Strengths Technology

Bridget Biggar & Ninh Tran

University of Pennsylvania

A Capstone Project Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Christopher Peterson

August 1, 2010

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Abstract

While the language of positive psychology can be universal, there is a language that organizations gravitate towards and find both engaging and effectual. Organizations speak in terms of *behavioral* competence when recruiting, assessing performance, measuring results, creating development plans and administering performance appraisals. The current positive psychology canon of self-assessment surveys does not include one that relates to behavioral strengths. We suggest such an assessment, and produce evidence to establish its rightful place. Peterson and Seligman's Character Strengths and Values (2004) can be operationalized to align with the heuristics of for-profit organizations by connecting the two. We combine positive psychology concepts and scientific research with a proven operational methodology, the Lifo Orientations (Lifo®) Method – to produce Strengths Technology, a more pragmatic strengths-based framework. This proposed framework is comprised of two components, 1) identification of the behaviors that are the expression of VIA Character Strengths and 2) the Strengths Technology Matrix, which outlines 12 strength development strategies. Strengths Technology is a more practical and usable strengths-based framework that will help individuals, teams and organizations discover, capitalize on, and increase their strengths.

Introduction

The current trajectory of positive psychology is to have 51% of the world's population flourish by 2051 (Seligman, MAPP graduation dinner address, 2010). For-profit organizations are a market that has yet to be fully tapped and represent a way of reaching millions of adults who spend as long at work as they do asleep, 5-6 days a week in most cultures. Employee engagement programs have risen to the top of both Human Resource and Communication Directors' agendas because of the changing organizational climate. This is driven by the Gen Y new intake having greater expectations of the workplace and their jobs fitting them and their lives (Alsop, 2008), and the "moral malaise" of increased consumption without increased happiness as Fineman (2006) called it. Finding ways to engage individuals more fully is becoming an expectation and a challenge.

In 2009, the Chartered Management Institute in the UK (MacLeod, 2010) reported a strong association between motivation and personal productivity levels. More than two-thirds of those managers who reported that they were motivated at work also claimed high productivity levels (defined as more than 90%). Only 15% who were motivated experienced low levels of productivity (defined as less than 70%). And according to Gallup (2006), 86% of engaged employees in the US say they very often feel happy at work, as against 11% of the disengaged. 45% of the engaged say they get a great deal of their life happiness from work, against 8% of the disengaged.

Gallup also pointed to the negative effects of disengagement. 45% of the actively disengaged say that work stress caused them to behave poorly with friends or family members in the previous three months, against 17% of the engaged. More

alarmingly, 54% of the actively disengaged say their work lives are having a negative effect on their physical health, versus 12% of the engaged.

Given the benefits that individuals can realize from confirming and using their strengths in new ways (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005) and at work (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002) this area is a fruitful one for further research and study, as well as application. Money, Hillenbrand and da Camara (2009) concluded that elements of positive psychology applied to organizations have led to increased employee commitment, job satisfaction and happiness at work, helping individuals to flourish. Part of their study provides empirical evidence that the study of personal strengths and virtues can have an impact within the workplace.

The objective of the research and thinking that has gone into this capstone is to develop a practical and usable way of helping individuals, teams and organizations discover, capitalize on, and increase their strengths. We suggest a framework that can be applied to any model or classification of strengths which should enable trainers and facilitators to work with strengths more fully, and will add to the established focus on character strengths and talents that are already well known to those in the positive psychology community. Additionally the current positive psychology canon of self-assessment surveys does not include one that relates to behavioral strengths. Our experience is that the benefits that have been measured through the increased use of character strengths can also be gained through focusing on behavioral strengths the language of which, if not the strengths themselves, may be more suitable to organizations and at least can provide a start to the conversation. Either way we

believe that a strengths-based approach needs to be developed that has organizational acceptability and truly makes a difference to individuals.

This capstone is in six parts. Firstly, we dive into the how and why focusing on strengths helps individuals achieve increased flourishing, and examine the existing strengths classifications, instruments and frameworks being used within the positive psychology community and their particular characteristics and applications. Next we look at the role that values play in potentially defining what drives our strengths and bring together two circumplexes (Schwartz and Boehnke, 2004, and Peterson, 2006) together with further research into other values frameworks. In doing so, we explore whether the VIA character strengths classification has omitted a category of strengths that are particularly applicable to success in organizations. Next we introduce the Life Orientations (Lifo®) Model of behavioral strengths, as well as outlining the efficacy and value of using it in organizations. We then introduce our Strengths Technology Framework and illustrate its use to work with strengths as well as further development and design ideas. In the fifth section, we outline a preliminary PowerPoint presentation we plan to use to present the Strengths Technology Framework to trainers, who in turn will use this knowledge to apply to their domains. Lastly, we note how we plan to incorporate the Strengths Technology Framework into the Flourish program, which uses a multi-layered positive intervention approach to increase individual, team, and organization well-being.

Chapter 1: Strengths-Based Frameworks

In the American Psychologist, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi urged organizational practitioners to "Recognize that much of the best work they already do in the consulting room is to amplify strengths rather than to repair the weaknesses of their clients" (2000, p. 8). Amplifying and focusing on strengths is a fundamental concept of positive psychology, albeit an area which we are not naturally wired to do. Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs (2001) concluded that:

> Events that are negatively valenced will have a greater impact on the individual than positively valenced events of the same type. When equal measures of good and bad are present, however, the psychological effects of bad ones outweigh the good ones. (p. 323)

From an evolutionary standpoint, we are hardwired to focus on the negative as a necessity for survival from an individual and group perspective. However, movements such as positive organizational scholarship (POS) have proven that focusing on the ingredients that lead to optimum individual and organizational performance such as developing human strengths, producing resilience and fostering vitality have merit and are proven to produce an engaged and highly flourishing workforce (Cameron & Caza, 2004). For example, The Corporate Leadership Council, in a study of 20,000 employees that spanned 34 countries, found that managers who emphasized strengths achieved 36.4% higher performance from their employees, in comparison to a reduction of 26.8% in performance when managers emphasized weaknesses (Linley, 2009). A research study on employee engagement of 10,885 work units (308,798) in 51 companies, work units scoring above the median on the statement "At work, I have the

opportunity to do what I do best every day" have 44% (1.4 times) higher probability of success on customer loyalty and employee retention, and 38% higher probability of success on productivity measures (Harter & Schmidt, 2002).

Why focus on strengths?

Organizations allocate a good portion of their budget to recruiting and retaining talent into their firms. However, most organizations fail to focus on development and retention of the talent once recruited. Linley (2009) found that 68% of employees leave a job because of their managers. In addition, studies have shown that only 3 out of 10 employees feel like they are engaged while at work; these percentages are much lower when focusing on the under 35 years old demographics (A&DC Group, 2008). While these figures are alarming, what is more worrisome is that most managers do not have the skills to recognize their employees' strengths, let alone develop them. It is crucial that managers within organizations create an environment that will foster engagement, which energizes and motivates their employees for peak performance.

Prior to delving into why organizations should focus on strengths, we want to define the word strength. Linley defined a strength as a "preexisting 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" (2008, p. 9).

Recently, research from positive psychology has provided the scientific evidence and underpinnings for why focusing on strengths is effective, which is supported by benefits that arise from doing so. The Centre for Applied Positive Psychology (CAPP) has done extensive research on the benefits of a strengths-based methodology. In "Why Strengths? The Evidence" (2010), they listed ten benefits of

using strengths and the research that backs these statements. People who use their strengths are happier, more confident, higher self-esteem, higher levels of energy and vitality, less stressed, more resilient, more likely to achieve goals, perform better, more engaged, and more effective at people development. See Benefits of Using Strengths in Appendix A for the research that CAPP identified that supports each positive outcome from individuals focusing and utilizing their strengths.

Traditionally, strengths researchers have been primarily concerned with establishing evidence that using strengths is a valuable endeavor, leading to such desirable outcomes as happiness (Govindji & Linley, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005) and better performance at work (Clifton & Harter, 2003), studies have even identified which strengths are most likely to contribute to well-being and life satisfaction (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Peterson et al., 2007). A recent study identified that certain strengths (zest, curiosity, gratitude, and optimism/hope) are more highly linked with "elevated life satisfaction, subjective vitality, satisfaction of autonomy, relatedness, and competence needs, and a pleasurable, engaging, and meaningful existence" (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010, p. 151).

This exploratory approach makes sense for a nascent science that must be established as legitimate and worthwhile. Among the most important questions in positive psychology, and related to strengths specifically, is whether or not using our signature strengths helps us to achieve our goals and whether this, in turn, helps satisfy our psychological needs and leads to greater well-being. Little is known about the mechanisms by which strengths use might lead to psychological benefits such as

enhanced well-being and goal progress and this is currently one of the primary goals of the current research.

One possible answers lies in understanding the relationship between strengths and motivation. Peterson and Seligman's (2004) criteria for strengths to be included in the VIA taxonomy suggest that strengths use is largely intrinsically motivated. Criterion One, for instance, defines signature strengths as those strengths that an individual considers to be very much their own. These strengths convey a sense of ownership and authenticity in their use, an intrinsic yearning to use them and a feeling of inevitability in doing so. Hence, using one's signature strengths is considered to be concordant with one's intrinsic interests and values. In addition, using one's signature strengths is considered to serve well-being and basic psychological needs, such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness. There is, as yet, no firm theory of the processes that may explain how signature strengths contribute to these outcomes (Linley, Nielsen, Wood, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, R., 2010).

Peterson and Seligman (2004) commented that the thinking of Abraham Maslow (1970) about the characteristics of actualized people could be recast as a catalog of virtues and strengths. We hypothesize that it is the fulfillment of needs that individual character strengths provide that creates individual self-actualization and therefore growth in well-being. In "Toward a Psychology of Being", Maslow discussed his hypothesis that "choice values" are "what healthy people choose [are] on the whole what is "good for them" in biological terms certainly, but perhaps also in other senses" ("good for them" here means "conducing to their and others' self-actualization") (1968, p.187).

Positive Organization Frameworks

Referred to as the father of Modern Management, Peter Drucker is credited with launching the strengths-based movement. In *The Effective Executive*, Drucker stated, "Effective executives build on strengths – their own strengths, the strengths of their superiors, colleagues, and subordinates. They do not build on weakness. They do not start with things they cannot do" (1967, p. 24). He further argued that the task of a leader is to "make strengths productive" and to achieve results; leaders have to "use all the available strengths – the strengths of associates, the strengths of the superior, and one's own strengths" (Drucker, 1967, p. 55).

It is clear that Drucker's work and positive psychology share the same heritage. According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), positive psychology's mission is to focus on the study of strength and virtues, which is a departure from "psychology as normal" that focuses on pathology, weaknesses and damage. Drucker's approach to management, coupled with positive psychology's roots in evidence-based research has produced and inspired many disciplines, assessments, and methodologies. In this chapter, we seek to identify current instruments that help identify strengths in order to leverage and develop them, in order to produce positive outcomes within organizations. These assessments and methodologies include, the VIA Classification of Strengths and Virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), Gallup's *StrengthsFinder* (2008), and the Centre of Applied Positive Psychology's (CAPP) *Realise2* (2009). For each, we provide a brief background, the validity of the assessment, applications for the results of the assessment, and conclude with our critique of what is lacking from these instruments, specifically when applied to organizations.

1. VIA Character Strengths and Virtues

Virtues are core characteristics that are universal and grounded in biology and evolutionary theory. Peterson and Seligman outlined six broad categories and argued that these virtues must be present for an individual to be considered of "good character." Character Strengths are "the psychological ingredients – process or mechanisms that define the virtues. Said another way, they are distinguishable routes to displaying one or another of the virtues" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 13). Peterson and Park (2003) defined positive traits as "characteristics that contribute to individual fulfillment", which in turn can have a positive impact in other domains (p. 33). They argued that these individual traits can be translated and are "counterparts" that exists at the organizational level. With this foundation, the *Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths* was created. The VIA Signature Strengths Inventory is an online assessment tool that measures 24 positive traits organized into six virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, love, justice, temperance, and transcendence.

In "Putting positive psychology to work in organizations", Money, Hillenbrand and da Camera (2009) investigated the role that character strengths and virtues play in the workplace, and how they can contribute to happiness from the three approaches of The Pleasant Life, the Engaged Life, and Meaningful Life. They argued that individuals could flourish when he/she lives a life that provides an outlet for their strengths and virtues. This can be applied especially to the workplace, as much of our time is spent within this domain. The authors suggested that job satisfaction should

come from matching ones strengths and finding the opportunities to express them in a job. However, their study also found that some character strengths are perceived to be more important to the nature and requirements of the workplace than others. Spirituality, appreciation, love and valor were ranked relatively low in importance in their study, whereas virtues such as perseverance, learning, leadership, curiosity, self-control, and prudence were ones that the respondents rated as character strengths that require more expression beyond their natural inclination to fit into the organization's heuristics. Most mismatches require individuals to suppress this strength in some way. The expression therefore of gratitude, humility, kindness, playfulness, spirituality, citizenship and hope for example, suggest that many of the human and community-based virtues are suppressed in the workplace (Money, Hillenbrand and da Camera, 2009).

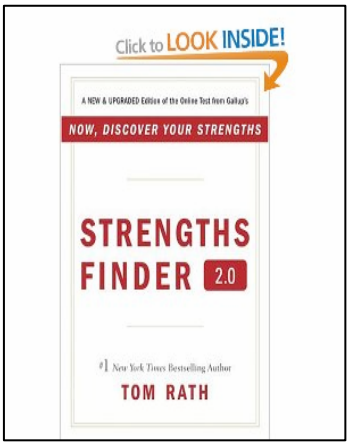
The studies mentioned above demonstrate that positive psychology is applicable within the workplace. The three general approaches to life, specifically positive emotions, meaning and engagement, theorized by Seligman (2002) provide an effective context to understand approaches to work. In the Money et al. study (2009), despite the relatively small sample size, the study of individual strengths and virtues also seems to have an impact at work. The authors noted surprising findings in that the work environment doesn't always foster strengths, rather it can create a need for individuals to suppress some strengths, such as appreciation of beauty and kindness. They admit that while there is a clear need for positive psychology within the workforce, there is still additional research needed.

> The findings provide a useful starting point and a potential instrument to analyze the strengths of individuals, the demands of work and potential to foster under-utilized strengths. In adopting this approach to exploring the long term causes of happiness and the potential of positive characteristics in the workplace, the study also adds to the positive institutions pillar of positive psychology in that it provides an insight into how organizations can engender and support more positive behaviors from their employees and promote organizational growth and performance improvements. (Money, et. al, 2009, p. 13)

A common question that is asked of the VIA Institute after respondents have taken the survey and received their rank-ordered list of 24 character strengths is how the results can be applied and their applicability within an organization. To answer this, the VIA Institute defined a three-step process: Aware, Explore, Apply. Awareness is the first step in this model, which stresses the importance of strengths language. In order to build upon ones strength, it is imperative that the individual understands their own strengths and recognize when they exhibit their strengths. Simply put, this step answers two questions, "What are the strengths?" and begins to answer the question, "What strength was I just using?" (VIA Intensive Workshop, Bray UK, 2010). The second step in the process is Explore, where the client connects the strength labels to past and current experiences. It begins to recognize the individual's hot buttons and what "makes the person tick." Some personal exercises within this step involve "reflection, pondering, and journaling, as well as interpersonal discussion and co-exploration" (VIA Intensive Manual, 2010, p. 86).

The last step in this process is Apply, which involves the client beginning to use his strengths in daily life. This is the action phase. The client moves from reflecting and thinking to doing. A coach or therapist might start with a question, "Which strength are you interested in applying in your daily life?" Another angle is to directly point out themes that emerged in the exploration questions: the practitioner might point out that hope and perseverance seem to keep popping up in discussions, that the client seems to use self-regulation well at work but not at home, or the theme that the client frequently overuses his curiosity and under-uses his creativity. At the 2010 VIA Intensive workshop, Ryan Niemiec (Director of Education) expressed his view that in addition to the interventions currently in the VIA Institute's toolbox of organizational applications, they are continually looking for more ways to introduce new strategies and techniques for individuals and organizations to utilize the results of the VIA survey more effectively and productively.

2. Gallup's Clifton StrengthsFinder (CSF)



Where the VIA classification is intended as a scientific classification, the aim of Gallup's Clifton StrengthsFinder is to identify various qualities in employees that allow them to flourish within the workplace. The VIA Institute distinguished itself from the CSF from the standpoint of scope and perspective. "The VIA's perspective is that character strengths are foundational to the human experience. They are psychological ingredients that define virtues" (VIA Intensive Manual, 2010, p. 83). Contrastingly, the CSF defined strengths as talents, which can be enhanced through past experiences and

practice.

Developed by Donald Clifton, who was cited by the American Psychological Association (2002) as the Father of Strengths Psychology and the Grandfather of positive psychology, believed that "Talents could be operationalized, studied, and capitalized upon in work and academic settings. Talents are manifested in life experiences characterized by yearnings, rapid learning, satisfactions, and timelessness" (Asplund, Lopez, Hodges, Harter, 2009, p. 6). Whereas Linley (2008) saw strengths as an enabler or mechanism in themselves, Clifton believed that strengths are part of an equation, not necessarily the answer. He believed that strengths had to be combined with talents, which are developed from knowledge and skills, in order to perform at a person's best. To support this construct, Clifton identified "themes" of individual talents that predicted success in the workplace and academia. As he designed his questionnaire and conducted interviews, the overriding theme of his research was "What would happen if we studied what is right with people?" In Clifton's strength philosophy, he believed that talents are the foundation for developing strengths. He defined talents as "naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied" (Hodges & Clifton, 2004, p. 257). Strengths are realized when talents are maximized.

Clifton's interview guide and strength's philosophy serve as the foundation for the CSF. The CSF is an online assessment designed to measure the talents that can serve as the foundation of strengths development. When taking the assessment, the respondents have to answer 177 questions. They are asked to choose the statement that best describes him or her, and also the degree to which that chosen option is descriptive

of him or her. Unlike other assessments, participants are given 20 seconds to respond to a given question. The CSF measures the presence of talents in 34 distinct themes. Values for items in the theme are aggregated to derive a theme score. The calculation of scores is based on the mean of the intensity of self-description. The results are presented to the respondent as a ranked ordering of Signature Themes, where the five highest scoring themes are provided to the respondent (Asplund et al., 2009).

