when you remember that experience?



What would our work environments
be like if our staff felt like they had
an opportunity to be successful
every day?



What is a strengths perspective?

- A revolutionary way to reorient student development work around what is right with students and our staff.

- Two basic premises:

1. Individuals already have within themselves what they need to succeed!

Our job is to

- Recognize it
- Nurture it
- Build on it as we teach them skills and knowledge

2. “Individuals gain more when they build on their talents, than when they make comparable efforts to improve their areas of weakness.”

--Clifton & Harter, 2003, p. 112



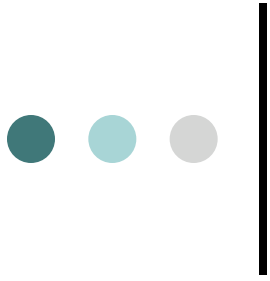
**I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Wonderful are thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well.
Psalm 139:14**

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:10

“We have different gifts according to the grace given us”

Romans 12:6



Writing Challenge



Strengths Perspective Originated From a Shift in Psychological Theory

- Shift from purely psychology of pathology to the psychology of the positive attributes of individuals
- Increasing attention on studying what works in people's lives as opposed to what doesn't work
- Key elements: hope, positive emotion, confidence, gratitude, courage, spirituality, strengths, resiliency, etc.



Strengths Perspective is Counter Cultural

- “Let’s fix what’s wrong and let the strengths take care of themselves.” (Clifton)
 - Business managers spend most of their time working with the weakest performers and zeroing in on mistakes.
 - Parents and teachers focus on students’ lower grades rather than on their highest.
 - Student affairs staff study risk factors related to potential student drop out. We focus on why they leave as opposed to understanding the attributes of highly successful students.



How Do We Identify Strengths?

One way: Strengths Finder – Gallup’s Tool

- Strengths Finder was created by Gallup through a systematic study of excellence.
- 34 themes describing the most prevalent talents of individuals in an expansive range of fields and professions emerged from two million interviews.
- Web-based tool that takes approximately 30 - 45 minutes to complete and generates a report listing the top five strengths.
- Gallup has provided free StrengthsQuest books and codes – business card trade



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Strengths in the Hiring Process

- Define job responsibilities (ex: JW)
- Determine needs
- Project pros & cons of strengths combo
- Careful to diversify (not all Responsibility!)
- Team/work group composition – colleagues



Managing through a Strengths Lens

- Affect of manager's strengths
 - Expectations
 - Managing upward
- Communication
 - Affirming Language
- Evaluation
 - What to do with weaknesses?
 - Improvement comes through managing the shadow side of strengths
 - Use of strengths to improve in areas that are part of a job description



Strengths-Based Approach to Creating Teams

- Determine needs
 - Creative/brainstorming
 - Logistics/follow-through
- Leverage Networks
 - Resources
 - Presentation
- Profiling – good and bad
- 2BU – example of all of the above



Resolving Conflict through a Focus on Strengths

- Reframing
 - Creates a language
- Seek understanding
 - What motivates?



Closing Thoughts

- Body of Christ is the goal
- Affirms your calling
- Different from spiritual gifts
 - Provides motivation for “roles” in the body



Contact Information

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