

NOW, DISCOVER

THIS DIGEST

One introductory note

It is unclear who actually wrote this updated edition of the book, so I'll be referring to the author as Gallup, the organization built to honor and spread the work of Don Clifton, a man who made it his life mission to write "the taxonomy of human strengths" and creating "a movement to help people spend less time fixing what's wrong with them and more time building on what's right with them".

The strengths revolution at work

"Guided by the belief that good is the opposite of bad, mankind has for centuries pursued its fixation with fault and failing.

Doctors have studied disease to learn about health. Psychologists have investigated sadness to learn about joy. Therapists have looked into the causes of divorce to learn about happy marriage."

The book starts with this very potent observation and a powerful mind-shift:

"Faults and failings deserve study, but they reveal little about strengths. Strengths have their own pattern."

And it means that it's high time for us to learn how to identify what our strengths are, how to define them, to refine them and how to rethink our goals and dreams according to them.

Ideally an organization should prioritize identifying the strengths of all their employees and build their workflow around them. Gallup reveals that **only one in three people (36%) agreed strongly with the idea that they have the opportunity to do what they do best everyday**. Interestingly, the longer someone stays in one place and the higher they climb on the traditional ladder of success, the LESS likely they are to agree that their strengths are being put to good use.

Here's why: most organizations rely on the two flawed assumptions that everyone can become competent in almost anything and that our biggest room for growth lies in the areas of our greatest weaknesses. This leads organizations to spend more time focusing on training those they have hired than on making sure they're right for the job, to legislate work styles with a heavy emphasis on work rules, to offer people plan to overcome their perceived weaknesses and to promote people based on the skills they acquired (not on their particular strengths).

"This isn't development. It is damage control".

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HERE ARE NEW ASSUMPTIONS TO CONSIDER ADOPTING INSTEAD:

- Each person's talents are enduring and unique.
- Each person's greatest room for growth is in the areas of their greatest strengths.

Yes, it implies that we need to stop focusing people's performance on outcomes, and to start treating each employee differently.

And here are questions they ask us to consider:

"What are your strengths? (...)

What one, two or three things can you do better than 10,000 other people?"

Gallup has conducted millions of interview and systematically **studied excellence for the past 50 years** or so, and they've come up with **34 patterns**, which reflect the 34 most prevalent themes of human talent!

And they ask us to:

"Think of these 34 patterns as akin to the 88 keys on a piano. The 88 keys cannot play every single note that can possibly be played. But in their many combinations, they can capture everything from classic Mozart to classic Madonna."

This book gives you access to an online assessment to identifying your own!

Remember to do it after Chapter 3 ++

*"The real tragedy in life is not that each of us doesn't have enough strengths.
It's that we fail to use the ones we have."*

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The anatomy of a strength.

WHAT DOES A STRONG LIFE LOOK LIKE?

The good news is that playing to our strengths will help us **succeed** in what we do

AND that we'll **love** what we do when we deliberately play to our strengths.

A strength is :

- Something we are **able to do CONSISTENTLY**,
- A task we **derive intrinsic satisfaction from**,
- And **NOT necessarily** reflected **in every aspect** of the role we excel in.

"A task is a strength only if you can fathom yourself doing it repeatedly, happily and successfully."

The most powerful take away they want us to understand upfront is that **we can only flourish by harnessing our strengths** and not by fixing our weaknesses. Our job is to find ways to **manage around our weaknesses** and to free ourselves to **hone our strengths** fully.

They give us three revolutionary tools to build a strong life and for us to be able to:

- Distinguish our natural **talents from things we can learn**.
- Identify our **dominant** talents.
- Find a **common language** to describe our talents.

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The anatomy of a strength.

DISTINGUISHING OUR NATURAL TALENTS FROM THINGS WE CAN LEARN

A strength is not only something we can get good at through practice, it is a **task we can reach consistent near-performance at**. It can **only** happen when we're **developing our natural talents**.

So what is a talent exactly? It's **one of our recurring pattern of thought, feeling or behavior**. If you add a talent to **knowledge** (the facts and principles we acquire along our way) and **skills** (our ability to perform the steps of a task), you create a STRENGTH (talent being the most important part of the equation).

IDENTIFYING OUR DOMINANT TALENTS

These are activities we pick up **quicker** than everyone else, finding ourselves able to skip steps and add twists very early on in the learning process. Activities which drive us to **loss track of time**. Whether they translate into strengths or not yet, those are the **areas of our greatest potential** (and the CliftonStrengths assessment will allow each of us to know very soon which talents we should bet on).

FINDING A COMMON LANGUAGE TO DESCRIBE OUR TALENTS.

Gallup points out that the language of human weakness is rich and varied, so much so that most non experts are fluent in it! **The language of human strength is however very sparse**.

For example, we'll call having people skills one's capacity to build trust in their relationships and one's ability to initiate contact with anyone they meet. Same appellation, different characteristics and practical implications.

And there's one extra layer of complexity:

"It is possible that you know exactly what you mean (...) But what about the people around you? They may use the same words but give them very different meanings. This is the worst kind of miscommunication. You finish the conversation and think you are both on the same page when in fact, you aren't even speaking the same language."

This is why we need this book. ENJOY !

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THIS BOOK

SAVE THE DATE & REGISTER

(and please **fill out this form** if you're
NOT planning to attend a meeting **this time around**)

TO MEET US ON ZOOM

EITHER ON

TUESDAY JULY 25th at 7 pm

OR

FRIDAY JULY 28th at 12 pm

*We'll discuss the main themes of the book,
and reflect how to build on our assessment results!!*