The CSF's intended purpose is to facilitate a discussion around personal development and growth, via strengths and talents. The CSF results form the basis of further interventions that help individuals capitalize on their talents and identify ways to apply them to various situations. Because of this intended purpose, Gallup believes that the psychometrics that supports the results of the assessment is sufficient. The internal reliability of the themes in a random sample of 46,902 respondents from 2008, and the 2,219 respondents from the test-retest study describes a strong similarity of the two sets of reliability estimates (Asplund et al., 2009). From a validity standpoint, the CSF looks very strong. That is, it seems to measure what it is supposed to measure. Studies have produced evidence of congruence with the Big Five (Costa & McCrae, 1985).

Buckingham & Clifton state that the CSF is "an omnibus assessment based on positive psychology, its main application has been in the work domain, but it has been used for understanding individuals and groups in a variety of settings — employee, executive team, student, family, and personal development" (2000, p. 249). The CSF is often used as a starting point in Gallup's strengths-based development program. This program consist of respondents taking the assessment, talent feedback is provided, a set

of suggestions are provided based on the individual's Signature Themes, and finally the individual integrates these strategies into their workplace. "The strengths-based development process encourages individuals to build strengths by acquiring skills, and knowledge that can complement their greatest talents in application to specific tasks" (Asplund et al., 2009, p. 9). Through the CSF methodology, Gallup found evidence that strengths-based development increased employee engagement and productivity (Clifton & Harter, 2003). In addition, managers that created environments that fostered strengths use have more productive work units and lower turnover (Clifton & Harter, 2003). Gallup is continually looking into additional studies and research that explore the benefits and outcomes of strengths-based development such as the CSF.

3. Centre of Applied Positive Psychology – Realise2

The Centre of Applied Positive Psychology (CAPP) team of Linley, Willars, Biswas-Diener, Stairs and Garcea developed Realise2, an online strengths assessment and development tool. In this assessment, respondents are asked to answer 60 different items, according to the three dimensions of energy, performance and use. The ratings are then combined in different ways to determine whether an attribute is classified as a Realised Strength, Unrealised Strength, Learned Behavior, or a Weakness. Respondents receive a Profile Report that details the categories in which their strengths fall. In their individualized reports, respondents can select which strengths they want to focus and develop (Linley, 2009).

The CAPP team defined strengths as "the things that we are good at and that give

us energy when we are using them" (Linley, 2009, p.2). In dissecting this definition, CAPP identified three components to any strength, 1) **Performance:** how good we are at doing something, 2) **Energy**: how much energy we get from doing it, and 3) **Use**: how often we get to do it. For something to be considered a strength, the three components of performance, energy, and use need to be present (Linley, 2009, p. 2). Linley (2009) examined hundreds of different strengths and then identified those

> That gave the broadest and most representative basis for assessing strengths in the general population. Their goal was to establish which strengths clustered together from our experience of working with people who had those strengths, and which strengths could be subsumed under other strengths in a hierarchical fashion. (p. 4)

The assessment clustered the strengths into five *strengths families*: Being, Communicating, Motivating, Relating and Thinking. There are 14 Strengths of Being, 8 Strengths of Communicating, 13 Strengths of Motivating, 11 Strengths of Relating, and 14 Strengths of Thinking.

CAPP has conducted validity studies to measure personality, social desirability, and organizational citizenship behaviors. The initial item pool was tested on a pilot sample of over 100 working adults in order to test for comprehensibility and item internal consistency reliability for each strength (Linley, 2009). With a single exception (Incubator $\alpha = .68$), all Cronbach's alphas exceeded 0.70, even though only three items were included. The mean Cronbach's alpha across the 60 Realise2 attribute item groupings was $\alpha = .82$. Test-retest reliabilities were calculated on a sample of 132 adults, and for each individual item (energy, performance, use), for each attribute (the 60 attributes of Realise2), were statistically significant at $p<.001$. For single item test-

retest correlations, this is impressive. Taking the three items for energy, performance and use as a whole for each attribute, the test-retest correlations range from $r = .634$ to $r = .802$, all statistically significant at $p<.001$. An average of 62.9% for each attribute remained consistent in its Realise2 category over the test-retest period of one-week (Linley, 2009, p. 6). Linley (2009) concluded that for the purpose of strengths assessment, the results are valid:

> Given that a move of a single point in the Realise2 attribute ratings can shift a response into a different category, and that there are three ratings made for each attribute, this level of stability indicates that Realise2 is a stable and reliable assessment tool, but is also capable of detecting dynamic changes, as it is explicitly designed to do. (p. 6)

Robert Biswas-Diener, program director of CAPP, stated that strengths are pre-existing capacities that energize and lead to our best performance (2009). Some strengths are easy to identify and others are less well developed. Strengths should be innate and be that which gives us the drive to achieve. "Strengths are also our greatest areas for growth. Even though many of our strengths are second nature most of us could still use some practice in order to use them even more effectively" (Biswas-Diener, 2009, p. 1). He believed that while focusing on strengths is important, there should be a balance and weaknesses must be managed. Where failure occurs is when too much energy is focused on trying to transform deficits into areas of strength.

In the Realise2 Personal Development Plan worksheet, CAPP outlined the four areas of Realised Strengths, Unrealised Strengths, Learned Behaviors, and Weaknesses. The strategy for each category, respectively are to marshal them, maximize them,

moderate them, and minimize them. To facilitate this process, the respondents are asked to identify Activity, Barriers, Enablers, Support, and Milestones for each of the four categories.

In CAPP's Strength Book (Linley, Willars & Biswas-Diener, 2010), for each of the strengths, they outlined several components to help respondents identify and build on their strengths. They provided catchphrases and quotes for those that exhibit that Realised strength. The book also included paragons, which they term "Hall of Fame". They also highlight these strengths in various contexts: relationships, work, and play. Lastly, they warn respondents about the pitfalls of overplaying the strength (Linley, Nielsen, Wood, Gillett, R., & Biswas-Diener, 2010).

Comparative Analysis

The three strength's based frameworks outlined above are intended to help individuals identify, build upon, and develop strengths to produce positive outcomes. To do so, each assessment presents a set of strategies. In order to do a comparative analysis of these strategies we created the matrix in Figure 1, which has four quadrants: Think-Internal, Act-Internal, Think-External, Act-External.

	Think	**Act**
Internal		
External		

Figure 1: Strengths Technology Matrix

There are strength strategies that require mental processing: Think; while others require the respondent to take action: Act. The Think category can be both cognitive

and/or emotional in nature. On the vertical axis, we have the External and Internal categories, which assesses the context of interactions with the environment and with other people. Externally focused strategies involve interactions with another individual, which take into consideration environmental factors such as stress. Internally focused strategies are those that require individuals to be introspective and think only about themselves or the role they play in a situation. For each of the strengths-based frameworks, we populated each quadrant with the strategies that they have so far established as effective. In doing so, we highlighted areas of strength and areas that are lacking in each framework. This comparative analysis helps illustrate our hypothesis that there still lacks a robust strengths-based framework or methodology whose strategies fill up all four quadrants.

1. VIA Character Strengths and Virtues

While each of the 24 VIA strengths may have different applications to build them up, the VIA Institute outlined several exercises that can potentially help develop any character strength (refer to Figure 2).

	Think	**Act**
Internal	Self Monitor Imagine using the strength in the future	Use the strength in a new way Write or journal about the strength
External		Emulate a paragon Practice using the strength

Figure 2. VIA Matrix

For example, an exercise such as emulating a paragon or role model requires the respondent to observe and identify individuals around them that display the strength that they want to develop – this is very much Externally driven. Once they have identified this individual, they have to

Act or mirror these strengths. Writing or journaling about a strength is an exploration activity that is proven to be effective because expressing the strength in a written form can have powerful internal and interpersonal benefits. Therefore, we consider this an Act/Internal strategy. An example of an Act/External strategy would be to practice using the strength – which involves more acting than thinking. This strategy is about making the strength a routine, which turns it into a habit.

While there are strategies that fall into at least three quadrants, the Think/External quadrant is empty. This piece of the quadrant is important because we need to think about our strengths in relation to the environment. For example, which strengths we use may vary depending on whether we are under stress or in favorable conditions, or who we are with. The question that the VIA Institute suggested of "What strength am I interested in applying today?" will change depending on the context and the situation. Applying zest when dealing with an employee conflict might not be the best option. What is lacking in these interventions is the identification of which strengths an individual gravitates towards when under a favorable or unfavorable environment. Knowing how one naturally reacts under these circumstances will allow the individual to better harness their strengths to deal with the situation at hand.

Gallup's Clifton StrengthsFinder (CSF)

While Buckingham & Clifton argued that the CSF's main application is within the workplace, we think it falls short when trying to apply it to the workplace. As Figure 3 shows, most of the strategies they recommended for building upon strengths fall within the Think/Internal quadrant. Most of the strategies that are suggested involve understanding language and distinguishing talents, knowledge, and skills. While knowing strengths and understanding language is important, they fail to emphasis action both externally and internally. The CSF does suggest a strategy of understanding patterns of behaviors, usually in the context of interacting with others. However, there is no strategy for how to monitor, facilitate, or augment these behavioral patterns depending on the situation or environment. Clifton believed that strengths had to be combined with talents, which are developed from knowledge and skills, in order to perform at an individual's peak (Hodges & Clifton, 2004). However, this language seems very abstract and lacks little action, as reflected in Figure 3. It begs the question how does one develop strengths and talents beyond just knowing and being able to label them?

	Think	**Act**
Internal	Brainstorm new strength themes Refine your strengths Categorize talents, knowledge, skills Create a common langugage	Write or journal about the strength
External	Understand your patterns in behavior	

Figure 3. CSF Matrix

3. Centre of Applied Positive Psychology – Realise2

In Biswas-Diener's article "4 Powerful Strategies for Using Strengths" (2009), he outlined the techniques as shown in Figure 4. The Realise2 strength assessment is more comprehensive in considering the external factors compared to the VIA and CSF. CAPP stressed the importance of developing strengths within a certain context. Specifically, "Take time to consider how a particular situation may be suggestive of one of your strengths over another. Make sure you match your strength to the situation to increase your effectiveness" (Biswas-Diener, 2009, p. 2). In addition to matching your strengths to the situation, Biswas-Diener also suggested individuals should consider the degree to which strengths are being utilized – too much or too little. In the four-week program that CAPP outlined, the first two weeks are spent identifying strengths and developing a strengths vocabulary. In the third week, individuals are encouraged to develop their strengths. This is the area in which the development program falls short. CAPP suggests picking a strength and working on it. However, which strength should an individual choose, a Realised or Unrealised strength? Or, should an individual develop a strength that the individual wants to develop or one that is applicable to the environment or situation? We believe that choosing *any* strength will not necessarily give an individual the uplift in benefit that might be implied.

	Think	**Act**
Internal	Build strength vocabulary Identify strengths by what energizes you	
External	Balance strengths and weaknesses	Develop strengths by matching it to the situation

Figure 4. Realise2

Organizational Application

The existing strengths-based frameworks that are used within the positive psychology community, the VIA, Gallup's Clifton StrengthsFinder, and CAPP's Realise2, share the same heritage but have gone in different directions. Specifically, these assessments recognize that focusing on strengths, rather than weaknesses, produces higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, happiness, confidence, and self-esteem. While the CSF and Realise2 are used primarily in the workplace, the VIA was not intended to be such a tool, rather it was initially devised as a counterpoint to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM, 1994).

Govindji and Linley (2007) stated that "Traditionally, strengths researchers have been primarily concerned with establishing evidence that strengths use is a valuable endeavor, leading to such desirable outcomes as happiness". Organizational development practitioners, trainers, consultants and coaches have seized on the potential demonstrated by the positive results associated with strengths use, but now require not only a vocabulary and an understanding of how strengths work, but how using a strengths-based methodology will actually make a difference.

We also observe that the VIA classification of strengths and virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) has moved beyond being a strengths vocabulary relating to good character (Park & Peterson, 2009) which can now be effectively and reliably measured (Park & Peterson, 2006, Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006) to being a coaching, training and development framework of strengths to be confirmed, developed and exploited. We ask in the second chapter whether what makes the difference to individuals is whether it is the fact that the character strengths are *morally valued* or are

strengths or indeed both. Focusing on "signature strengths" or the "top five" seems to us to somewhat deflect attention from the original intention. This isn't necessarily a bad thing but we see a gap appearing between the science and the practice.

In a number of corporate settings we have received pushback on a few issues particularly since the VIA interpretive report has been available. The responses that we as coaches give from a qualified practitioner perspective do not necessarily wash with executives. So far issues that have arisen include: 1) **Granularity of results**. The 5-point likert, ipsative scale that is used for the VIA potentially does not provide much differentiation between top and bottom character strengths and particularly when perhaps ten strengths come within 0.4 of each other. This seems to reduce the face validity of the results. 2) **Sequence.** In many settings (and cultures) strengths such as "Honesty" or "Judgment" are perceived as more morally valued than, say, Curiosity or even Kindness. An executive receiving an interpretive report with "Honesty" as #22 strength is going to worry whether their superior will be calling in security and more energy will be going into defending this lesser strength and its position, than concentrating on maximizing top strengths.

We believe that what is missing from the mainstream positive psychology research is the answer to the "so what" of the VIA survey results. The other two commercial instruments are actively trying to develop and utilize strengths-based approaches to exploit the efficacy of their own instruments. Developing a methodology for using the VIA character strengths as the most accepted and non-commercial classification of strengths is what we hope to bring to light, and propose an answer.

Chapter 2: Values, Behaviors, and Strengths

The potential role values play in the structure of strengths

The VIA Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) were arrived at as being morally valued in all cultures. However, the use of them has extended beyond this and a growing body of knowledge about strengths in general is arising. The question is whether it is the "morally valued" part of the character strengths or the "strengths" part of the strengths which is being found to make a difference?

Interestingly the VIA Institute has dropped the original title of "Values in Action" that the 3-letter abbreviation stood for and used the letters in a purely abstract sense (Ryan Niemic, Director of Education at the VIA Institute, Intensive Strengths Workshop, June 2010).

Rokeach (1973) defined values as lasting beliefs that certain personal goals are preferable to others. They can be consciously chosen or unconscious, perhaps inherited from parents, teachers or the institutions to which we belong (the church, for example) and not questioned. In many ways, our values color our reality and become the filter through which we assess certain elements in the world (Maio, Olson, Bernard, & Luke, 2003), dictating certain attitudes and the way we behave.

McClelland in the instructions to his Personal Values Survey (1991) explained that "Values are those factors - activities, behaviors, qualities, beliefs, goals - that you believe are important to do, follow, or strive toward. While you may not always think about your values, you are aware of them and can consciously identify them" (p. 4).

Values are ordered in systems and we each order them uniquely as more or less important, as well as those we admire in others. We almost instinctively know when

someone shares the same values as ourselves through observing their behavior and attending to how they talk about certain issues. Scott (1963) showed that we join groups with values that are similar to our own, whether or not that group is actually about the propagating of those values.

In their overview of previous classifications of character strengths, Peterson and Seligman (2004) pointed out that the Schwartz circumplex of universal human values (1994) has some useful structural implications for the character strengths classification as well as some loose parallels. Certainly it is possible to see at least a visual association between the Schwartz circumplex in Appendix B (1994) and the circumplex of character strengths created by Peterson (2006). Further factor analyses of the character strengths (Macdonald, Bore, Munro 2008, & Brdar & Kashdan, 2010) indicated two slightly different four-factor structures although neither has been plotted on a circumplex to aid comparison. "We have not produced a circumplex of the 4 factors found. If we had a relevant specific hypothesis we could do so, but I'm not sure what would be achieved. From our perspective we were just exploring what structure might underlie the VIA" (M. Bore, personal communication, July 5, 2010).

We reason that if character strengths arise partly from personal value sets then working with them clearly has a powerful impact on our motivation and potential stressors. This thinking contributes to our framework for working with strengths outlined in Chapter Four.

The Theory of Basic Human Values (Schwartz, 1992) identified 10 motivationally distinct types of values that are likely to be recognized within and across cultures. Extensive research has assessed the theory in over 200 samples in more than

60 countries from every inhabited continent. Those values are shown below with their value labels attached:

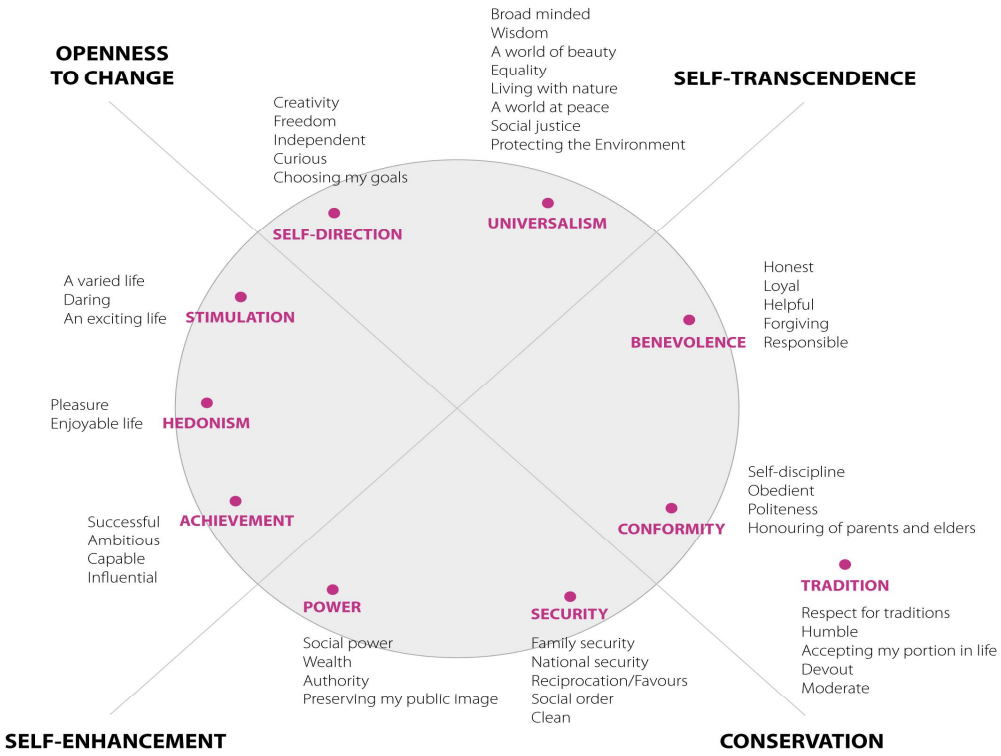


Figure 5. Theory of Basic Human Values

And are organized on two bi-polar dimensions:

- Openness to change vs. conservatism
- Self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement

The theory structures the dynamic relations amongst the 10 values by placing them on the circumference of a circle and proposes that the strength of associations between variables reduces as the distance between the variables increases. Because of the bi-polar organization, any action that is an expression of any value may either

conflict or be compatible with the pursuit of other values. For example, actions that arise from Hedonism values are likely to conflict with actions that express Tradition values and vice versa. Talking about Self-direction values is likely to jar with someone who wishes to maintain Conformity values and vice versa. On the other hand, Hedonism values are compatible with Self-direction values, and Tradition values are compatible with Conformity values being adjacent on the circumplex.

