

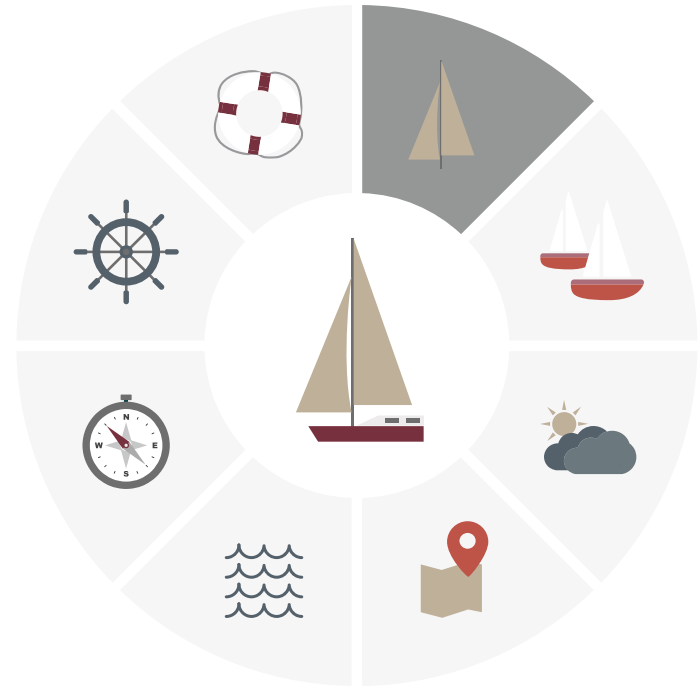
Defining Strengths



Defining Strengths

Strengths

- fifth element of sailboat metaphor
- sails



Defining Strengths

Linley (2008, p. 9)

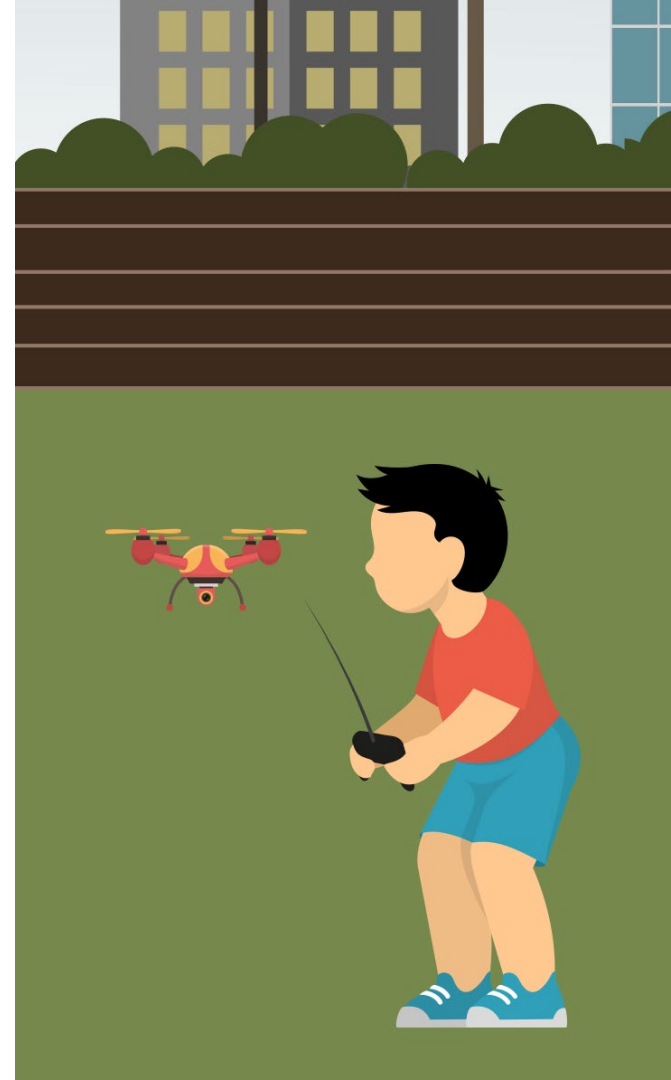
”

“... a strength is a **pre-existing** capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is **authentic** and **energizing** to the user, and enables **optimal functioning**, development and performance”

Defining Strengths

Pre-existing

- already present within us
- many strengths are often visible at an early age



Defining Strengths

Authenticity

- feels like the “real me.”
- “This is something I feel I was born to do.”



