

StrengthsFinder 2.0

EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- PART I: Finding Your Strengths
- PART II: Applying your Strengths and the 34 Themes

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What is StrengthsFinder?

Strengths Finder gives a list of the 34 most common talents among leaders. One can take the Clifton StrengthFinders assessment to discover their top five themes of talents. From there, you are given ideas of action to help develop the top five themes of talents.

“If you want to improve your life and the lives of those around you, you must take action”

THE #1 WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER

**STRENGTHS
FINDER 2.0**

TOM RATH

New York Times Bestselling Author of

WELLBEING

Summary In Brief

StrengthsFinder 2.0 is an updated version of a previous Clifton Strengths Assessment. It discusses the key ideas of Strengths leadership and the importance of focusing on your strengths rather than your weaknesses. By focusing on your weaknesses, it is argued that it is like wasting your time. You are able to be more successful when focusing on your strengths. By doing so, you are able to focus and help others develop their strengths. StrengthsFinder2.0 outlines 34 themes of talent—each having different characteristics. These talents are your strengths. Everyone is strong in a few of these talents—but not all of them. It is important to focus only on the talents that are your strengths. This book also includes plans of action for each of the 34 themes of talents to help you develop your own strengths.

Part I: Finding Your Strengths

In Part I of the book, Rath focuses on the notion of “the path of most resistance”. From the start of Part I, it is argued that the most common goal of most learning programs is to help someone become someone become who they are not. Rath uses the example of Rudy Ruettiger from the movie *Rudy* to show how “overcoming deficits is an essential part of the fabric of our culture” (p. 5). The idea of overcoming one’s lack of natural ability has become a “heroic” act and is focused and recognized more than those who capitalize on their innate talents. This has led to millions of people trying to conquer major challenges. However, Rath views this as the path of most resistance.

“You cannot be anything you want to be—but you can be a lot more of who you already are” - p. 9

A Misguided Maxim?

“You can be anything you want to be, if you just try hard enough” (p. 5).

Question for the reader:

Can someone truly be anything they want if they just try hard

enough?

According to Rath, the answer is simple—no. In this section of Part I, Rath argues why the answer to the above statement is no. He uses both personal and hypothetical anecdotes

that show why someone cannot be anything they want if they just work hard enough. As described in his personal anecdote, he wanted to play basketball when he was younger. He tried very

The Strength Zone

“Having the opportunity to develop our strengths is more important to our success than our role, our title, or even our pay” (p. 11).

When you don’t have the ability to use your strengths, chances are that you:

- Dread going to work

- Have more negative than positive interactions
- Achieve less on a daily basis

Part II: Applying Your Strengths and The 34 Themes

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

“Every human being has talents that are just waiting to be discovered” (p.30)

The 34 themes of talent all have different characteristics. Each person is strong in these different talents—not everyone will have the same combination of talents. By identifying your top talents, you will better understand how you can be an effective leader. One of the key ideas presented is knowing when and how to combine the talents of others with your own talents. Doing so will create a stronger group and become more successful.

Final Thoughts

The StrengthsFinder assessment is a great tool to discover your own strengths. These strengths can be applied to several different leadership styles and approaches. Being able to identify your strengths will allow you to find the best approach that will allow to become a more effective leader. By drawing on your strengths and the strengths of others, you (and your organization) can become successful. It is important to remember to focus on your strengths rather than weaknesses. By focusing on your own strengths, you can then help followers develop their strengths.

"If you spend your life trying to be good at everything, you will never be great at anything."

- Tom Rath, Strengths Based Leadership

References:

Rath, T. (2007). StrengthsFinder 2.0. New York, NY: Gallup Press

Northouse, P. G. (2019). Leadership. Theory and practice. Michigan University, MI: SAGE Publications, Inc