Schwartz used the higher-order axes as a way to more simply describe the structure of the values. However, this way of describing the values allows other models and frameworks to be oriented for comparison and potential correlation purposes, although standard statistical data-analysis would need to be done to prove true correlation. Other researchers have labeled the axes differently. For example Rohan (2000) labeled the Conservation-Openness to Change axis: Priority on Organization versus Priority on Opportunity.

Bilsky and Koch (2000) suggested that there is evidence that the organization of values by Schwartz can be found in other assessment instruments. They listed the following:

- Rokeach Value Survey (RVS)
- Portraits Questionnaire (PQ-29)
- O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell's (1991) 'Organizational Culture Profile' (OCP)
- Kilmann Insight Test: Interpersonal Constructs (1975)
- Morris (1956) 'Ways to Live', as simplified by Dempsey & Dukes (1966)

Even Allport and Vernon's (1931) 'Study of Values' closely matched the configuration postulated by the theory (Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994).

We have also seen the potential that the Schwartz values structure underpins the Life Orientations model (Atkins, 1981) and the Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) Competing Values Framework (CVF). The axes in both cases appear to be similar and the organization of the quadrants the same. Both of these models were derived through other theories and empirical studies. Both these instruments look at behaviors arising from clusters of values, the former at individual strengths and the latter at organizational culture.

If values can be seen as motivational drivers then this has exciting implications for how we can work with strengths to increase motivation, well-being and happiness, and reduce stress. The extent to which we chose to use our most and least preferred strengths therefore is about doing what comes naturally and aligns with our fundamental drives, or doing that which goes against the grain and is not necessarily valued.

In fact strengths relating to one quadrant are absent from the VIA character strengths: those relating to the Schwartz Achievement and Power values. These cluster around the self-enhancement end of the bi-polar dimension that has self-transcendence at its other end. In the literature about positive psychology and organizations there is debate about whether there is a mismatch between the development of virtuous character strengths and the ultimate goal of for profit organizations.

> Seeking personal reward or recompense for ones efforts, such as profit, power, or prestige, is not virtuous; this acts against the internal counsel of one's good

> spirit. Displays of compassion and courage are, therefore, void of virtue if they are performed simply for personal recognition or applause. (Fineman, 2006, p. 272)

So this makes sense except that if playing to one's strengths and using them in new ways produces increased positive affect and contributes to an upward spiral of resourcefulness and happiness then this is an area that would be productive to be looked at, particularly when seeking acceptance within organizations.

If we take the Schwartz values as representing the whole of humanity's values – could it be that there are strengths of character that need to be identified for those who are naturally motivated by the positive side of Achievement and Power? Peterson and Seligman (2004) draw a loose connection between Achievement (Schwartz) and Persistence (VIA CS) and Power (Schwartz) and Leadership (VIA CS). But these two character strengths are only part of the more dynamic strengths of those who favor these two values, strengths such as initiative, vision, drive, purposefulness, quickness to act, change seeking and inspiring (although the character strength of Zest comes close to some of these). These are the strengths of "starting" rather than "persisting". The character strengths are well-placed to help individuals to increase their well-being and to flourish, but may not be yet complete.

Further evidence that strengths driven by the Achievement and Power values are missing from the VIA classification might be found from an extensive study by Lawrence and Nohria (2002). Edward O. Wilson writing in the foreword of their book Driven (2002) suggests that their "four-drive model will . . . be of interest to scholars because it has been conceived from an independent approach to the study of human

nature. Its conception of broad instinctual categories can serve as a valuable reference point for future studies by both social scientists and biologists ” (p. xvi). To do this, they first examined the most recent evolutionary biological, neuroscience and human behavioral research looking for what drives people as human beings. They concluded that there are four genetically based drives. Their hypothesis is that each of the four specific drives is independent from the others in as much as fulfilling one does not fulfill the others and that these drives in combination with each other provide humans with their motives that have been genetically evolved to act as a set of decision guides and underpin our continued survival as a race.

They make four critical assertions:

1. The four drives are innate and universal, found in some physical form in the brains of all human beings

2. The four drives are independent, that is the goals they seek are not interchangeable, although they are highly interactive with each other

3. The drives are not derived from one another in the brain or from a single underlying mental drive: they each have a different neural pathway

4. The four drives are a complete set, they are not missing any other important universal and independent human drives

Those four drives are: 1) the drive to acquire, 2) the drive to bond, 3) the drive to learn and, 4) the drive to defend. The first two relate echo Erich Fromm’s assertion that human relatedness to the world is done by "assimilation" and "socialization" (1947). Lawrence and Nohria’s main argument for the drive to acquire is based in great part on fundamental survival behaviors, that is to survive and prosper, you have to do

better than others in both the material and positional senses, and in a world of scarce resources, survival depends on constantly striving to outdo your fellow human beings. Evolutionarily, if you are faced with the possibility of death, only those with an instinctive propensity to take risks to acquire food would have survived.

They cited a number of social science experiments that support this being one of the innate drives. They see ambition as the positive manifestation of this drive and envy as the negative. Taking examples of modern day corporate and individual greed, where enough is never enough, they trace this behavior back to the Pleistocene era where many species were quickly eradicated as human populations rose. They posit that the Drive to Acquire also gains its energy in relation to others, be it for more wealth or greater rank, and suggest that many people would see this drive as underlying much of the negative side of human behaviors – wars, slavery, exploitation, global warming: our innate aggression.

However, they suggested also that the Drive to Acquire could lead to cooperation as people pool resources to increase their chances of acquisition, and that humans have an innate skill set for defining what is owned by them as distinct from what is owned by others and how such objects can be traded.

This Drive clearly aligns with the Achievement and Power values identified by Schwartz (1992). The element of self-enhancement that it contains also points to why the character strengths classification (Peterson and Seligman, 2004) doesn't contain strengths directly related to those values as this drive relates to much that is negative.

The second drive, the Drive to Bond, is an innate need to form social relationships and develop mutual caring commitments with other humans. It stems

from one of the simplest but most human skill sets which are the ability to distinguish between “us” and “them”, the “dyadic instinct”. The evidence they cited for this drive, apart from the multitude of evidence around us, is mainly gathered from Baumeister and Leary (1995). In this study they cite 296 references to support their argument. Importantly they also put forward evidence that humans carry over their bonding drive to their affiliations with groups and other collective entities.

Looking for evolutionary evidence Lawrence and Nohria return to Darwin who proposed that man is a social being in The Descent of Man (1871). Although the evidence for social bonding as an evolved trait was denied for many decades, some leading biologists have now returned to Darwin’s original theory.

The authors pointed out that bonding is fundamentally different from acquiring since it can only be fulfilled with another human, who is acting voluntarily. They also hypothesized that basic moral codes are a skill set that have emerged genetically as a means of satisfying our Drive to Bond and that all major religions share these basic moral ground rules that children seem to understand at an early age. Interestingly, they point out that the most common punishment for violating social norms is social ostracism or even solitary confinement or exile.

The Drive to Learn is without doubt the most surprising of the four drives. Lawrence and Nohria (2002) described it as an innate drive to satisfy curiosity, to know, to comprehend, to believe, to appreciate, to develop understandings or representations of environment and of self through a reflective process, proposing that the drive is expressed in consciousness "by an emotion variously labeled

inquisitiveness, wonder, and curiosity" (p. 107). They turn to the research of Antonio Damasio (1999) who stated:

> It is as if we are possessed by a passion for reason … from the practical to the theoretical, is probably constructed on this inherent drive by a process which resembles the mastering of a skill or craft. Remove the drive, and you will not acquire the mastery. But having the drive does not automatically make you a master. (p. 45)

Further evidence for this drive is taken from the work of psychologist George Loewenstein (1994), whose important paper, "The psychology of curiosity: a review and reinterpretation", reviewed much of the research undertaken in the 20th century about curiosity, quoting in particular Piaget, the child psychologist, and Hebb, an experimental psychologist who both came to similar conclusions from different starting points that curiosity reflects a natural human tendency to make sense of the world that is activated by violated expectations. Loewenstein called this the Information Gap Theory, which proposed that individuals start with what they previously know (or think they know) on a given topic, and when they encounter something that is inconsistent with what is known a gap is generated that is immediately experienced as an unpleasant sensation that they feel driven to remove. He hypothesized that this gap motivates individuals to try to make sense of the new observation by reordering their previous knowledge in a way that accommodates it.

Lawrence and Nohria pointed out that this account of curiosity and learning is completely consistent with the explanation of how the brain works by Edelman (1992), which is that the brain is seen as a computational mechanism that can compare new

perceptions with existing ones and faced with inconsistency the brain generates or imagines a set of possible resolutions, until it finds one that restores consistency, which is then preserved in long-term memory. They are also at pains to distinguish this type of learning through curiosity from conditioning and learning, as demonstrated by the experiments of Pavlov, Watson and Skinner.

Finally they turn to evolution, where they stated that the emerging Drive to Learn undoubtedly fostered the evolution of additional innate skill sets such as manipulating tools, creating mechanical devices, painting, dancing, creating and performing music etc.

They listed major psychologists who have studied human motivations and needs that could be considered derivative of the drive to learn:

- Competence (White)
- Growth (Maslow)
- Achievement (McClelland)
- Mastery (Deci)
- Creativity (Amabile)
- Efficacy (Bandura)

And in particular, they stated that the Drive to Learn is quite clearly the basis of the intrinsic rewards of many types of work (as studied by Hertzberg), and that understanding its nature as a fundamental human driver pulls together the literature on motivation, anchoring it firmly in biologically driven human character.

The Drive to Defend is the fourth drive which they hypothesized may well have been the very first to evolve as a simple defense mechanism in primitive central

nervous systems. As the Drive to Acquire evolved and then the Drive to Defend became more sophisticated, it evolved to protect valued acquisitions of all varieties such as food sources. Much of human activities are generated by this drive, and it, of course, underlies the fight or flight defensive response.

There has been a great deal of research about the human defense system. What is interesting about this drive is the difference in neural pathway that it takes. Whenever humans experience extreme threats, a pain avoidance reflex is activated by the Amygdala (where basic human emotions are generated) and humans experience intense fear or anger that pushes them into a state of at least temporary irrationality. This inborn reflex mechanism seems to temporarily shut down the ability of the cortex to operate rationally in pursuit of the other three drives, seeming to operate as an on/off switch. Daniel Goleman (1995) referred to this process as emotional hijacking or flooding.

Another feature they describe of this drive is that it is always reactive whereas the other three drives are proactive in the sense that they activate behavior to seek a desired object (Acquire), an experience (Learn) or condition (Bond), whereas the Drive to Defend keeps people alert to threat by providing an instinctive urge to avoid them.

Because the four drives are independent of each other they can work together but also be in conflict. This conflict poses choices (that are impossible to avoid without resorting to psychological mechanisms such as repression) that feel uncomfortable, even painful. Lawrence and Nohria speculated that:

> Our genes by establishing the independence of the four drives, have guaranteed that humans have to make decisions that involve difficult trade-offs, difficult

> moral choices that other animals do not face. Since these are conscious choices (what is often called free will), and since our large memory and information processing capacity forces us to review the past and anticipate the future consequences of our choices, we cannot avoid seeing ourselves as causal agents. Our minds are designed to force us to feel responsible for all the consequences flowing from our decisions. This is what is called the human conscience. (2002, p. 147)

Framework of Organizational Values

Much of this chapter has revolved around the search for what drives or underpins the character strengths of Peterson and Seligman (2004) as well as providing a rationale for adding another strengths instrument into the positive psychology canon. A final piece of empirical research also seems to echo the general structures that we have been exploring.

The Competing Values Framework (1983) was initially developed through research conducted in many organizations seeking to identify the major indicators of effectiveness. Taking the work of John Campbell and colleagues which listed 39 indicators that they claimed represented a comprehensive set of all possible measures for organizational effectiveness, Quinn and his colleague, Rohrbaugh, sought to determine if patterns or clusters could be identified from that list. The 39 indicators were submitted to statistical analysis and two major dimensions emerged that organized the indicators into four main clusters. One dimension emphasized at one end of the pole flexibility, discretion, versatility, pliability and dynamism, with stability, order, consistency and control on the other pole. The second dimension differentiated

between the effectiveness criteria that emphasized an internal orientation, integration and unity from criteria emphasizing an external orientation, differentiation and rivalry. The framework thus has two dimensions forming four quadrants, each representing a distinct set of organizational effectiveness indicators.

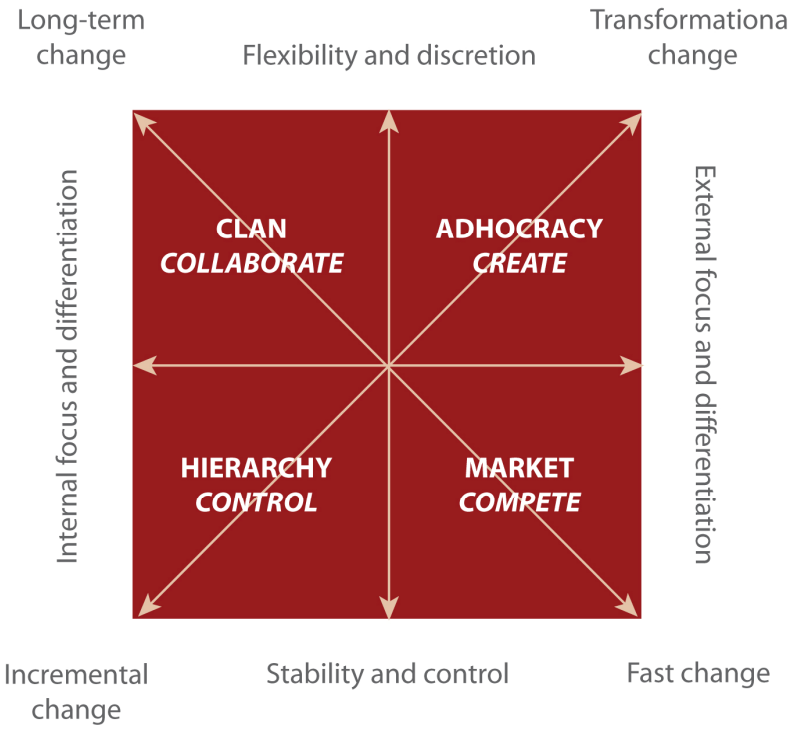


Figure 6. Competing Values Framework

Basically the four clusters of criteria represent what people value about an organization's performance and define the core values on which those judgments are made. These four core values represent opposite or competing assumptions at the ends of each of the two continuums, and the quadrants diagonally opposite each other are also contradictory or competing. Each quadrant is given a label, which were derived from scholarly literature that explains how different organizational values have become

associated with different forms of organizations. Those labels have been substituted more recently with action verbs that give an indication of the dominant activities that each of the quadrant will be concerned with.

▪ Clan	Collaborate	Do things together
▪ Adhocracy	Create	Do things first
▪ Hierarchy	Control	Do things right
▪ Market	Compete	Do things fast

The authors of the framework discovered that the four emerging quadrants from their analysis of the 39 criteria precisely matched the main organizational forms that had developed in organizational science as well as matching key management theories about organizational success, approaches to organizational quality, leadership roles and management skills. They also pointed out that in their broad research they have found similar dimensions that help organize the way in which the brain and body work as well as the way behavior is organized.

We have found many more models and theories all organized along the same two dimensions, with similar dimensions on the diagonal bi-polar also:

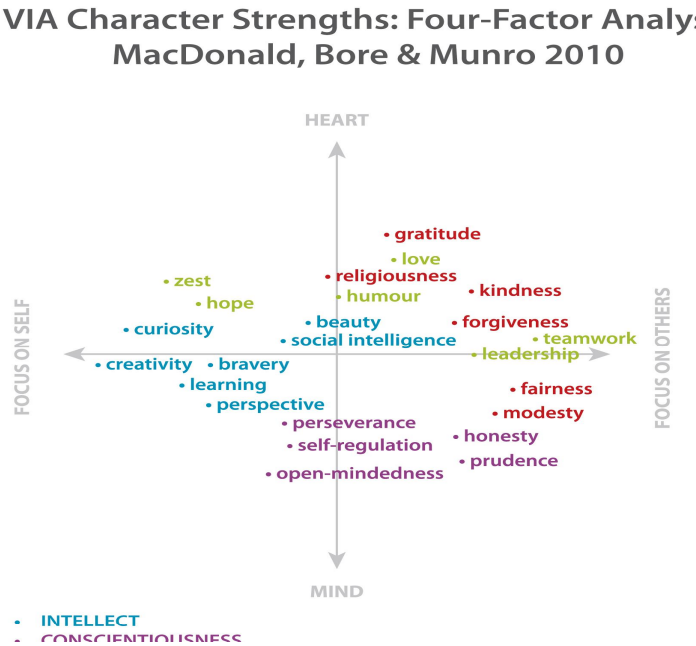
- Galen' Four temperaments (cAD129)
- Pavlov's four temperaments (c1900) (as per Galen)
- Erich Fromm's four orientations (1947)
- Life Orientations® four orientations (1960s)
- David Merrill "Social Styles" (1960s)
- Tony Alessandra Personality Styles (1996)
- Thomas-Kilman Conflict Model (1974)
- Marton and Geier DiSC (1928)
- Californian Psychological Inventory (1948)

- Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid Model (1964)
- Jay-Hall Conflict Management (1973)

Writing in 1983, Mitroff described it as such:

> The more that one examines the great diversity of world cultures, the more one finds that at the symbolic level there is an astounding amount of agreement between various archetypal images. People may disagree and fight one another by day but at night they show the most profound similarity in their dreams and myths. The agreement is too profound to be produced by chance alone. It is therefore attributed to a similarity of the psyche at the deepest layers of the unconscious. These similar-appearing symbolic images are termed archetypes. (p. 5)

Perhaps then further research could be carried out around the structure of the VIA character strengths using an organizing model based on the well-validated four quadrant model of both values and behavioral strengths (which we will introduce in the next Chapter). As demonstrated by Macdonald, Bore & Munro (2008) and Brdar & Kashdan (2010), the existing character strengths can be organized around various bi-polar dimensions, but perhaps some strengths need to be added in order for the classification to be complete.