Defining Strengths

Energy

- enjoyable
- energy levels are being raised



Defining Strengths

Optimal functioning

- increased well-being
- increased performance
- process-oriented



Defining Strengths

Examples of strengths

- social intelligence
- perseverance
- curiosity
- gratitude
- creativity
- humor

Defining Strengths

Different Strength Approaches

- a) Values in Action (VIA model)
- b) Centre for Applied Positive Psychology (CAPP model)
- c) Talent-based Strengths Model (Gallup model)

Defining Strengths

A) VIA model

- strengths are defined as morally valued traits the use of which contributes to meaning in life and happiness
- 24 different strengths
- six broad virtues reflecting core human excellences

Defining Strengths

A) VIA model

Category (virtues)	Strengths
Wisdom and Knowledge	creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective
Courage	bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest
Humanity	love, kindness, social intelligence
Justice	teamwork, fairness, leadership
Temperance	forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation
Transcendence	appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality

Defining Strengths

CAPP model

- strengths reflect the natural capacity for behaving, thinking, or feeling in a way that allows optimal functioning and performance in the pursuit of valued outcomes
- 60 different strengths
- 4 categories

Defining Strengths

CAPP model

Category

Strengths

Being

Authenticity, Centeredness, Courage, Curiosity, Gratitude, Humility, Legacy, Mission, Moral

Compass, Personal Responsibility, Pride, Self-awareness, Service, Unconditionality

Communicating

Counterpoint, Explainer, Feedback, Humor, Listener, Narrator, Scribe, Spotlight

Motivating

Action, Adventure, Bounce-back, Catalyst, Change Agent, Competitive Drive, Efficacy, Growth,

Improver, Persistence, Resilience, Work Ethic

Relating

Compassion, Connector, Emotional Awareness,

Empathic Connection, Enabler, Equality, Esteem Builder, Personalization, Persuasion, Rapport

Builder, Relationship Deepener

Defining Strengths

CAPP model

compared to the VIA strengths most strengths are:

- more specific, less culturally universal, and less “timeless”
- more directly relevant in a working context

Gallup model

- talent = naturally occurring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- a strength = well-developed talent which facilitates optimal performance.
- Training can transform talents into strengths
- 34 different talent themes
- 4 categories

Defining Strengths

Gallup model

Category	Talent themes (which can be developed into strengths)
Executing	Achiever, Arranger, Belief, Consistency, Deliberative, Discipline, Focus, Responsibility, Restorative
Influencing	Activator, Command, Communication, Competition, maximizer, Self-Assurance, Significance, Woo
Relationship Building	Adaptability, Developer, connectedness, Empathy, Harmony, Includer, Individualization, Positivity, Relator
Strategic Thinking	Analytical, Context, Futuristic, Ideation, input, Intellection, Learner, Strategic

Critical notes

- many strengths are unique to each model
- only a limited set of human strengths is addressed
- the criteria for strengths are arbitrary



