Creating Our Best Selves
Through Strengths and Wellbeing

Building Strengths Based Relationships and Teams

Strengths Quest: Helping Students, Staff, and Faculty Achieve Academic, Career, and Personal Success

Material included in this handout may not be reproduced or presented without explicit written consent of the Gallup Organization, and the facilitators.
The truths
✓ As you grow you become more of who you already are
✓ You are going to grow and develop the most in your areas of strength
✓ What your team needs of you most of all is for you to bring your strengths deliberately

DVD: How do you talk about your strengths without boasting?
The Language

Strengths Development Framework
BUILDING RELATIONSHIP THROUGH STRENGTHS

“We don’t see things as they are. We see them as we are.”
-Anais Nin

Value Ladder
Learn to value others through strengths

Valuing
Appreciating
Respecting
Understanding
Judging
Activity: Different Paths to the Same Destination

- Pick three of your themes; discuss with a partner how these themes help you to be a positive part of the organization.

- How does each theme help you contribute to positive organizational outcomes?
- How are your themes different from those of the partner you shared with?
- Does one set of themes have an advantage over the other?
The highest result of education is tolerance.

-Helen Keller
Activity: Different Paths to the Same Destination

- Write the 3 themes you are assigned below the arrows.

A new member with the themes below joins your team; How can you help them be successful?

• How would you help them?
• Is it difficult to help someone with themes quite different from yours?
• How does it help to understand themes in others?
The 5 C’s of Strengths Based Relationships

- Connect
- Communicate
- Collaborate
- Control
- Cultivate

Connect
Social relationships lead to increased well being

Gallup research places Social relationships as #2 of the five elements of Well-being.

Most powerful relationships were with friends, relatives and significant others.

- 6 hours a day of social time to thrive
- Best friend at work = 7 x’s more likely to be engaged

Contact with someone who has high well-being dramatically increases your chances of being happy.

Indirect contact has an effect as well. The wellbeing of a friend of a friend affects you.

Without a friend, work is a lonely place.
-Tom Rath
Communicate
In the most successful relationships, the ratio of positive to negative statements is 5:1
- John Gottman, Gottman Institute

Communication is inevitable and irreversible

Activity: Balconies and Basements

- Choose one of your Signature Themes and fill in the words that you have heard used to describe that theme.
- The Balcony descriptors are those that sound like compliments.
- The basement descriptors are the barrier labels – terms used when a talent is mistakenly devalued and dismissed or understood as a weakness.

Balcony

Basement

Share your thought with someone in your session.
  - What could you do to ensure that others know the balcony impact of your talents versus the basement moments?
  - Are there moments where the basement descriptions are accurate? If so, how could you manage that talent differently so that it is not viewed as a weakness?
Activity: Balconies and Basements

*In most successful relationships the ratio of positive to negative statements is 5:1*  
- John Gottman, Gottman Institute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Basement Label</th>
<th>Balcony Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Chatterbox</td>
<td>Bring new Ideas to life by telling vivid, energizing stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivity</td>
<td>Unrealistic</td>
<td>Optimistic, Uplifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achiever</td>
<td>Workaholic</td>
<td>Exceptional producer, inspires others by setting high expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command</td>
<td>Bossy</td>
<td>Is confident and a powerful advocate on behalf of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Pushover</td>
<td>Invites differing views of others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pick 5 themes not listed above and not yours and identify basement language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Basement Label</th>
<th>Balcony Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaborate

Partnerships are forming all around us every day. They are formed for a variety of reasons. For example:

- To “make up” for a lesser talent
- To “take over” where one person leaves off
- To “enhance” what one person already possesses

Activity: Complementary Strengths

Think of an activity you are responsible for at work.

- Look back at the strengths matrix.
- Label the stick figure in the middle with your themes and “create” two new partners with complementary strengths that could help you achieve excellence.
Control
Control conflict by using your talent productively and mitigating your weaknesses.

Are your strengths not productively applied or do you have a weakness?

First, define a weakness in an effective way.
- Difference between “non-strength” and “weakness.”
  - Is there something that you aren’t very good at that isn’t a weakness?
  - A non-strength becomes a weakness when it interferes with your own ability to perform to expected levels—or interferes with others’ ability to do their work.

Mitigating Weakness
- Open Communication/Transparency
- Get the RIGHT training
- Leverage other talents
- Use support systems
- Form complementary partnerships
- Adjust/Change role

DVD: How Do You Talk About Your Weaknesses without Whining?

Activity: Identify Weakness

Pair up with a partner you do not regularly work with and share a weakness that you believe is currently getting in your way, or keeping others from achieving excellence? How could you mitigate this weakness?

Be more concerned with your character than with your reputation.
Your character is what you really are.
Your reputation is merely what others think you are.
- John Wooden
Cultivate

The Gallup Organization’s decade long research into employee engagement offers some insight and strategies about relationships. In his book Vital Friends, Tom Rath, asks us to look at relationships in our lives and ask which measurably improve our lives and which could we not live without. These are our Vital Friends.

Gallup research has found if you have a best friend at work, you are significantly more likely to:

- Engage your team
- Get more done in less time
- Have fun on the job
- Have a safe workplace
- Innovate and share new ideas
- Feel informed and know that your opinions count
- Have the opportunity to focus on your strengths each day

Activity: Vital Friends

Tom Rath has identified 8 categories of vital friends. Take a moment to look through the list below and identify someone in your life that fills one of these vital categories. Which categories do you fill for others in your life? Do you fill more than one vital category for more than one person?