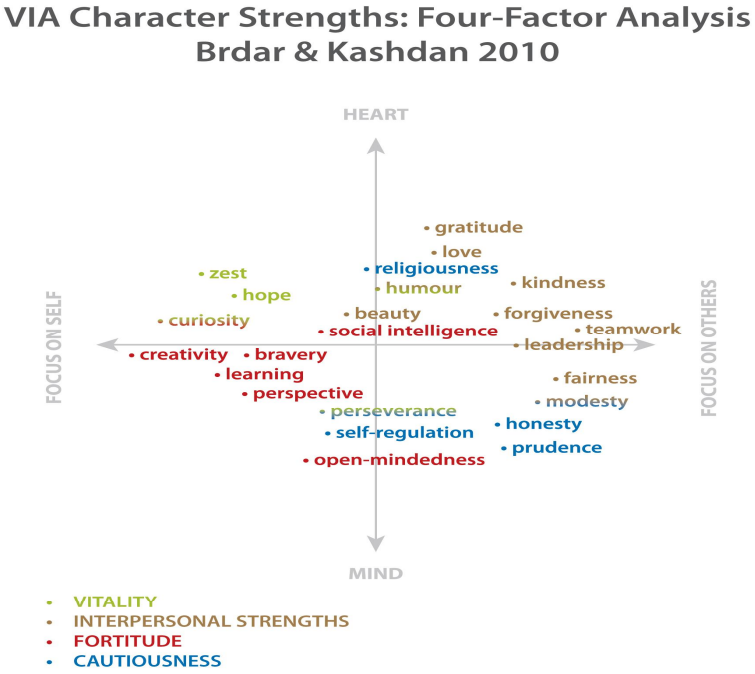


Figure 7. Four-factor analyses of VIA character strengths

Chapter 3: Behaviors

Life Orientations (Lifo®) Model and methodology

Stuart Atkins, who developed the early Life Orientations theory, was strongly influenced by the work of Erich Fromm (1947), who identified four generalized stable forms of functioning acting as viable psychosocial choices. Following Freud, he believed that character traits underlie outward behavior and must be inferred from the outer behavior; character traits being a powerful force influencing behavior. "The way a person acts, feels and thinks is to a large extent, determined by the specificity of his character and is not merely the result of rational responses to realistic situations" (1947, p. 56). In *Man for Himself,* Fromm hypothesized that character traits must be deep-rooted because they operate in the place of the innate instinctual patterns of animals and "are expressive of the particular form in which energy has been canalized in the character structure" (1947, p. 59). The canalization provides consistency of behavior and the organizational structure of how a person orients himself towards the world.

Fromm saw a person's character orientations developing as a way to relate to others, to nature, to society and to self, believed that the orientation of character develops from two specific kinds of relatedness to the world: acquiring and assimilating things (assimilation), and reacting to people (socialization).

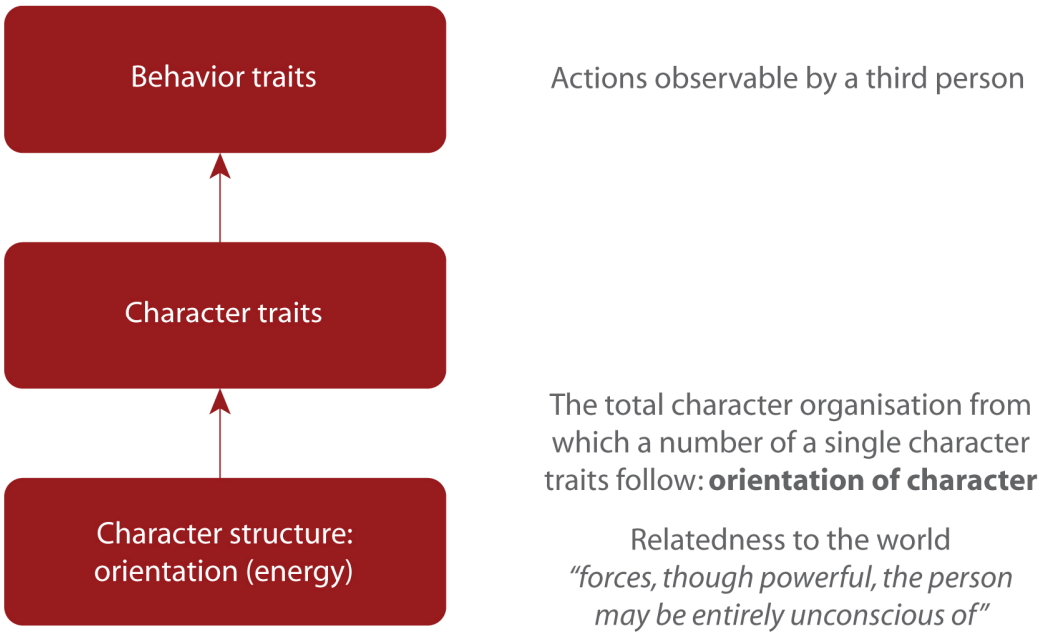


Figure 8. Fromm's model of underlying character orientations driving outward behavior

Fromm proposed the concept of people having both productive and unproductive sides, which he represented as four non-productive orientations and an all- encompassing productive one. Three of the four orientations (Receptive, Exploitative and Hoarding) follow the clinical picture of the pre-genital character described by Freud and others, while the fourth, the "Marketing" orientation he described as "developed only in the modern era" (and actually, throughout history four orientations have been recognized – see list below). He was clear in pointing out that while someone may be dominant in one of the orientations it would be blended with the other three and that all four are "part of the human equipment". Atkins saw these orientations influencing the way issues such as trust, initiative, autonomy, intimacy, generativity, and integrity are addressed. Orientations are the ways an individual relates to the world and constitute the core of character.

Fromm critiqued Freud's and his followers' focus on the neurotic character by pointing out that what was missing was the character of the normal, healthy, mature personality (much as Seligman did five decades later). He introduced the concept of productive activity through the full use of power and potentialities using one's full capacities.

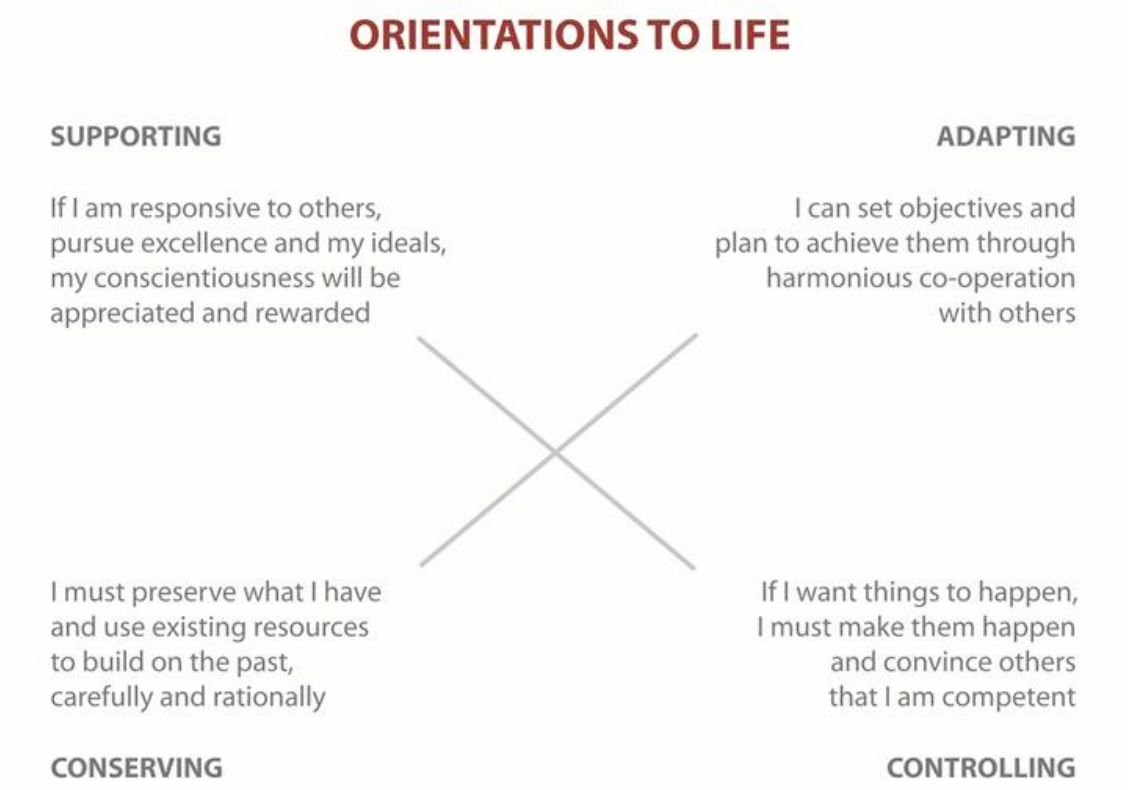


Figure 9. Life Orientations

Building on Fromm's thinking, Atkins, together with colleague Allan Katcher developed the Life Orientations model, which consists of the four productive orientations each driven by a distinct set of drivers or values and organized as four quadrants along two bi-polar axes. Productivity in Life Orientations terms is defined as "the full use of one's own strengths and uniqueness in relation to the full use of the

strengths and uniqueness of others" (Atkins, p. 278). It is therefore arguably the first strengths based framework and methodology.

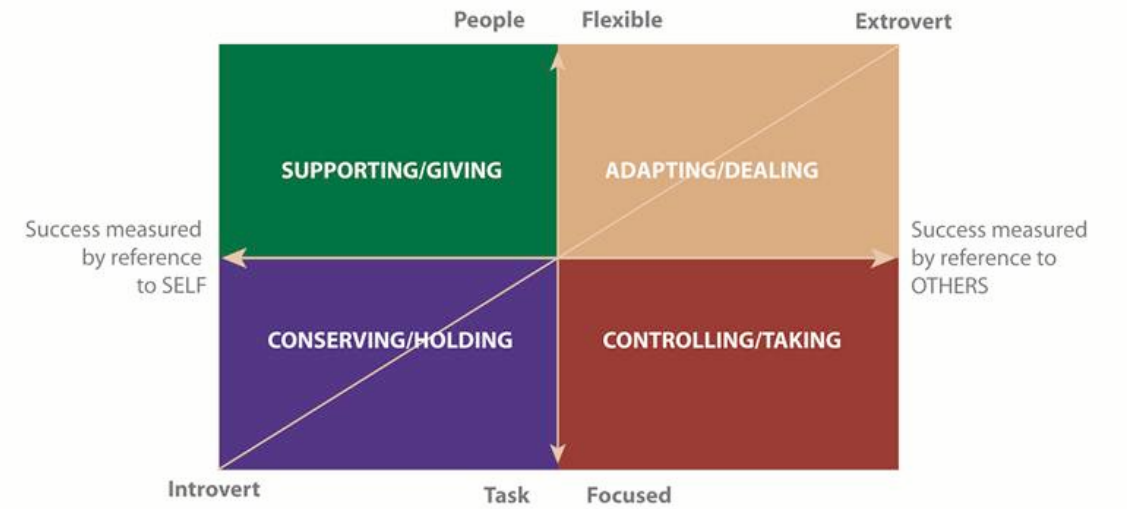


Figure 10. Lifo® Matrix

Fromm also called attention to the continuity of strengths from high to low, regarding weaknesses as either exaggerated uses of strengths or relatively unused ones.

Atkins pointed out (1981) that William James (1899) also identified the effect on productivity that the "errors of excess" cause, suggesting that when any virtue is expressed in extreme form it can "diminish" the person.

Unresolved stress becomes another source of excess in the Life Orientations(r) model. When an individual perceives that the fulfillment of their needs is threatened or when we are blocked from playing to our strengths through using our own preferred orientations, we experience stress. Selye (1956) describes this as experiencing "distress" if we are unable to cope with these threats. Atkins points out that this is the most likely trigger for us to use our strengths excessively. We have likened this reaction to the "Englishman abroad": "When you can't get what you want, speak louder

and slower til the natives understand." The perceived impediment to the achievement of our personal goals is sensed as a discounting of our values and self- image, and produces stress for us. The behavioral pattern we adopt when such stress affects us, Atkins and Katcher called our Stress orientation, and our order of preferred orientations may change from that which rules when we feel secure in our self-image. The objective of using this Stress orientation is to enable us to cope with and to remove the threat to our personal goals and to return to our comfortable way of relating to others.

Seven years after Erich Fromm raised the issue of productivity and the need for studying the healthy person, Abraham Maslow developed his own concept of self-actualization. Maslow also focused on the healthy, normal personality rather than the emphasis found in psychoanalysis on the "what's wrong". His view of self-actualization parallels the idea of the fully functioning personality conceived by Carl Rogers (1961). Maslow believed that the ordinary person can self-actualize and realize their full capacities once their basic needs are met according to a hierarchy of needs. The highest need in the hierarchy is self-actualization. Peterson (1997) suggested that we probably try to fulfill needs at all levels in different combinations according to a complex mixture of motives. Atkins (1981) designed the way the Lifo Orientations model was to be used to try to fulfill Maslow's criteria for self-actualization (1971):

1. To become more aware of what is going on around, between, and within people.
2. To see life as a process of choices having positive and negative aspects, but to choose for growth even though there are risks.
3. To get in touch with the core and essential inner nature of ourselves including our values, tastes, and temperament.

4. To be honest about our needs and actions and take responsibility for them.

5. To learn to trust our judgment about ourselves and our needs so that we can make better life choices.

6. To continually develop our potentialities and see self-actualization not as an end-state, but as a never-ending process.

7. To have more peak experiences in which we are more aware, think, feel, and act more clearly and accurately.

8. To recognize our defenses and the way we distort our self-image and the image of the external world, and to work to remove these defenses.

Carl Rogers (1961) postulated an innate human tendency to move in the direction of growth, believing that the strongest motivating force is self-actualization*:* the fulfillment of all our capacities. However he pointed out that we may not see clearly which actions lead to growth and which are counter-productive, but that once we see the way, we will choose to grow rather than to regress. Rogers did not deny that there were other needs, some of them biological. He saw them as subservient to our motivation to enhance ourselves, unlike Maslow who saw them as a pre-condition. It was this belief that formed the basis of his "Client Centered Therapy". This assumed that every individual, given the proper circumstances, has the motivation and inclination to change and that the individual is the best qualified to decide on the direction that such changes should take.

Central to his theories was the concept of "self". This consisted of all ideas, perceptions and values that characterize "I" or "Me", "What I am" and "What I can do". This perceived self, which grows out of our experiences of living, influences both our

perception of the world and our behavior. We want to behave in ways that are consistent with our self-image; experiences and feelings that are not consistent are threatening.

Building on this approach the Life Orientations concept started from the values and personal goals of each individual in terms of how they expect to achieve self-actualization, or satisfaction. Personal goals can be expressed as how I want others to see me, and, of course, how I want to see myself. We adopt four orientations towards others, which cover the spectrum of behavioral strengths we expect to help us achieve our personal goals or values. For some of us, one personal goal and its associated orientation dominates the others. Some of us have two, three, or even four personal goals and our orientations may change depending on the situation. Even though one personal goal may drive much of our behavior, we will use another, or others, if we feel the situation requires it. The orientation which dominates, or to which we gravitate in most situations, would be described as our "most preferred" orientation and that which is least dominant, or to which we gravitate in relatively few situations, as our "least preferred" (“preferred” refers to recurring patterns of behavioral strengths).

Rogers heavily influenced the final component of the Life Orientations theory. This is his thinking on congruency and the match between what one desires, how one behaves, and how one is perceived by others. The more congruent the relationship between *intention* and *behavior*, the more likely one will be understood as intended. Within the structure of the Life Orientations® Survey, a test of this model was included, since a grouping of items was made according to whether they reflected a person's

intention, *behavior* or (self) perceived *impact* on others. A copy of the Life Orientations® Personal Styles Survey can be found in Appendix E.

To shed further light on how practitioners might work with individuals to help them increase congruence of intention and behavior is the work of Ajzen (1985). The Theory of Planned Behavior examined the key variables that affect the determinants of whether someone will perform a behavior or not – whether a person intends to do something. Bringing to awareness each of the aspects can help individuals identify what might be getting in the way:

- Their attitude toward the behavior and beliefs about the consequences
- How much they feel social pressure to do it
- Their perception of how in control of the action in question they are

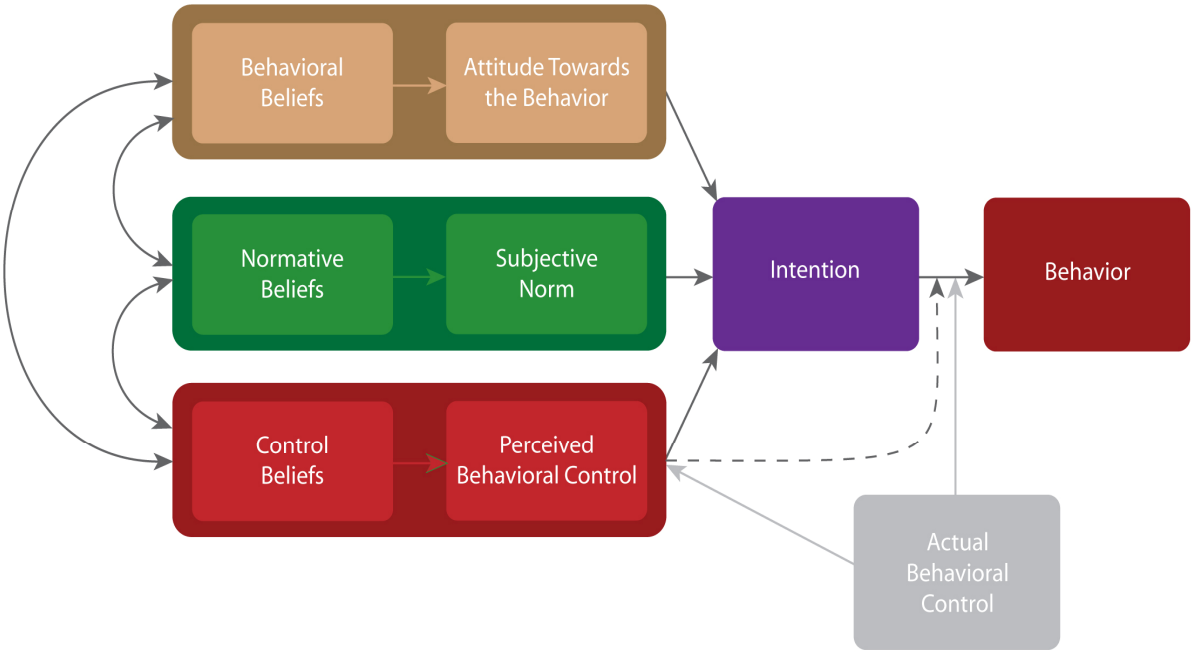


Figure 11. Theory of Planned Behavior

Behavioral belief: belief about the likelihood of what will happen if they do a certain behavior. The strength of the belief is weighted by their evaluation of the potential outcome.