a good starting point rather than an all-inclusive
overview of human strengths

Strengths, Weaknesses and Learned Behaviors



Writing your name

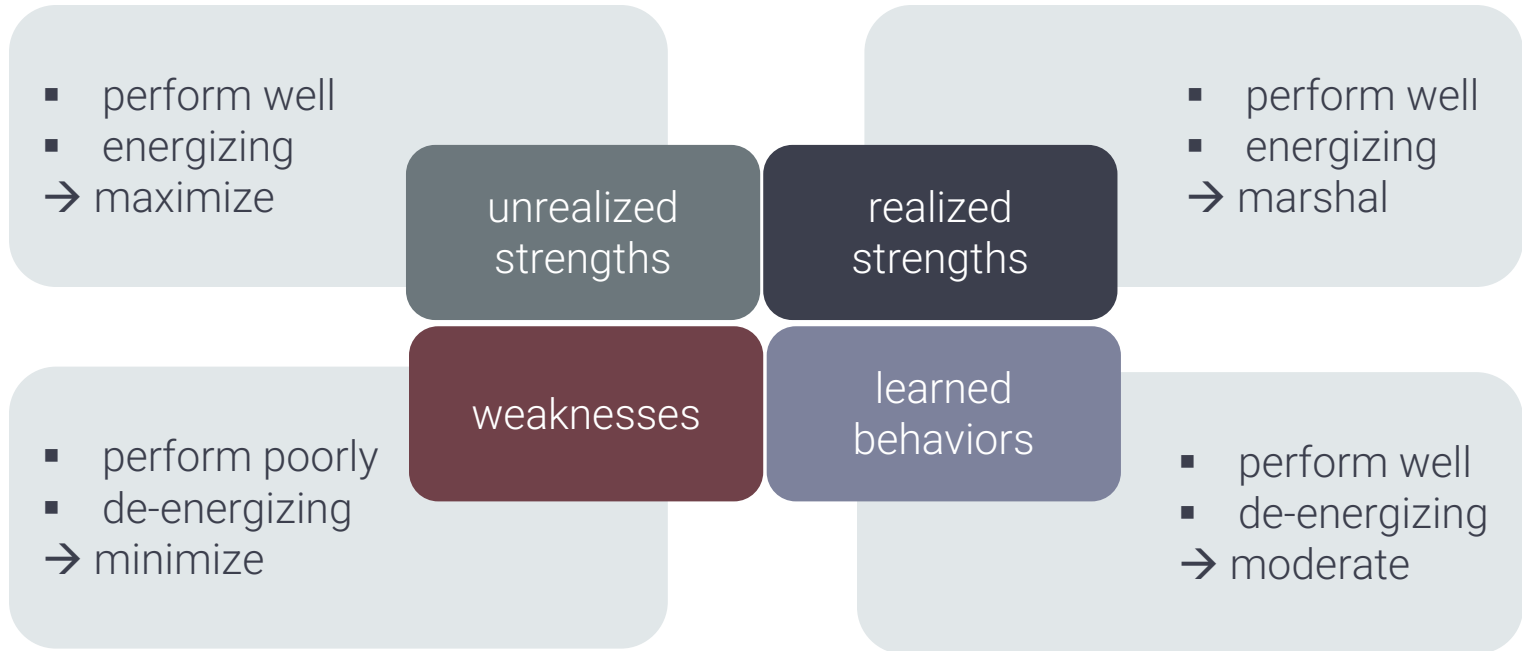


- write your name three times using your dominant hand
- write your name three times using your non-dominant hand

What strengths are not

1. **talents:** innate abilities, which typically have a strong biological loading, and may or may not be well-developed
2. **skills:** specific proficiencies developed through training
3. **interests:** areas or topics an individual is passionate about and driven to pursue

Strengths, weaknesses and learned behaviors



Thanks



for your attention

The Importance of Strengths



The Importance of Strengths

The importance of strengths

- authenticity (David)
- intrinsic motivation
- flow and positive experiences
- meaning
- coping

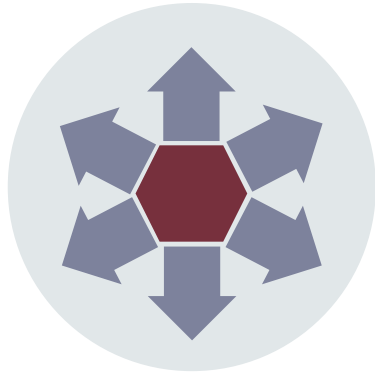
The Importance of Strengths

The importance of strengths

- greater subjective and psychological well-being
- less stress
- increased positive affect
- decrease in depressive symptoms
- job satisfaction
- engagement