**Builder**

Builders are great motivators, always pushing you toward the finish line. They continually invest in your development and genuinely want you and the team to succeed. Builders are generous with their time as they help you see your strengths and use them productively.

**Champion**

Champions stand up for you and what you and the team believe in. They are the friends who sing your praises and praise the team. Champions are loyal friends with whom you can share things in confidence. When you need someone to promote your cause or the cause of the team, look to a champion.

**Collaborator**

A Collaborator is a friend with similar interests—the basis for many great friendships. You might share a passion for sports, hobbies, religion, work, politics, food, music, movies, or books. In many cases, you belong to the same group or share affiliations. When you talk with a Collaborator, you’re on familiar ground, and this can serve as the foundation for a lasting relationship. Indeed, in those conversations, you often find that you have similar ambitions in work and life.
Companion
A Companion is always there for you, whatever the circumstances. You share a bond that is virtually unbreakable. When something big happens in your life—good or bad—this is one of the first people you call. At times, a true Companion will even sense where you are headed—your thoughts, feelings, and actions—before you know it yourself.

Connector
A Connector is a bridge builder who helps you and your team get what you want. Friends who play the role of a Connector are always inviting you to lunch, dinner, drinks, and other social gatherings where you can meet new people. This extends your network dramatically and gives you access to newfound resources.

Energizer
Energizers are quick to pick you up when you’re down—and can make a good day great. They are always saying and doing things that make you feel better. Energizers have a remarkable ability to figure out what gets you going. When you are around these friends, you smile a lot more. You are more likely to laugh in the presence of an Energizer.

Mind Opener
Mind Openers are the friends who expand your horizons and encourage you to embrace new ideas, opportunities, cultures, and people. They challenge you to think in innovative ways and help you create positive change. Mind Openers know how to ask good questions, and this makes you more receptive to ideas. When you are around a Mind Opener, you are unguarded and express opinions aloud, especially controversial ones that you might not be comfortable sharing with other friends.

Navigator
Navigators are the friends who give you advice and keep you headed in the right direction. You go to them when you need guidance, and they talk through the pros and cons with you until you find an answer. In a difficult situation, you need a Navigator by your side. They help you see a positive future while keeping things grounded in reality. Any time you’re at a crossroads and need help making a decision, you can look to a Navigator. They help you know who you are—and who you are not.

Building Vital Friends at Work
- Family Ties
- Water Cooler Effect
- Plugging In

"It is not so much our friends' help that helps us as the confident knowledge that they will help us."
- Epicurus
Strength Based Teams

What do strong teams have in common?
- Good leaders and managers pay attention to strengths when forming teams.
- Productive teams have a variety of strengths represented and a balance of strengths and weaknesses.
- Well rounded teams are not made up of a bunch of well-rounded people.
- Conflict doesn’t destroy strong teams because strong teams focus on results.
- Strong teams prioritize what’s best for the organization and then move forward.
- Members of strong teams are as committed to their personal lives as they are to their work.
- Strong teams embrace diversity.
- Strong teams manage for talent.
Ideas for Maximizing Team Talents

- Each team member selects one of his or her Signature Themes. Then each person finds or writes a sentence or phrase that captures the essence of his or her talents in that theme and posts it in a prominent place. When you enter one another’s work space, ask that person: “How have you used that talent theme in your role today?”

- As a group, pick a talent theme to focus on during the week or month --- Achiever for example. Watch for evidence of that talent theme in one or another, and point it out when you see it in action. This will help each person better understand that talent theme and begin to see that theme’s nuances within the context of each person’s personality. A certain theme might not be among your Signature Themes, but you still have talent in it to some degree.

- Using the Theme Dynamics in Partnership activity, identify one way in which you can uniquely partner with each team member.

- Review your Symphony of Themes, and respond to the fooling questions as a team. Consider starting your next team meetings with one of the questions.
  - How do we get work done?
  - How might a new person feel joining our team?
  - How do we celebrate?
  - How do we track our success?
  - How do we build relationships?
  - How do we generate new ideas?
  - What makes us tick?
  - What is it like to be part of this team?
  - How do we communicate?
  - How do we measure success?
  - What numbers are important to us?
  - How do we respond to change?
  - Are we implementers of others ideas?
  - How do we add value to the University?

- With each project or challenge that a team faces, take time before you start to identify an exhaustive “to do” list. Then, ask people to take on those to-do items where they could leverage their natural talents.

- With each critical activity the team handles, make sure expectations are clear among team members. Talk about who owns what projects, deadlines or assignments.

- Think about forming complementary partnerships for specific tasks. Given what needs to be done, consider who would partner with whom to be most effective.
Live Your Strengths!

- Know your top 5
- Be proud of your top 5
- Post your top 5
- Develop your top 5
- Build a relationship with your top 5.
- Donate your top 5! Donate them every day!

Commitments:

- What is one thing you will do starting today to get on and stay on your strengths path?

- What is one thing you will do starting tomorrow, to help those who you work with get on and stay on their strengths path?

- In a word or phrase, what will you remember about today’s seminar?