Attitude towards behavior: comes from whether an individual has positive or negative feelings about the behavior, determined from an assessment of his/her beliefs about the consequences and how desirable those consequences might be. Thus are they in favor or against performing it.

Normative beliefs: perceived social pressure - an individual's perception of what key other people would expect them to do. The strength of the belief is weighted by how strongly they want to comply with the expectations or desires of each of those key people.

Subjective norms: an individual's perception of whether people important to him/her think the behavior should be performed generally.

The third group of variables are beliefs about the presence of factors that may help or hinder the performance of the behavior.

Control beliefs: an individual's perception of what might be present that may facilitate or impede actually doing a behavior - for example, skill, resistance or motivation of others.

Perceived behavioral control: the power of each of these perceived factors determine the extent to which an individual thinks/perceives that the behavior will be easy or difficult (along a continuum).

Thus all of these variables contribute to "Intention" which is an indication of a person's readiness to perform a given behavior but do not guarantee that a certain

behavior will be performed. The stronger and more favorable the perceived behavioral control the more likely the behavior is to be performed. The limitation of this model is that it is based on cognitive processing without emotional variables such as threat, fear, mood etc, or the particular values traits of the individual being considered.

The Four Life Orientations

The **Supporting Orientation** is motivated to behave in such a way that will be worthy of the respect of self and others. It is the extension of the desire to be a good person, from being able to conform to the values and dictates of one's beliefs, to striving for continuing self-development reflected in an overall insistence and concern for high standards of behavior. Therefore using the strengths of considerateness, thoughtfulness, and helpfulness to others is valued; as is the ability to do things well. Trust, belief in others, modesty, and a willingness to dedicate effort for good causes are the behavioral manifestations of this style.

Under intense threat this orientation overplays its strengths by becoming overly concerned with ideals to the point of being unrealistic and so concerned or so trusting and responsive that others take advantage. Because of the high standards required by the values that underpin the orientation, individuals may, under pressure, become hypercritical, experience a loss of self-efficacy, thus becoming overly dependent on others. When engaged in conflict the mode of response will be to try to relieve tension by giving in, or passively resisting.

At the core of the **Controlling** orientation is the drive to be competent and the desire to maximize whatever opportunity comes along. With high self-efficacy, this orientation will behave in line with a belief that they are master of their own fate. The

strengths of this style are characterized by a high sense of time urgency, a tendency to trust their own experience and judgment, and to act decisively to achieve goals. Accomplishment is a must. Organizing and energizing others to get things done are also seen as key strengths, and the challenge of many problems to be solved is a true motivator.

Threat and high tension stimulate a lot of activity, an over involvement in other people's work, and sometimes frantic efforts to get problems solved immediately. Passion becomes impatience, and is often accompanied by anger, blow-ups and coercive pressure. In conflict, the strengths of clarity and self-direction get dialed up and assertiveness turns to aggression.

The **Conserving Orientation** has the need to prevent loss and an interest in protecting the status quo, extracting the most from any situation and maximizing the value of what already exists. Careful analysis, thorough attention to detail and a reliance on rules, procedures and policies are typical behavioral strengths associated with this style, as is a structured, planned and generally cautious approach to new situations.

Under threat the over-played strengths are likely to reflect an unwillingness to be involved or a pre-occupation with detail, relying on data and failing to include social intelligence to inform actions. In a conflict situation (depending on natural fight or flight response) facts are mustered and argued point by point, or simply the person tunes out and withdraws. As well as suffering "analysis paralysis", under pressure this style can often lead to an unwillingness to accept new ideas or be receptive to change.

Adapting strengths are geared towards gaining acceptance and maintaining harmony while wanting to create something new and exciting. With strengths of emotional intelligence and curiosity, tuning into how people are feeling and thinking brings a distinct "other" focus. Responses are enthusiastic and optimistic and show an eagerness to try things out. The strengths of the orientation are geared towards meeting needs and expectations of others as flexibly as possible. Building consensus and mediating are also strengths contained within this orientation.

This flexibility can be overdone under threat giving others the feeling that there are no guiding principles underpinning the behavior. That strength of willingness to achieve consensus may, under stress or conflict conditions, become compromise or even appeasement simply to preserve harmony and goodwill. In stressful situations the strength of humour can have the unfortunate effect of coming across as trivial or lightweight.

Inspired by the Schwartz (1992) circumplex of values, we recently worked with Atkins and Katcher to come up with a hypothetical Lifo® behavioral strengths circumplex. It should be emphasized that this is not as yet validated, but we are designing a series of research studies to establish whether the values that underlie the behavioral strengths of the Lifo® model could yield such a structure.

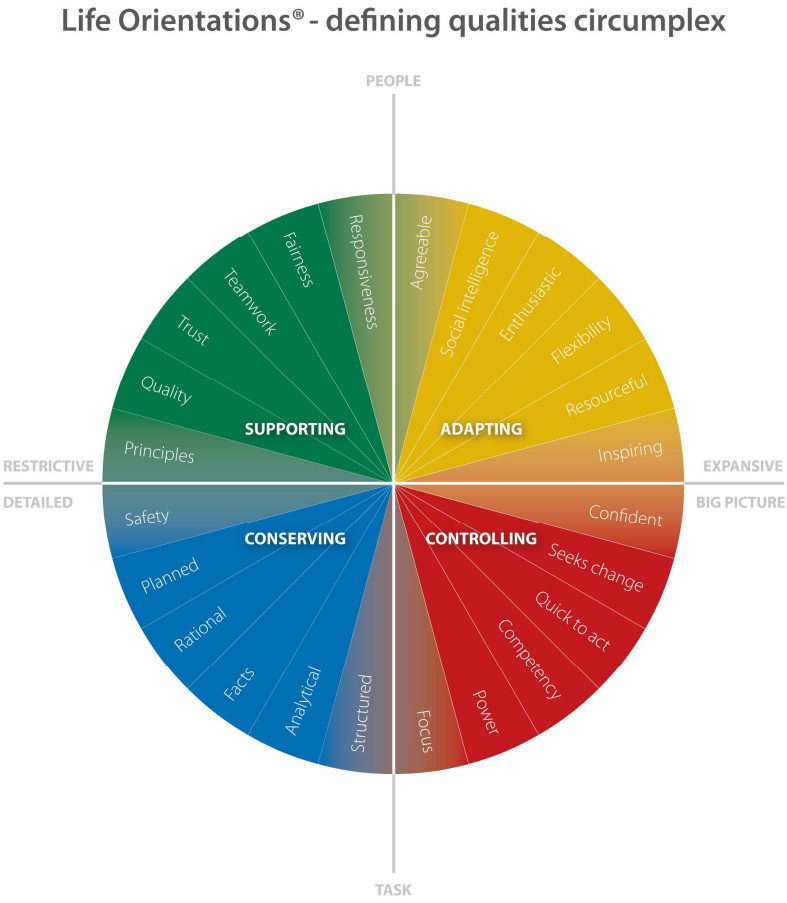


Figure 12. Defining Qualities Circumplex

Validity of the Life Orientations® Personal Styles Survey

The survey has been completed by over 9 million people worldwide over the last 40 years in 15 languages in over 26 countries. It has never sought to be psychometrically validated as Atkins and Katcher (1981) originally intended the survey to be merely a tool to generate understanding and development conversations. However, an early validation study shows that the survey construction has validity and test/retest validity despite its ipsative nature.

The granularity of results provides remarkable face and structural validity. We are in the process of correlating survey results with the NEO PI-R (1985), the Short Schwartz Values Survey (1992) and the VIA Character Strengths (2004). Early informal data seems to point towards there being robust internal and external validity.

The survey seeks to measure how the individual completing it prefers to behave when things are going well (favorable conditions) and when they are experiencing stress or conflict (unfavorable conditions). The surveys are not situation specific and are not a predictor of effective or ineffective behavior – each person's profile is capable of being effective or ineffective depending on their understanding and management of their behavioral strengths and potential weaknesses in relation to others. The tool was designed to be the starting point for coaching and developmental conversations with individuals and interactions amongst teams. The results give individuals insights into how to:

- Make more of their strengths
- Make more effective use of the strengths of others
- Minimize potentially inappropriate or ineffective behavior and
- Get on well with people who are not like them.

The Personal Style Survey is constructed as a "forced choice ranking" of four different endings to each statement. The process of forcing the person completing the survey to choose between four behaviors quickly is designed to access the individual's *sub-conscious value sets* and to enable them to surface what drives their behavior through feedback and discussion of the survey results.

Because the process is non-threatening it is possible to openly discuss and confirm the survey findings with the client – "Does this *feel* or *sound* accurate to them?" The licensee can encourage them to discuss and validate the findings with friends and colleagues. It is important to ensure that they choose someone who they trust to know them and to have a constructive opinion to offer. If necessary, they should be allowed to modify the findings to create a "best fit" profile of their behavior. The reliability coefficient for the Personal Style Survey was derived using Cronbach's coefficient alpha and is reported below from an analysis by Dr Allan Katcher (co developer of the Life Orientations® Method) for the eight scales:

Orientations	Favorable	Unfavorable
Supporting/Giving-in	0.54	0.54
Controlling/Taking-over	0.70	0.61
Conserving/Holding-on	0.63	0.46
Adapting/Dealing-away	0.61	0.37

Table 1. Lifo® reliability

The Personal Style Survey was administered to 63 graduate students and then re-administered after five weeks. The subjects were not given their scores or any information about the meaning of the survey until after the second administration. The simple product-moment correlations are as follows:

Orientations	Favorable	Unfavorable
Supporting/Giving-in	0.49	0.53
Controlling/Taking-over	0.61	0.57
Conserving/Holding-on	0.62	0.60
Adapting/Dealing-away	0.69	0.39

Table 2. Lifo® correlation

It is of interest to see whether the Life Orientations® method style descriptions change from one administration to the next. Each pair of test profiles was analysed to note whether the basic descriptions changed. The results of this analysis are as follows:

- No change (favourable) 38 of 63 = 60%
- No change (unfavourable) 31 of 63 = 49%
- No change (considering both) 19 of 63 = 30%

Even though 30% of those tested showed virtually identical scores on both administrations, it was suspected that those who showed a clearly predominant style preference would be less likely to change; that is, if the test really measures some genotype variables. Again, the test was considered in two parts, the "favourable" style and "unfavourable" style. Twenty-one subjects showed a predominant style choice (5 points more than any other score) on the "favourable" scales and of those, 14, or 67%,

showed the same style preference on the second administration. Twenty subjects showed a predominant "unfavorable" style with 16, or 80%, showing no change on the second taking.

These same data were also examined to pick out those subjects who had clear "favorable" and "unfavorable" styles that were the same, another gross measure of strength of preference. Of the 27 who showed such a pattern on the original administration 17, or 63%, showed no change with the second administration. The expectation that those who have clear style preferences are less likely to change over time is strongly supported.

Overall, it is evident that the Personal Style Survey measures pretty much the same thing in people over time though, as stated earlier, the interpretation of less than perfect stability is difficult. Some anecdotal evidence suggests that changes in scores could be due to subjects focusing on different parts of their lives as they took the test at different times, or that they could respond differently according to mood. One person reported some progress in his personal therapy between the first and second administrations, and felt the second test results reflected more what he was going after and the first a rather pessimistic view of himself. But this sort of evidence only adds to the confidence in the survey's reliability and usefulness.

We have found through our research that the Lifo® Survey is "valid" from a psychological testing standpoint. When compared to other tests that are well accepted as valid, such as the Allport-Vernon Study of Values and the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey, the Lifo® Survey performs as expected. That is, dimensions which are conceptually similar on LIFO and another test measure similarly, thus

showing construct validity. Most importantly, however, since the Lifo® Survey is meant to be an aid to discovery and learning about oneself, we should ask whether it works as a pedagogical tool. Almost everyone who experiences the Survey results reports that the interpretation of the results is accurate and meaningful.

Efficacy and value of the Life Orientations Personal Style Survey

Rather than identifying top strengths, or ranking strengths, the Lifo® Survey produces a profile that shows intensity of preference for using the strengths of the four orientations. This gives an individual the understanding that they are able to use strengths from all four orientations but have preferences because of their fundamental values or drivers. This reduces the natural tendency to stereotype or box and increases resourcefulness in terms of strengths development. Individuals are able to assess where they might be overplaying a preferred strength or underusing a mid-range strength. It also shows them where their blind spots are likely to be: showing them what they don't know they don't know.

Critically, because the four orientations are easily recognizable, it gives the individual a pragmatic structure that enables them to recognize someone else's behavioural strengths and therefore their drivers. Using this knowledge increases interpersonal sensitivity, the ability to influence and most importantly, improved communication strategies.

A critical feature of the Life Orientations Survey is the way it shows how a person's preference for the strengths they use changes when facing stress or conflict. The ability to unpack a person's 'survival mechanism' in a pragmatic and easy to

understand way enables further strengths development and again increases their ability to understand how their use of strengths might impact on others.

The multi-layered interpretation of the survey also encourages the exploration of behavioural strategies that might arise from habit rather than efficacy, or from perceived or actual barriers within the environment for using certain behavioural strengths. Discussing why a person's behaviour doesn't match to their intentions is a rich vein to explore.

Applying our Strengths Technology Framework to the Lifo® assessment we found that all four quadrants are populated:

	Think	Act
Internal	**Confirm** most preferred strengths - understand and appreciate own unique strengths **Resourceful state** celebrates successful use of strengths and re-captures the energy they bring **Communication congruency** - clarify intentions	**Moderate** excesses - dial down the overuse of most preferred strengths **Stress trigger** - recognize the warning signs and pull away **Communication congruency** - ensure behavior signals intentions
External	**Capitalize** on strengths - seek situations to use most preferred strengths **Exten**d lesser preferred strengths - find motivation in preferred strength's value driver **Impact** -monitor how behavior comes across to others	**Supplement** least preferred strength - get help from people with different strengths and perspectives **Bridging** communication style - match the message to other's preferred strengths **Model paragon** - incorporate the best of others into behavioral strategies

Figure 13. Strengths Technology Matrix

Thus far in this capstone, we have highlighted the history of strengths-based methodology, explained why using strengths are productive and effective, outlined examples of strengths-based frameworks, detailed the drivers that underpin our values, behaviors, and strengths, and finally introduced the Lifo® methodology, which emphasizes the importance of behaviors in the strengths-based equation. We noted that while current strengths-based frameworks and assessments are a good starting point, there is a gap that must be bridged for individuals, teams, and organizations to fully discover, capitalize on, and increase their strengths. To complete the equation, we will build upon the existing framework, specifically the VIA character strengths and virtues, by layering on the Lifo® methodology to produce a more robust model which we have chosen to name Strengths Technology. As in MAPP, the second piece of our capstone will focus on the application and pragmatic components of the strengths-based theory outlined in the previous chapters.

Chapter 4: Strengths Technology

In this chapter, we suggest a framework that can drive a range of interventions to help people discover and play to their strengths and move beyond current competence. The main focus on strengths in positive psychology up to now has been in the ways they can be harnessed to increase positive affect and life satisfaction. We believe that widening the approach to strengths will also contribute to building and strengthening positive relationships, to providing more individual and organizational meaning and to a greater sense of accomplishment and mastery as people discover and pursue what they are really good at.

Strengths Technology is comprised of two components, 1) identification of the behaviors that underlie the VIA Character Strengths and 2) presentation of the Strengths Technology Framework, which outlines 12 strength strategies.

To operationalize the VIA Character Strengths, we will first identify the behaviors that underlie the strengths. We will then highlight how these behaviors will vary depending on an individual's values and drivers. It has been proven that utilizing one's strengths daily is both energizing and lead to increased productivity, happiness, engagement, motivation, and self-esteem (Money et al., 2009). The VIA Institute suggested strength development strategies such as practicing your strengths in novel ways and model paragons that exhibit a strength that an individual wishes to develop. However, we believe that this is difficult to do because what is missing is the identification of the behaviors that one exhibits when demonstrating particular character strengths. For example, what behavior is one exhibiting when demonstrating vitality? Understanding our strengths is only the first step, learning how these strengths

manifest themselves through our behaviors will allow us to build upon and mold them to our benefit. Supplementing the VIA's strength language with a list of the behavioral strengths are the expression of those character strengths and how they vary according to individual drivers creates a robust framework.

In the second component of Strengths Technology, we will present 12 strategies to further harness and develop strengths so they can be utilized to their full potential, specifically within an organizational context. Strengths Technology utilizes an individual's VIA results and Lifo® results to give a range of strengths that can be developed and then suggests ways that development can take place. As described in Chapter 3, Lifo® is an applied behavioural science methodology that has been utilized effectively by millions of users around the world. The Lifo® approach emphasizes behavioral strengths, identifies shifts in our response to environmental conditions, and acknowledges how our behaviors can come across to others (behavioral congruency), it offers a more accessible and flexible strengths-based language for organizations (Atkins, 1981). Combining these components into the strength-building strategies established by the VIA Institute and the Lifo® methodology for strengths development will create a more robust and pragmatic methodology to be utilized by organizational practitioners.

1. Character Strengths and Behaviors

As described in Chapter 3, Lifo® is an applied behavioral science methodology that has been utilized effectively by millions of users around the world. The Life Orientations theory starts from the values and personal goals of each individual in terms of how they expect to achieve self-actualization, or satisfaction. Personal goals can be

expressed as how I want others to see me, and, of course, how I want to see myself. We operate out of four orientations, which cover the spectrum of behavioral strengths we expect to help us achieve those personal goals or values. Individuals learn about the **values** that shape their work, **goals** that drive their performance, and the **strengths** that they prefer to use. Those three elements shape our behavioral style, which is based on a "core philosophy" about the way the world works and how we best work in the world. Lifo® defines values as "What's important to us", goals as "What we strive for", and strengths as "How we like to do things. Refer to Figure 15 for further details on the philosophy, goals, values, behaviors, and strengths of the four Life Orientations.

Figure 14. Lifo Behavioral Style Components

As we noted in Chapter 2, our values are ordered in systems and we each order them uniquely as more or less important, as well as those we admire in others. We almost instinctively know when someone shares the same values as ourselves through observing their behavior and attending to how they talk about certain issues. If values can be seen as motivational drivers then this has exciting implications for how we can work with strengths to increase motivation, well-being and happiness, and reduce stress. The extent to which we chose to use our most and least preferred strengths therefore is about doing what comes naturally and aligns with our fundamental drives, or doing that which goes against the grain and is not necessarily valued.