The Importance of Strengths

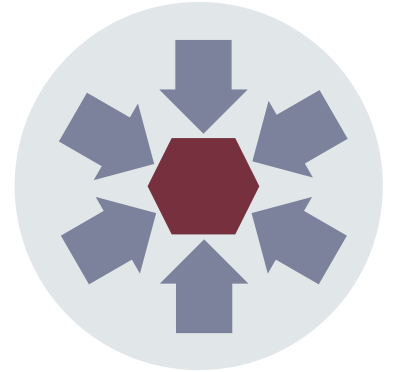
A different starting point



have → do → be

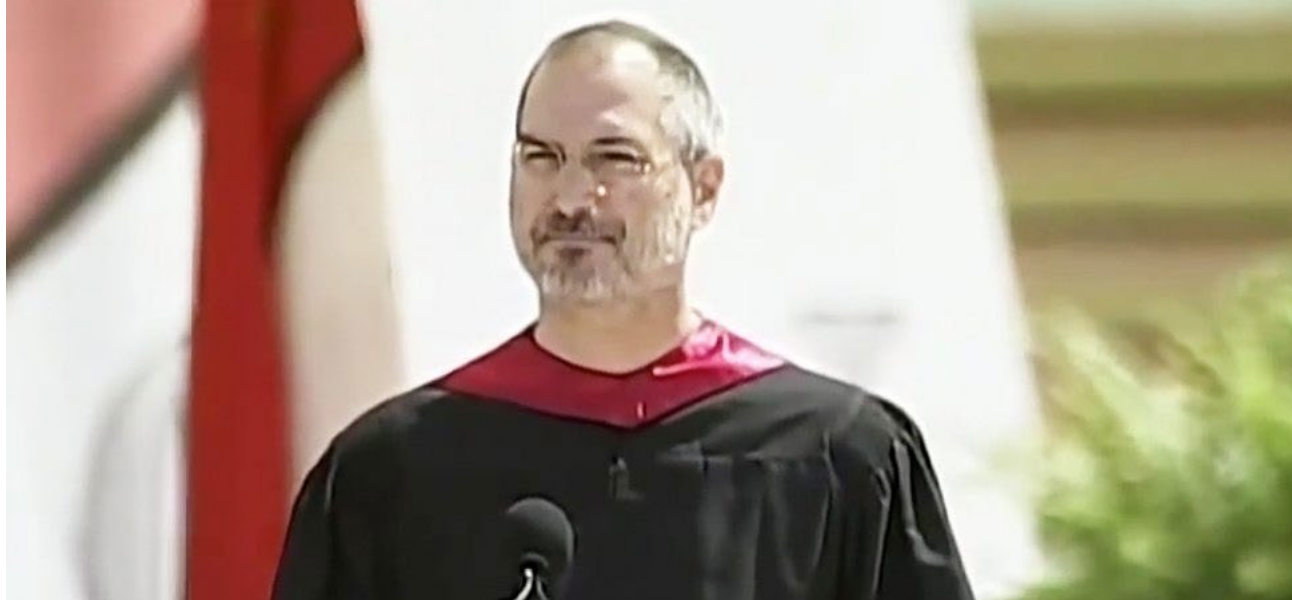
vs

be → do → have



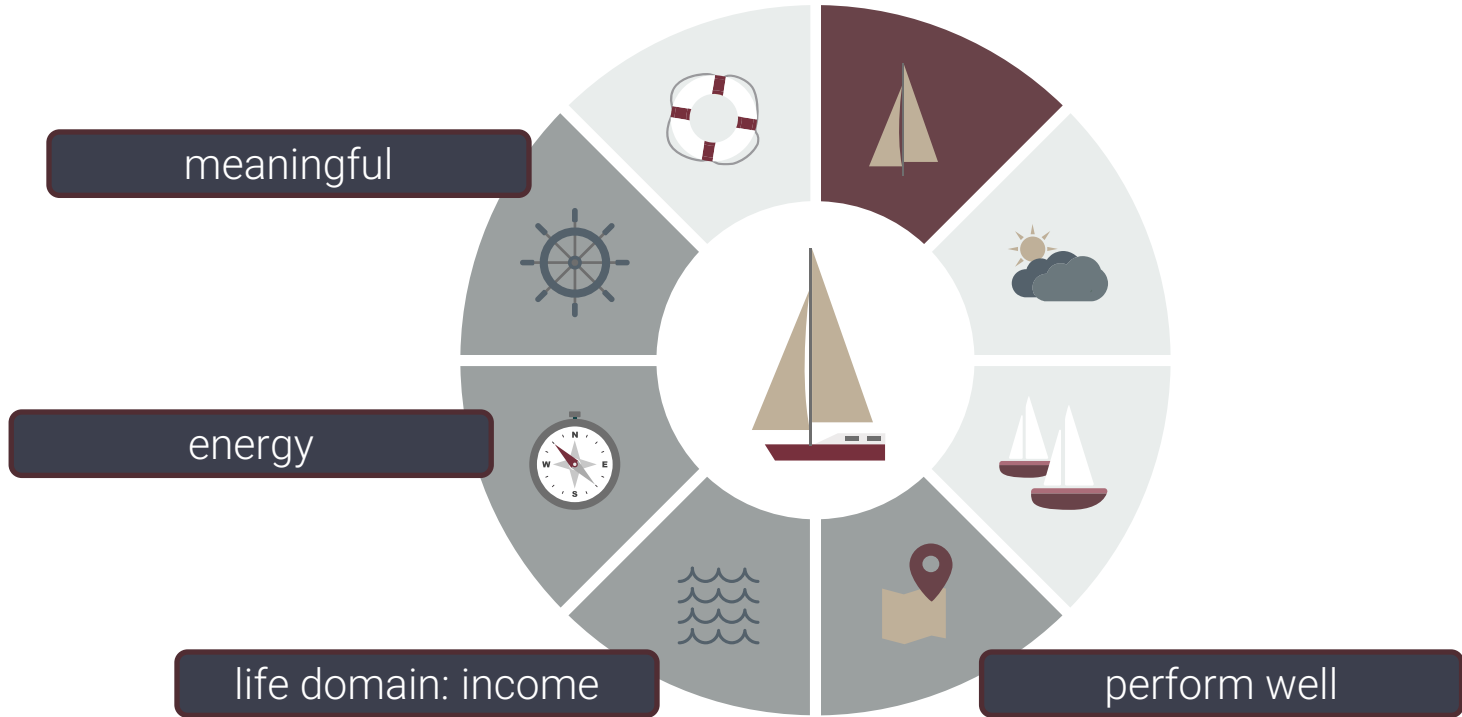
The Importance of Strengths

Steve Jobs: Do what you love



The Importance of Strengths

Do what you love?



Strength-based Practice



Strength-based Practice

Strength-based practice

attention is devoted to:

1. the client's personal strengths
2. what is already working
3. positive exceptions to problems
4. coping strategies that the client is already using

Strength-based Practice

A different lens



John is a 41-year-old single father of two. Despite carrying two jobs, John is on the verge of losing his home and health insurance. This is of particular concern to John because one of his children has a chronic illness that requires constant monitoring and care. He initiated services because he reports feeling depressed, having trouble sleeping, and experiencing periodic anxiety attacks. John says that although he has three close friends who check in on him often by phone, he really feels he needs professional help right now.

Strength-based Practice

The Peterson pathologies

- possible underlying theory of mental illnesses
- one must first know what is right in a person before one can know what is wrong in a person
- real disorders are the absence, the excess, or the opposite of strengths



Strength-based Practice

The Peterson pathologies

strength	opposite	absence	excess
bravery	cowardice	fright	foolhardiness
forgiveness	vengefulness	mercilessness	permissiveness
prudence	recklessness	sensation seeking	prudishness
curiosity	boredom	disinterest	nosiness

Fluckiger & Grosse Holtforth (2008)

directing the psychotherapists' attentional focus
towards their clients' strengths:

- enhanced therapeutic bonding
- client mastery experiences
- decreased symptoms
- increased intrinsic motivation and effort

Practical note

Early in treatment clients often feel an urgent need to share their problems. From the client's perspective, a **premature effort** to assess strengths can be viewed as **rejection**.

Thanks



for your attention