The other component missing from the strength-based frameworks noted above is recognizing differences in how people demonstrate their strengths. Effective communication is a skill that most employers look for in their employees. An effective communicator contributes to effective meetings through listening intelligently and speaking with clarity, seeks and accepts feedback, shows respect through being sensitive to others' viewpoints. Obviously an effective communicator is likely to have strengths of social intelligence, perspective, and curiosity – all of which were not mentioned in the definition. But more importantly, we have to acknowledge that people demonstrate these strengths in different ways. We all communicate in different ways, we all prefer to lead in different ways, and we all have our own styles and behave in a manner in which we are most comfortable. Individuals may share similar strengths, but how these strengths manifest, revealed, or interpreted will all vary depending on the individual. The key to effective communication is recognizing an individual's values, goals, and philosophies that drive their behaviors and then translate your message so it matches the way they prefer to communicate. Others open up to us when we address what is important to them. If we focus on things that aren't important to them, they are likely to shut down and then shut us out. And continuing to "talk at" people who are closed to communication generates resistance that makes it even more difficult to get through.

Life Orientations	Supporting	Adapting	Conserving	Controlling
Philosophy	"If I prove my worth by working hard and pursuing excellence, the good things in life will come to me."	"If I please other people and fill their needs first, then I can get the good things in life that I've wanted all along."	"If I think before I act and make the most of what I've got, I can build up my own supply of the good things in life."	"If I can get results by being competent and seizing opportunity, the good things in life will be there for the taking."
Values	Excellence	Harmony	Reason	Action
Goals	Prove worth. Be helpful.	To know people. To get along.	Be careful. Get it right.	Be competent. Get results.
Behavior	To behave in such a way that will be worthy of the respect of self and others.	To behave in a way that gains acceptance and maintains harmony while creating new and exciting things.	To behave in a way that pursues status quo, maximizing the value of what already exists.	To behave in line with a belief that they are the master of their own domain.

Behavior	To behave in such a way that will be worthy of the respect of self and others.	To behave in a way that gains acceptance and maintains harmony while creating new and exciting things.	To behave in a way that pursues status quo, maximizing the value of what already exists.	To behave in line with a belief that they are the master of their own domain.
Strengths	• Principled • Cooperative • Dedicated • Pursues excellence	• Agreeable • Tactful • Flexible • Aware	• Systematic • Analytical • Tenacious • Objective	• Persistent • Initiating • Urgent • Directing

Figure 15. Lifo Orientations Values, Drivers

Strengths Technology in Practice

When organizations define competencies they are essentially pinpointing the behavioral strengths that they believe will achieve their objectives and fit with their values. Peterson and Seligman have stated that they are psychologists, not practitioners. Their survey respondents were primarily college students, not executives, organizations, or Fortune 500 firms. One clear gap that must be bridged in order for organizations to fully utilize the VIA survey results is to speak to them in terms of

behavioral competencies, rather than in terms of characters and values. The goal of Strengths Technology is to couple the language of the VIA Character Strengths with Lifo® behavioral strengths. Below are a few examples to illustrate Part One of our framework. The framework includes Peterson and Seligman's definition of the character strength, statements that individuals with that strength would endorse, a list of behaviors that one can observe and react to, and finally how each Life Orientation exhibits that strength. Equipped with this understanding, practitioners can implement other Lifo® strategies that we have expanded to form Part Two of our framework. Below are examples using the VIA Character Strengths of Leadership, Integrity, and Vitality.

Leadership

Understanding the definition of the word leadership and recognizing statements that someone with this strength endorses is simply the first step in fully developing that particular strength, specifically within an organization. As outlined below, we exhibit behaviors that others can easily observe, understand, digest, and react to. It is also important to recognize that the way individuals exhibit leadership will vary depending on the values that they hold. The strength definition, statements, behaviors, and variances in behaviors, provide organizational practitioners with a more robust understanding of how to fully utilize and develop that particular strength.

For example, Atkins and Katcher developed a Lifo® Leadership Styles Table in Appendix H to describe how each Life Orientation leads in the following functions: instilling mission and purpose, driving action, making decisions, solving problems, delegating tasks, giving feedback, and communicating information. Knowing your own

leadership style is important, but it is also as critical to understand how your boss and coworkers around you lead and want to be led. Individuals can identify these styles via the behaviors and actions that they exhibit.

VIA Character Strength	Leadership			
VIA Definition	A personal quality (which) refers to an integrated constellation of cognitive and temperament attributes that foster an orientation toward influencing and helping others, directing and motivating their action towards collective success (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 414)			
VIA Leadership Statements	• I prefer to take on the leadership role in a group • I usually take charge in emergencies • I am often able to help others do a task better • I am often able to motivate others to act in a certain way • People generally look to me to help solve complex problems			
VIA Leadership Statements	• I prefer to take on the leadership role in a group • I usually take charge in emergencies • I am often able to help others do a task better • I am often able to motivate others to act in a certain way • People generally look to me to help solve complex problems			
Lifo® Behaviors	• Uses detailed reviews to check on progress • Manages through policies, procedures, and methods • Fosters consensus • Provides explicit directions and requirements • Demands prompt responses to requests • Invites participation and encourages cooperation			
Lifo® Four Ways to Lead	**Supporting** • Emphasizes long-range goals • Gives value-driven feedback • Involves others in decision-making	**Adapting** • Strives for consensus about goals • Gives reassuring feedback • Makes decisions intuitively	**Conserving** • Derives goals logically • Gives objective feedback • Makes decisions slowly after deliberation	**Controlling** • States goals for the group • Gives corrective feedback • Makes swift decisions

Figure 16. Strengths Technology - Leadership

Looking at the items that contribute to the leadership score on the VIA it becomes apparent that the different Life Orientations would score some of those items more highly than others.

- I prefer to take on the leadership role in a group (Controlling)
- I am often able to motivate others to act in a certain way (Adapting)
- People generally look to me to help solve complex problems (Conserving)
- I am often able to help others do a task better (Supporting)

The VIA appears to be measuring an exceptionally rounded, generic leadership style. Interestingly in our informal correlation study, we found that no one with leadership as a top character strength, despite some of those participating being senior, recognized leaders in large organizations. They also had clear Life Orientations preferences. This implies that leadership has to be understood in the context of the organization and the competencies it requires rather than purely as a character strength if it is to be a useful description.

Integrity

A second illustration of where a different language would be more efficacious surrounds the character strength of Integrity. In Appendix F is a sample performance review that is used within an organization. The VIA Institute Intensive: Strengths Manual defined integrity as speaking the truth, but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions. The example organizational definition suggests that one demonstrates integrity by being direct, can present the truth in an appropriate and helpful manner, will respond well to feedback and admit to mistakes. There is a clear

difference in how Peterson and Seligman defined integrity in comparison to organizations.

VIA Character Strength	Integrity (Authenticity, Honesty)			
VIA Definition	A character trait in which people are true to themselves, accurately representing – privately and publicly – their internal states, intentions, commitments. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 249)			
VIA Integrity Statements	• It is more important to be myself than to be popular • I always follow through on my commitments, even when it costs me • My life is guided and given meaning by my code of values • When people keep telling the truth, things work out			
Lifo® Behaviors	• Willing to extend self to do what is right and fair by others • Makes allowances for people and defends their rights • Responds objectively and calmly to objections posed by others • Protects own rights and interests from exploitation • Outlines the trade-offs of his position and the options for others • Sensitive to and aware of the future expectations of others			
Lifo® Four Ways to show Integrity	**Supporting** • Desires cooperation and openness with everyone • Influences opposition through statements of principle and fairness • Takes a moralistic attitude and resents injustice done • Tries to be fair and to do the right thing by all concerned	**Adapting** • Listens with empathy • Diplomatic and careful of other's feelings • See all sides of an argument • Works to get 'win-win' solutions to disagreements	**Conserving** • Does not become heated in argument an aims to resolve differences sensibly • Is not easily shifted from a position • Reacts calmly, and objectively considers the options to resolve an issue	**Controlling** • Confronts disagreement openly and clears the air • Protects the organizations rights and interests from exploitation • States his position firmly and with conviction • Offers unsolicited advice

Figure 17. Strengths Technology – Integrity

Peterson and Seligman (2004) define integrity as a characteristic trait, one that until perhaps ten years ago did not carry that much weight until organizational scandals

such as Enron brought to light the importance of integrity when conducting business transactions, especially when many are impacted by the result of acting without integrity. Via ethics codes, values and mission statements, organizations try to instill and foster honest behavior in their employees. In the Sample Performance Plan in Appendix G, a person that has integrity "demonstrates a sense of responsibility and commitment to the public perception of the organization." This definition as defined by an organization places higher importance on the behavioral and extrinsic manifestation of integrity. Organizations often times ask their employees to demonstrate a higher sense of integrity than what is expected of the individual or the individuals expects from himself outside the workplace. Because of this, it is especially helpful for individuals to understand and recognize when different orientations are exhibiting integrity behaviors, which may be very different than their own.

Looking at the items that contribute to the integrity score on the VIA, it becomes apparent that the different Life Orientations would score some of those items more highly than others.

- When people keep telling the truth, things work out (Conserving)
- My life is guided and given meaning by my code of values (Supporting)
- I always follow through on my commitments, even when it costs me (Adapting)
- It is more important to be myself than to be popular (Controlling)

On the surface, the Supporting orientation would appear to have the most integrity because their behaviors are driven by their code of values. However, each orientation demonstrates integrity in its own way. For example, the Adapting orientation demonstrates honesty and authenticity by soliciting facts and opinions from

as many people as possible in order to resolve issues and problems. With most character strengths, the behaviors that underlie integrity will vary from individual to individual but also from organization to organization. The degree and extent to which we exhibit integrity behaviors will also depend on the organization. Regardless, knowing what integrity behaviors look like and its variances is more beneficial than simply understanding the definition of the character strength.

Vitality

Unlike leadership and integrity, vitality is not a commonly spoken term within organizations, enthusiasm is perhaps more commonplace than vitality or zest, which is a term that is grouped with vitality. While it is certainly helpful to have zest and enthusiasm in the workplace, it is also rare to see vitality listed as a core behavioral competence that individuals are required to develop and build upon. However, Peterson and Seligman (2004) stated that at the somatic level, "Vitality is linked to good physical health and bodily functioning, as well as freedom from fatigue and illness" (p. 274). One can assume that these positive affects of vitality can also have a positive impact on the individual within the workplace.

To add more substance to the term vitality beyond pep, alertness, and spirit, the Lifo behaviors outlined in Figure 18 places an emphasis on how vitality is demonstrated within the workplace. When managing employees or working with co-workers, it is beneficial to understand and recognize what energies and invigorates them in order to harness that energy for mutual benefit. Individuals are more engaged and motivated when they are using their strengths, which are behaviors that energize them. For example, the Controlling orientation is energized when given multiple

challenges to work on and the Adapting orientation is energized when working with people. As a manager, knowing what activities, behaviors, or tasks that brings about energy and vitality in their employees is just as important as finding individuals that have vitality as a top strength.

VIA Character Strength	**Vitality (Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy)**			
VIA Definition	Someone whose aliveness and spirit are expressed not only in personal productivity and activity – such individuals often infectiously energize those with whom they come into contact. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 273)			
VIA Vitality Statements	• I feel alive and vital • I feel full of pep • I nearly always feel awake and alert • I have energy and spirit			
Lifo® Behaviors	• Responds quickly to problems and difficulties • Takes on several problem situations simultaneously • Quick to turn people's objections to an advantage • Is willing to assume responsibility for and tries harder to resolve problems • Optimistic and enthusiastic about outcomes of conflict • Eager to try many solutions to reduce stress			
Lifo® Four Ways to show Vitality	**Supporting** • Energized by worthwhile causes • Can bring a sense of excellence and relevance to a project • Admires and supports others' achievements and views	**Adapting** • Energized by working with others • Strives to keep tension low through humor and smoothing things over • Uses humor and personal charm to deal with situations • Acts as a broker between opposing points of view	**Conserving** • Energized by opportunities to tie new things to old • Maximizes the value of what already exists in a situation/relationship • Appreciates logic, facts and systems	**Controlling** • Energized by challenges/ power • Has a sense of urgency both for self and others • Enjoys challenging and novel situations and relationships • Creates and seizes opportunities

Figure 18. Strengths Technology – Vitality

2. Strengths Technology Matrix

Not only did Atkins and Katcher develop the Life Orientations Model and survey, they also developed over a number of years a robust strengths development methodology. We have reviewed this methodology in the light of positive psychology research and use it as the basis for the second part of our own Strengths Technology Framework.

This framework addresses all four quadrants of our matrix.

	Think	Act
Internal	**Confirm** most preferred strengths - understand and appreciate own unique strengths **Resourceful state** celebrates successful use of strengths and re-captures the energy they bring **Communication congruency** - clarify intentions	**Moderate** excesses - dial down the overuse of most preferred strengths **Stress trigger** - recognize the warning signs and pull away **Communication congruency** - ensure behavior signals intentions
External	**Capitalize** on strengths - seek situations to use most preferred strengths **Extend** lesser preferred strengths - find motivation in preferred strength's value driver **Impact** -monitor how behavior comes across to others	**Supplement** least preferred strength - get help from people with different strengths and perspectives **Bridging** communication style - match the message to other's preferred strengths **Model paragon** - incorporate the best of others into behavioral strategies

Figure 19. Strengths Technology Matrix

To illustrate how each of these strategies work in practice we have explained each in more detail and illustrated with potential interventions applied to both the Lifo® and VIA results, with an accompanying case study.

Confirm (Think/Internal)

We are biologically wired to take a deficit-based approach when reflecting on what we do. The strategy of Confirming acts as an antidote to this response and encourages the building of confidence and self-esteem by identifying and appreciating strengths, rather than dwelling on weaknesses. The objective of Confirming one's unique strengths is to attain a Resourceful State.

Resourceful State (Think/Internal)

It is still not known exactly how strengths develop (Park & Peterson, 2009) but research is telling us more about how developing them increases personal resourcefulness. The creation of a personally resourceful state is the starting point for growth and is the fundamental objective for any positive intervention. Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory (1998) that has driven much of the thinking about the key factors and outcomes of positive interventions, focuses on how increasing positive affect creates this resourceful state from which productivity and creativity can thrive as the conscious mind remains aware and open to exploration. Enabling people to be in an emotionally productive position equips them to be better able to meet their challenges and move towards learning and growth.

Increased happiness lies partly in engaging in activities that are personally meaningful to us through the application of our key strengths (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Thus we believe that the starting point for any strengths intervention is the

identification and confirmation of someone's own strengths profile, paying particular attention to the ones they identify as bringing them greatest energy, pleasure and satisfaction.

Details of the activities suggested below can be found in Appendix J.

CONFIRM/ RESOURCEFUL STATE (Think/Internal)	**LIFO**	**VIA**
Description	Identify and confirm most preferred strengths in order to understand and appreciate own unique strengths, thus increasing self-esteem and a platform for growth.	
Activities	(Complete survey) • Receive results/report • Strengths Feedback Chart (example in Appendix G • Strengths Brainstorm (©VIA Institute on Character) • Appreciating your strengths exercise • Strengths discussion exercise	(Complete survey) • Receive report • Strengths Feedback Chart (to be developed) • Strengths Brainstorm (©VIA Institute on Character) • Appreciating your strengths exercise • Strengths discussion exercise
Research	Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006) Broaden and build (Fredrickson, 1998)	
Case study: using the Strengths Feedback Chart	A team of managers each took one of the A3 charts and firstly marked what they perceived to be their own strengths using the yellow stickers provided. They then circulated around the room, giving their colleagues feedback on their respective charts. The energy level in the room was very high, and people would huddle and discuss someone's strengths amongst themselves and with the person concerned. Sometimes one person would talk another through why they were giving them a particular piece of feedback, always encouraged to give examples. For gaining practical self-awareness this session was powerful because it was real and transcended any theories as colleagues talked about real strengths and behaviors they had observed at work. The realization that each person had their own unique strengths to use and offer to others became an empowering place from which to work on further development.	

Figure 20. Confirm/Resource state strategy

Communication congruency

(Think/Internal)

Ajzen writing in 1987 said that "Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that have an impact on behavior" (1987, p. 44). For any situation we are likely to have a sub-conscious drive to achieve our own particular goals. Discovering our strengths also enables us to work back to our fundamental drivers.

Understanding the subjective motivator or driver of our behavior is a powerful strength development strategy because it enables us to find the true motivation that underlies our behavior or gives us the push to develop strengths that aren't necessarily in our current preferred repertoire, a critical part of **Extend** (see below). Knowing what is truly important to us enables us to make decisions that are congruent with self, or to question whether we will be able to stick to decisions that aren't. It helps us to match our own values with those of an organization or a role and taking an external perspective, gives us insight into the drivers and motivations of others. We group the two Communication Congruence strategies together on page 85.

In our framework *Intention* is defined as what the person sets out to do without the influence of:

- Role
- Situation or environment
- Recent experience of change
- Self-perception of their ability to follow through

Moderate (Act/Internal)

As our behaviors exist on a dynamic continuum from "too little" to "too much" the next stage of strengths development is to attain more specific feedback on which strengths could be used more and which less in order to maximize potential through increasing effectiveness and building even better relationships, as well as meeting expectations of others. To become more productive a balance needs to be found that meets the needs of the situation or the other person. We tend to underuse the strengths of our least preferred orientation and overuse the strengths of our most preferred. Others can perceive these extremes as weaknesses.

The motivation for "doing less" is that the overuse of those particular strengths doesn't actually fulfill the intention behind the orientation. For example, the overplayed strength of being analytical results in nit-picking or analysis paralysis. Whilst the original goal of the behavior is to minimize the chance of risk or error, over-analysis can result in sight of the overall objective being lost or no decision being reached.

The character strengths continuum at Appendix K shows the likely under- and over-use of the character strengths. The Lifo® behavioral strengths operate in the same way.

Figure 21. Moderating strategy

MODERATE (Act/Internal)	LIFO	VIA
Description	Using less of a preferred strength that we tend to overuse through habit or tension when facing potential threats to our goal achievement. Dialing back excess use of strength to an appropriate level.	
Activity	• Moderating Strengths Exercise (Appendix J) • Ask for feedback from a trusted colleague • Notice when the expected reaction doesn't come; check out how you are feeling • Signal intentions behind the behavior • Keep an aide memoire handy (screen saver/post-it note on desk) to remind about personal overplayed strengths • Re-focus on goals to ensure they are being met through current behavioral strategies • Notice the early warning signs of potential excess use (see below)	• Moderating Strengths Exercise (Appendix J) • As per Lifo® activities
Research	Self-efficacy (Maddux, 2009) Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for self-regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2004). Hope (Lopez et al. 2004)	
Case study	Being skilled at using humor to relieve tension, the consultant was about to do the third briefing of the day for a tough crowd of public sector employees facing potential compulsory redundancy after a skills audit. It was after lunch, they trudged in and the consultant brightly said "welcome to the graveyard shift". The trades union official pointed out that this wasn't the most tactful of light-hearted remarks to have chosen. Reflecting on the experience the consultant realized that he had been feeling very much under pressure and was trying to relieve his own, rather than their, stress with his misplaced joke. Thereafter he found that he could do a quick internal reflection on how he was feeling to ensure no more inappropriate jokes.	

Stress trigger (Act/Internal)

We are thrown off kilter when we face stress or conflict, or our fundamental values are not able to be fulfilled. This fight or flight response is unique to each individual and usually happens at a sub-conscious level as we perceive the threat. The autonomic nervous system initiates a sequence of nerve cell firing and chemical release that prepares our body for running or fighting, triggering our body into instantaneous physical and emotional response (Selye, 1937). When in a state of stress we are much less likely to be able to use our strengths productively. Becoming consciously aware of what triggers our stress responses enables us to remain on the productive side of stress.

In our Strengths Technology Framework, we make two suggestions for avoiding the stress trigger. Firstly we suggest identifying the early warning signs of our most likely overplayed strengths and creating a personal feedback loop to ensure we pay attention to when we are beginning to stray towards excess. A conscious alarm bell enables us to choose more appropriate responses rather than act on auto-pilot.

ORIENTATION	Strength	Early warning sign	Excess
Supporting	**Considerate**	**Overly helpful**	**Self-denying**
Controlling	**Confident**	**Cocky**	**Arrogant**
Conserving	**Thorough**	**Elaborate**	**Pedantic**
Adapting	**Flexible**	**Vacillating**	**Inconsistent**

Figure 22. Lifo Orientation Continuum

Reivich and Shatté (2002) building on the work of Ellis (1999) suggested that the ability to disentangle

emotions from each other and to identify the underlying beliefs causing the emotions will contribute to increased resiliency and the avoidance of stress.

STRESS TRIGGER (Act/Internal)	LIFO	VIA
Description	Identifying the early warning signs of potential excess use of strength Monitoring emotions for signs of threat response in order to change behavior and avoid shifting into stress response mode.	
Activity	Identify the early warning signs of overplayed strengths ABC exercise (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) (Appendix J)	Identify a time when you were feeling stressed: what character strengths were you able to use and which were you not using (particularly of your top 5). Notice which character strength in particular seems to be the key to your stress relief.
Research	Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (Ellis, 1999)	
Case study	A man who had built a very successful business was facing a great deal of stress. With the recession and downturn in the economy, cash flow had become difficult. He became unable to use his signature strengths of Leadership, Honesty and Perspective as he struggled to meet his day to day financial obligations and was having to lead through Bravery alone. He realized that by not using his signature strengths he was starting to operate using adrenaline, which is depleting, not endorphins which give zest and energy and are fulfilling. Taking a step back and realizing that he could use his Perspective to reframe the situation and Leadership to marshal the staff to find cost savings not only saved the business but saved his health.	

Figure 23. Stress Trigger strategy

Communication congruency (Act/Internal)

Achieving congruency between our intention and behavior enables us to be true to ourselves and to be authentic to others. People don't follow through on their intentions for a number of reasons: there is a situational constraint preventing them using the strengths they like to use; they have developed a habit of behavior that previously fulfilled their intention but now doesn't; or they haven't fully developed the strengths that would most deliver their goals.

COMMUNICATION CONGRUENCY (Think & Act/Internal) Clarify intentions Ensure behavior signals intention	**LIFO**	**VIA**
Description	The way we use our strengths sends signals to others about our goals and values. Ensuring that how we come across to others accurately represents "where we are coming from" improves communications and reduces tension.	
Activity	• Uncovering intentions exercise (Appendix J) • Analysis of Intention-Behavior-Impact sub-scores in the Lifo® survey • Identify alternative adjacent strengths that could be used to achieve the intention using the Lifo® circumplex	• Develop a complementary strength to help fulfill signature strength, e.g. increasing Capacity to love and be loved by developing the strengths of gratitude and kindness
Research	Client-centered therapy (Rogers, 1951). Gratitude (Emmons and Shelton, 2002)	
Case study	A client had moved to a new job recently and needed to spend time working alongside his new team to understand them better as people and to gain information about what they did. His intention was actually to move swiftly into leading the team by setting direction and allocating tasks (Controlling) but the strengths he used to get that information came across as very analytical and cold (Conserving). Moving more towards the people-oriented strengths of Controlling rather than the Conserving task-oriented enabled him to build the relationships he needed in order to lead.	

Figure 24. Communication Congruency strategy

Capitalize

(Think/External)

Capitalizing is seeking situations that bring out the best and which allow us to use our strengths to the fullest. Finding new ways to use our strengths has been proven to increase well-being and life satisfaction (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Sometimes we see certain strengths as domain-specific for example Capacity to love and be loved might not be seen as a character strength that can be brought to work. And yet Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee (2002) suggested that emotionally intelligent leaders using an affiliative style will build loyalty, improve the emotional climate and heal rifts amongst the workforce.

CAPITALIZE (Think/External)	**LIFO**	**VIA**
Description	Finding new situations in which to use our most preferred strengths and using strengths that we frequently use in one context to achieve our goals in another.	
Activity	• Your most effective work environment exercise (Appendix J)	• Strengths brainstorm (©VIA Institute on Character) • Your most effective work environment exercise (Appendix J)
Research	Using strengths in new ways (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson 2005). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for self-regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2004).	
Case study	A team secretary was disgruntled. She was fed up with staying late, sometimes as late as 9pm, in order to produce documents for the sales team. "Why don't they give me more notice? It just doesn't seem to be playing to my strengths". Her top character strengths were Honesty, Kindness, Love, Prudence and Leadership. Looking at these she said "Well I don't seem to be using many of them at the moment although they seem to be exploiting the Kindness and Love ones -they certainly take advantage of those. She looked down the list of strengths "I'd say I use Kindness, Teamwork, Perseverance, Love and Forgiveness! But I'm not like that at home" Consultant: "So could any of your top strengths help you with the team and its planning?" "If I used Prudence and Leadership I would be thinking ahead and letting them know about it – guess Honesty and even Bravery would play a part in that too. And actually because they are so busy, I would feel that I was acting out of Kindness so that would really make me feel I was doing a good job."	

Figure 25. Capitalize strategy

Extend (Think/External)

Using strengths that are lesser preferred is not as personally rewarding as working with most preferred or top strengths. Needing to use those strengths for periods of time can be de-motivating and deplete energy. Most people try to avoid using those strengths whenever possible. Often a key performance gain can be delivered by the use of a least preferred strength. The first issue is finding the motivation to use that strength, the second is knowing how to do it.

People commit themselves to goals because the goal fits with their values or long-range purpose and reinforces their sense of self. It is an important element that the person can perceive "what's in it for me" at every level through seeing the benefits. Lopez et al. (2004) suggested that showing an individual that they have the personal resources to make positive changes through highlighting previous experience will raise their belief and increase their motivation to pursue their goal. This optimism and self-belief leads to confidence which is, in itself, a positive, highly resourceful state. We can increase self-efficacy by visualizing successful outcomes.

Self-efficacy is critical in building up performance and managing emotional states in order to stay resourceful (Maddux, 2009). As beliefs in abilities to perform strengthen, the sense of self-esteem, well-being, health, competence and mastery should also increase (Baumeister, Gailliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006) which will encourage further resourcefulness and creativity in planning for the future

EXTEND (Think/External)	LIFO	VIA
Description	Finding the motivation to use lesser preferred strengths in service of most preferred strengths, values or goals.	
Activity	• Extending strengths exercise (Appendix J) • Journaling to extend perspective (Appendix J)	• Extending strengths exercise (Appendix J) • Journaling to increase perspective (Appendix J)
Indicative Research	Self-efficacy (Maddux, 2009) Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for self-regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2004). Hope (Lopez et al. 2004)	
Case study	Being late for important meetings meant that our client was losing opportunities and starting to feel they were losing their touch. Additionally, the stress of arriving late was taking its toll on them and their secretary who had to make the excuses. The client realized that they were not considering potential public transport hiccups when planning their travel schedule. To do this meant using Self-regulation and Prudence (VIA) or planning and risk assessment (Conserving – LIFO): their least preferred strengths. However as what was important to them in their values was opportunity, being liked and feeling on top of things (Zest, Social Intelligence, Love- VIA; competence and harmony – Controlling/Adapting, LIFO) they developed a more risk-averse travel strategy.	

Figure 26. Extend strategy

Impact (Think/External)

"Well-being is a positive state of affairs, brought about by the simultaneous satisfaction of personal, organizational, and collective needs of individuals and communities." (I. Prilleltensky presentation, University of Pennsylvania, February 2010). Our behavior is our reaction to our own perception of reality (Rogers, 1951). As others don't necessarily share that perception our behavior can be misinterpreted as others filter what they see through their own values' perspective. When we notice that we aren't getting the reaction we expected, it is either because we are overusing a strength or our intentions are being misunderstood and therefore our behavior is

interpreted wrongly, or our strengths stop someone else from using their strengths. For example, the character strength of persistence can be misinterpreted as coercion or obtuseness; the Lifo® strength of helpfulness (Supporting) can be misinterpreted as interference.

IMPACT (Think/External)	LIFO	VIA
Description	Monitoring the reactions to the way we use certain strengths and learning to signal our intentions. Managing our own PR.	
Activity	• Analysis of Lifo® survey Intention-Behavior-Impact sub-scores • Signal intention to explain behavior so that impact is as intended e.g. "it is so important to me that we do the right thing (Supporting) – sorry if I sound like I am telling you what to do (Controlling)"	Signal signature character strengths in situations where your strength might stop someone else using theirs (see case study)
Research	Client-centered therapy (Rogers, 1951)	
Case study	The chief executive of a large hospital was engaging the services of a management consultant to carry out a review of her clinical practice. Three of the CEO's signature strengths were honesty, leadership and perspective. Knowing that the consultant had high social intelligence and curiosity – the strengths she particularly needed for the assignment – she briefed the consultant on how to talk to her "I know you are very tactful and diplomatic. But I just don't understand that subtle stuff. Please just say it like it is, warts and all, I can put it into perspective and won't shoot the messenger".	

Figure 27. Impact strategy

Supplement (Act/External)

We know that acting in a way that doesn't come naturally causes "ego-depletion" (Baumeister et al., 2006) which reduces our ability to regulate our responses

which often therefore leads to the overuse of our most preferred strengths. Working with people whose most preferred strengths are your least preferred enables an individual to gather different kinds of information and increase the versatility of response. Incorporating other perspectives into our plans and decisions increases the chance of us attaining our goals and being true to our values. For example, someone high in the Adapting orientation will be perennially optimistic, resourceful and focused on the present moment. They may have a blind spot around risk assessment. Using the strengths of someone high in the Conserving orientation will help them ask "what if".

SUPPLEMENT (Act/External	LIFO	VIA
Description	Identifying people who use our least preferred strengths naturally and working with them to help us to incorporate their perspective and strengths into our way of working.	
Activity	• Group exercise: Pain and Pleasure (see case study) • Get help from people whose most preferred strengths are different from yours and who can fill in your blind spots	• Strengths spotting exercise (©VIA Institute on Character) • Savoring exercise: working with someone with very different strengths ask them to describe what they really love about one of their signature strengths and how they exercise it. Try it out
Research	Self-regulation (Baumeister, et al., 2006)	
Case study	Using four flipcharts, the group gathered around the chart that corresponded to their least preferred orientation. They then wrote everything about that orientation that they disliked. They then separated to go to look at the chart that referred to their most preferred and read what others most disliked about them. Duly chastened they then returned to their least preferred and wrote what they most appreciated about that strength then partnered up with someone strong in that orientation to work out how they could use their complementary strengths to increase productivity.	

Figure 28. Supplement strategy

Bridging (Act/External)

Bridging is a technique that helps us to communicate more effectively with others. We do this by making a conscious effort to recognize what is important to the other person and translating our message so that it matches to the way they prefer to be communicated with. People high in social intelligence or the Adapting orientation tend to do this naturally. The way we bridge might be stylistic or around content. For example communicating with someone who is high in zest we might need to speed up our speech, express our enthusiasm for what we are talking about to retain their interest, and ask lots of questions.

Bridging is very similar to building empathy or rapport as described by Rogers in 1959:

> To perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the "as if" condition. Thus, it means to sense the hurt or the pleasure of another as he senses it and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them, but without ever losing the recognition that it is as if I were hurt or pleased and so forth. (p. 210)

By bridging we ultimately increase the possibility to use our strengths as the other person feels respected and safe through the congruence of our joint communication and will therefore be more likely to respect our needs.

BRIDGING (Act/External)	LIFO	VIA
Description	Identifying others' strengths and matching communication to meet their stylistic or content needs through increased rapport.	
Activity	• Spot the orientation behind the action exercise – using the leadership strengths feedback chart for example • Consciously be answering the questions that are likely to be uppermost in the mind of the other person (as in Journaling to extend perspective exercise, Appendix J) • Take the cue from the other's communication style and match it	• Strengths spotting exercise (©VIA Institute on Character)
Research	Rapport (Erickson in Haley, 1993). Empathy (Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007).	
Case study	A consultant needing to rapidly build rapport with a rather difficult client decided to use his knowledge of her signature character strengths in order to engage with her. Walking into her office after the initial greeting he went over to examine the painting on her wall and asked some appreciative questions about it to which she responded enthusiastically (Appreciation of beauty and creativity). Whilst she was in her appreciation of beauty mode he then proceeded to show her the latest version of her company report which he was working on, beginning with the artwork rather than the accounts. The rapport that was generated allowed him them to move to the rather less creative element and use his strengths of prudence to go thoroughly through the rest of the document.	

Figure 29. Bridging strategy

Model Paragon (Act/External)

When we are seeking to extend our strengths, perhaps those that are more mid-range than least preferred, an effective technique is to spot the ways an exemplar of that strength uses it. This paragon can be someone famous or well-known, or a colleague,

friend or family. Modeling involves good observation skills and intuitive analysis or, if the paragon is known, great questioning technique.

MODEL PARAGON (Act/External)	LIFO	VIA
Description	Incorporate the best of others strengths into our own behavioral strategies.	
Activity	• Decide which strength you want to increase, find a paragon of that strength. Notice: what and how they say and do Work out: what are they trying to achieve through using that strength Check: their objective accords with your own Try it out	• Decide which strength you want to increase, find a paragon of that strength. Notice: what and how they say and do Work out: what are they trying to achieve through using that strength Check: their objective accords with your own Try it out
Research	Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977)	
Case study	A newly promoted manager was struggling. Her CEO was constantly giving her feedback that she wasn't taking on the leadership role that was expected but she couldn't work out what she wasn't' doing. She thought through all the best leaders that she had worked with over the years and selected one. She analyzed what it was that he did that particularly stuck out in her mind, realizing that however tough the issue he always tackled it head on with clarity but with respect and empathy for the individuals involved. Bravery and social intelligence were mid-range character strengths for her but she decided that they would be the strengths to develop. She then thought through exactly the words he used to use and incorporated them into her "difficult situation rehearsals" until they felt that they were coming from her rather than being artificially parroted. Using this technique allowed her to expand her repertoire of responses and begin to feel like a true leader.	

Figure 30. Model Paragon strategy

In this chapter, we introduced the Strengths Technology Framework, comprised of two components, 1) identification of the behaviors that underlie the VIA Character Strengths and 2) presentation of the Strengths Technology Framework, which outlines six strength strategies. We illustrated these two components via strength strategies and interventions, supported by evidence-based research. In this chapter, we modelled the first component of our framework by using the character strengths of leadership, integrity, and vitality. We plan to do the same with the other 21 character strengths. The interventions that we included for each of the six strategies are only a cursory list; we will look to add additional interventions to our toolbox. The interventions and strategies introduced in this chapter lay a strong foundation for us to bring positive psychology to life for individuals, consultants, practitioners, and organizations to fully understand and apply to their respective domains.

Chapter 5: Strengths Technology Presentation

While the language of positive psychology can be universal, there is a specific language that organizations gravitate towards and find both engaging and effectual. They speak in terms of *behavioral* competencies and strengths when recruiting, gauging performance, constructing development plans and informing performance appraisals. The current positive psychology canon of self-assessment surveys does not include one that relates to behavioral strengths. Peterson and Seligman's Character Strengths and Virtues (2004) could be operationalized to align with the culture and heuristics of for-profit organizations. We hope to connect the two by combining positive psychology concepts and scientific research with a proven operational methodology, the Lifo® Method. Our ultimate goal is to design a "train the trainer" workshop to develop strengths intervention knowledge and skills with consultants and trainers who have not yet studied positive psychology but who want to make a true difference. We are designing interventions that operationalize the theories and research of positive psychology, and strengths, in particular.

We plan to introduce the "train the trainer" seminar firstly to Lifo® Agents who will gather in Philadelphia in October 2010. The LIFO model has been developing and growing in parallel to the positive psychology movement and we believe it is time that elements of the two merged to create a more robust strengths-based methodology. We want to provide the Agents (from more than 14 countries worldwide) with positive psychology theories and models, to enable them to build upon their knowledge of LIFO, and strengthen it with current research. In return we need to hear (at least anecdotally) how and why strengths-based interventions succeed or fail in

organizations. The feedback from these sessions will allow us to assess the initial impact of our training design and its usefulness.

Goals/Objectives

We want to develop a practical and usable way of helping individuals, teams and organizations discover, capitalize on and increase their behavioral strengths. This will augment the opportunities for trainers and facilitators to work with strengths and will add to the established focus on character strengths and talents that are already well known to those in the positive psychology community.

Agenda

We created a PowerPoint presentation to help guide the seminar (see attached file). We start the seminar by modeling the power of talking about strengths through an appreciative inquiry story-telling exercise. This is followed by presenting the participants with the history, and strength-based frameworks as we believe it is critical that they know the alternatives and strands of research currently available. It is imperative that these trainers understand what they are teaching but also be able to answer difficult questions that may arise when they present this material to others. It is from this knowledge base that the trainers will be able to understand the synergy of the new model. In outline these trainers will be presented with the following:

1. Strengths-Based Methodology
    a. Why focus on strengths?
    b. Brief history
    c. What about weaknesses?
2. Theory

   a. Schwartz Circumplex - Theory of Basic Human Values
   b. Four-Factor Analysis of the character strengths
   c. Drivers to strengths
3. VIA and positive psychology
   a. VIA Background
4. What can Lifo® bring?
   a. Key element of character strengths that organizations understand
   b. Unpacking of drivers of behavior
   c. Translation into behavioral strengths
   d. Unfavorable and Favorable Conditions
   e. Communication Congruency
5. Strengths Technology
   a. VIA Character Strengths/Lifo® Behaviors Charts
   b. Strengths Technology Matrix
6. Applications/Interventions
7. Closing
   a. Discussion about the day
      i. What was valuable, not as valuable?
   b. Feedback from the Participants

Chapter 6: "Flourish"

Strengths Technology will be an important component in a larger program that we are developing. The intention is to use this program within organizations and as a public workshop for individuals to maximize their potential to flourish using the latest research from positive psychology and our Strengths Technology Framework. Just as we have identified a missing link in current strengths-based frameworks, we also recognized that there is a need for a new approach that combines exciting interventions grounded in sound theory. We further intend to train consultants, coaches, Lifo® agents, and in-house development professionals within organizations across various industries to deliver the program.

The Flourish program will use a multi-layered intervention approach, each element building on the previous one or interventions being combined. See the "Flourish" Program Appendix L for more details of the program. They will be a mixture of research-proven positive interventions from positive psychology resources together with existing training and development techniques. It is critical to the program that all elements are congruent, for example that the trainers are positive and fit and the food offered is healthy and energy giving; that there are plenty of breaks and energizers and the trainers model and encourage positive communication throughout such as active constructive responding to achievements and the reframing of negative observations. We will introduce a buddy system to help support activities in the inter- and post-workshop periods on an experimental basis to test whether this extrinsic motivation increases successful outcomes for individuals. We own www.flourishing.me and www.strengthstechnology.com, which will be used to provide

exciting resources (for example, pre-loaded iPods that also have a pedometer as an App.) and journaling options on these websites as well as social networking technology such as cohort blogs and chat rooms. Increasing positive affect and decreasing negative affect is the overriding objective of all elements of the program to provide the resourceful broadened state necessary for development (Fredrickson, 1998). We have already contracted with a number of client organizations to pilot the program. Part of our marketing effort once the pilots are concluded will rely on the outcomes of the rigorous evaluation that we have designed in order to establish the extent to which the whole program is effective and the efficacy of each individual element.

Evaluation

There are many elements to evaluate that would be fruitful and would contribute towards our understanding of what works best in programs of this kind. For example:

- Testing whether participants who know that they are going to be asked to complete a detailed evaluation are more assiduous and motivated to continue with their personalized interventions
- Whether buddy system/no buddy system has an effect on continued activity
- Finding what in the program provides the tipping points for new behaviors
- Whether the 30 day design does indeed help participants build new habits that have lasting effect on their positive and negative affect scores on the PANAS (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1982).
- We envision evaluating the program at the end of the 30 days and then again with chosen groups after a further four weeks then again after six months

Conclusion

A black Lifo® bag and an enthusiastic conversation on the bus ride back from Marty Seligman's home gave birth to this capstone collaboration and, well, "the rest is history". We should have known that an operational strengths based methodology, with over nine million followers, would have had at least two of its agents in the Master's of Applied Positive Psychology program. Our goal was to build upon our knowledge of the Lifo® methodology, years of organizational experience, and couple it with the positive psychology movement, deeply rooted in evidence-based research and data. After completing the coursework, we knew that the ending result would be a capstone on a new strengths-based methodology – Strengths Technology.

The objective of the research and thinking that has gone into this capstone is to develop a practical and usable way of helping individuals, teams and organizations discover, capitalize on, and increase their strengths. We suggested a methodology that can be applied to any model or classification of strengths which should enable trainers and facilitators to work with strengths more fully, and will add to the established focus on character strengths and talents that are already well known to those in the positive psychology community.

We believe that this capstone lays out a rich framework of positive psychology theory, strengths-based frameworks, and positive interventions. Our next task is to present our work to practitioners, trainers, and organizations to ensure that it is both effective and impactful. By helping individuals, teams, and organizations create, develop, and foster positive institutions; we will have a substantial impact on positive psychology's goal to have 51% of the world's population flourish by 2050.

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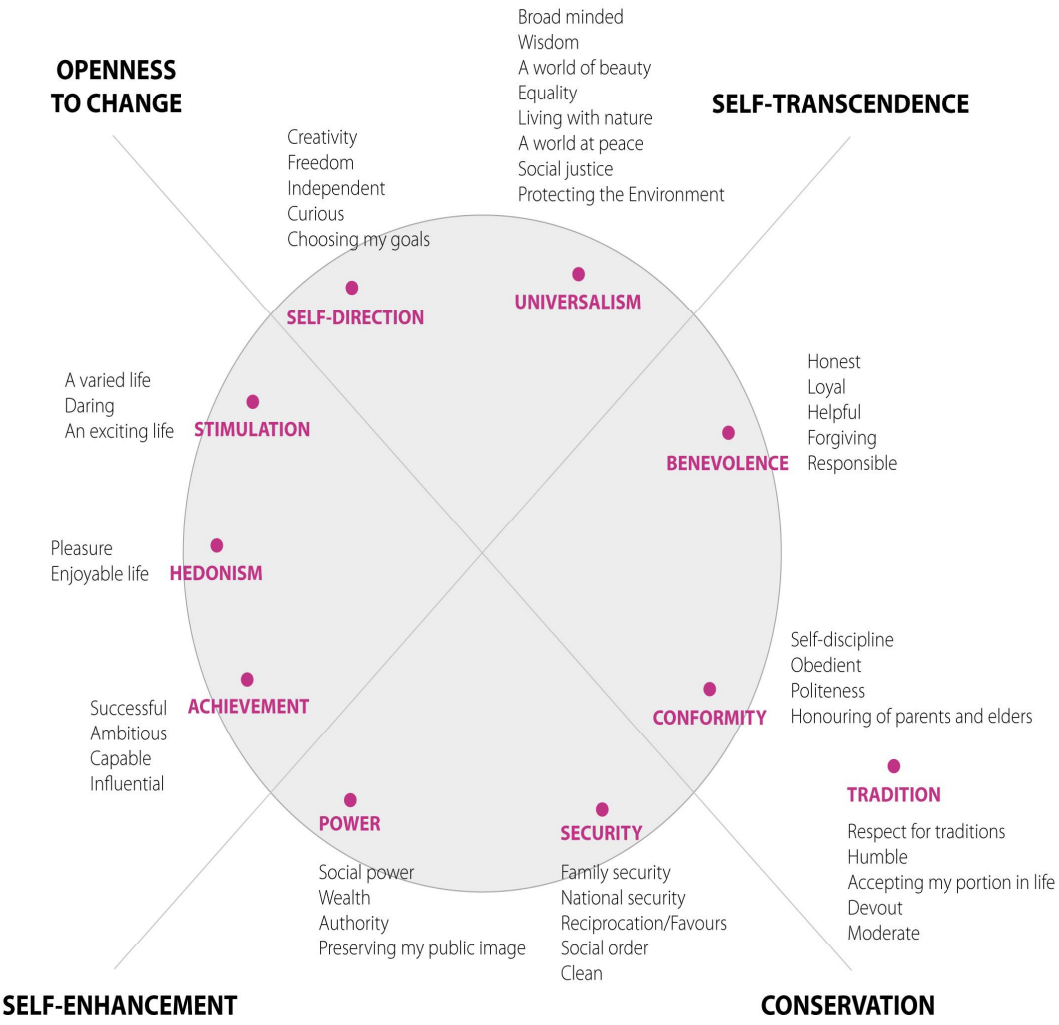
Appendix A

Benefits of using strengths

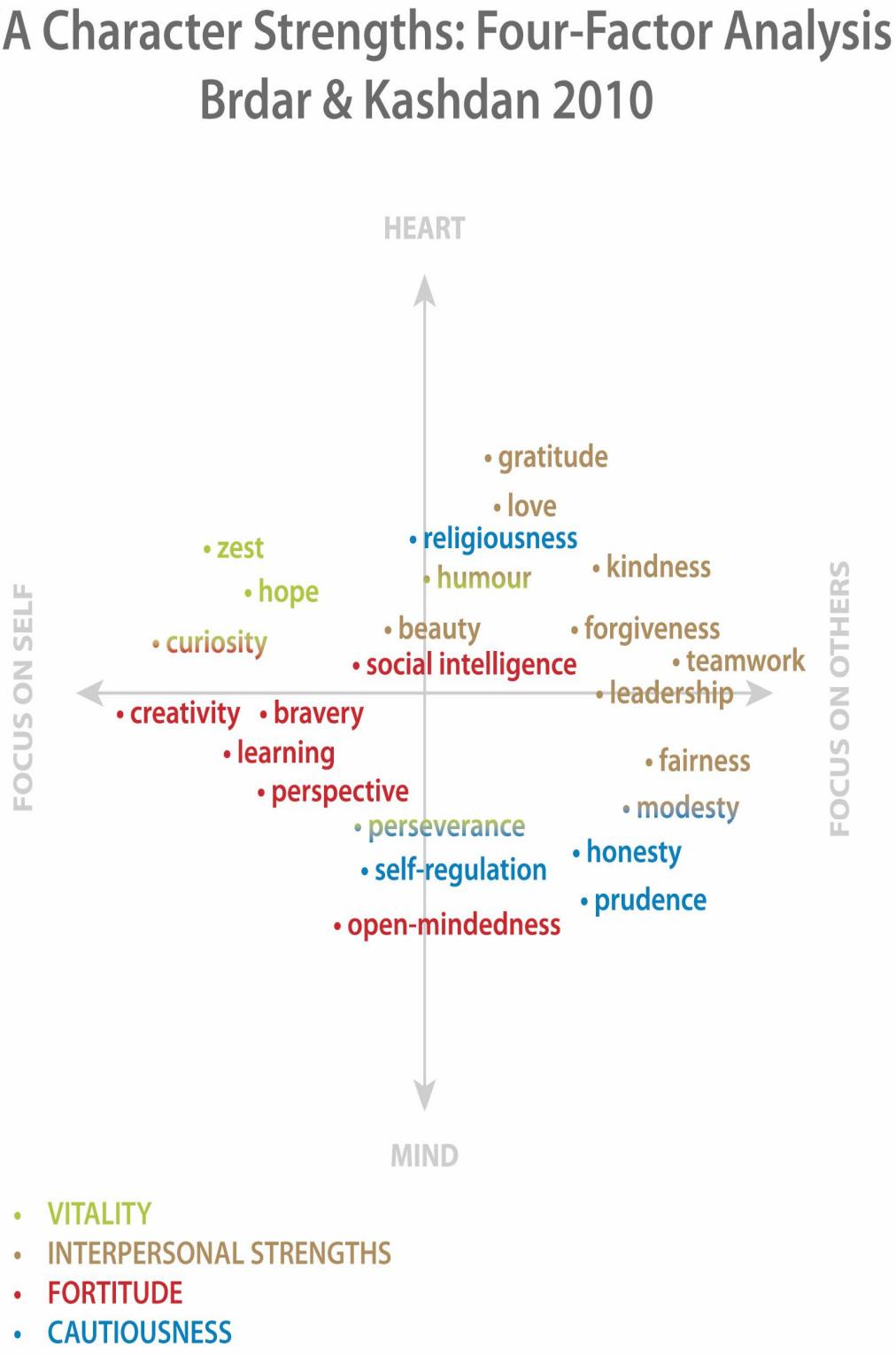
	Positive Outcome	Research
1	Happier	Govindji and Linley (2007), in a study of 214 university students, showed that people who used their strengths more reported higher levels of subjective well-being and psychological well-being. Similarly, Proctor, Maltby and Linley (2009) reported similar findings with a study of 135 university students. Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson (2005) found that people who used their strengths in a new and different way every day reported higher levels of happiness and lower levels of depression, and this lasted over time. Minhas (2010) showed that people who developed their realized or unrealized strengths reported higher levels of happiness and well-being over a four-week period.
2	More confident	Govindji and Linley (2007) found that people who used their strengths more reported higher levels of self-efficacy, which is a scientific conception of confidence – the belief that we are capable of achieving the things we want to achieve.
3	Higher self-esteem	Minhas (2010) found that people who developed their realized or unrealized strengths reported increases in self-esteem over a four-week period. Govindji and Linley (2007) reported that people who used their strengths more reported higher levels of self-esteem. In a study with 135 university students, Proctor, Maltby and Linley (2009) found that strengths use was associated with higher levels of self-esteem.
4	More energy & vitality	Govindji and Linley (2007), in a study with 214 university students, found that strengths use was associated with higher levels of psychological vitality, that is, having feelings of positive energy and buzz.
5	Less stressed	Over a six month time period with a community sample of 207 people, those people who used their strengths more reported lower levels of stress. This was the case at both the baseline period, where strengths use was associated with less stress, and also over the three-month and six-month follow ups, where higher strengths use predicted lower stress over time (Wood, Linley, Maltby, & Hurling, 2010).
6	More resilient	Analysis of the Ego Resiliency Scale with Realise2 shows that strengths use is associated with higher levels of resilience for fifty of the sixty Realise2 strengths (CAPP, 2010). The two highest correlations were with Resilience (as you might expect) and Adventure, which suggests that stretching yourself outside of your comfort zone can be a way to build your resilience.
7	More likely to achieve goals	Linley, Nielsen, Wood, Gillett and Biswas-Diener (2010) showed that people who used their strengths in striving to achieve their goals were far more likely to achieve those goals. When they achieved their goals, they satisfied their psychological needs and were happier and more fulfilled as a result.
8	Better performance	In a study of 19,187 employees from 34 organizations across seven industries and 29 countries, the Corporate Leadership Council (2002) found that when managers emphasized performance strengths, performance was 36.4% higher, and when they emphasized personality strengths, performance was 21.3% higher. In contrast, emphasizing weaknesses led to a 26.8% decline for performance weaknesses and a 5.5% decline for personality weaknesses.
9	More engagement	The opportunity to do what you do best each day, that is, using our strengths, is a core predictor of workplace engagement, which in turn is a core predictor of a range of business outcomes (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002).
10	More effective at people development	When focusing on self-development, people improve faster on areas where they are already strong, than they do in areas where they are weak, contrary to some popular perceptions that focusing on weakness development brings the greatest return (Sheldon, Kasser, Smith & Share, 2002).

Appendix B

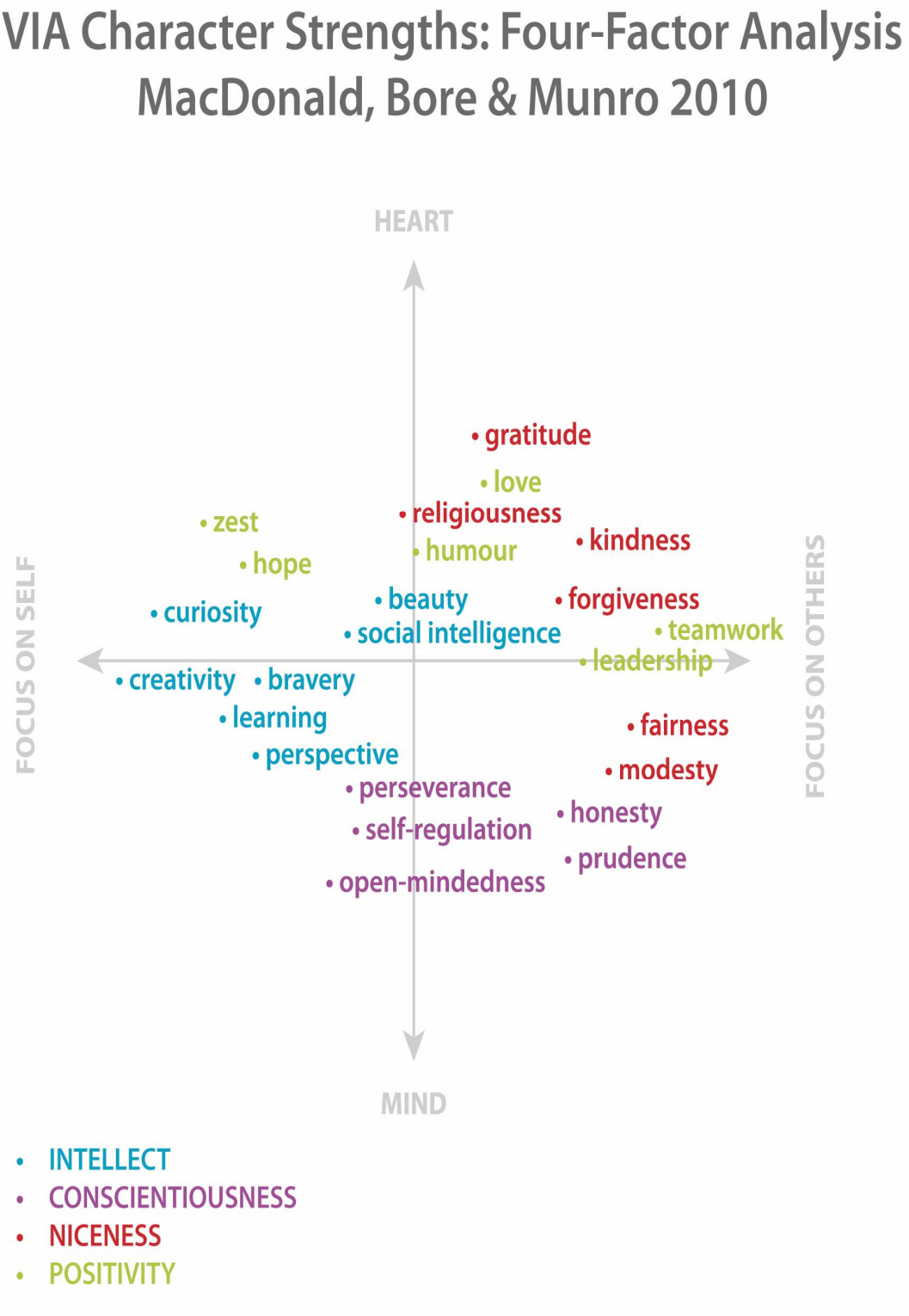
Schwartz's Circumplex with values labels



Appendix C


VIA Character Strengths: Four-Factor Analysis
Brdar & Kashdan 2010
HEART
MIND
FOCUS ON SELF
FOCUS ON OTHERS
gratitude
love
religiousness
zest
humour
kindness
hope
beauty
forgiveness
curiosity
social intelligence
teamwork
leadership
creativity
bravery
learning
fairness
perspective
modesty
perseverance
honesty
self-regulation
prudence
open-mindedness
VITALITY
INTERPERSONAL STRENGTHS
FORTITUDE
CAUTIOUSNESS

Appendix D


VIA Character Strengths: Four-Factor Analysis
MacDonald, Bore & Munro 2010
HEART
MIND
FOCUS ON SELF
FOCUS ON OTHERS
• gratitude
• love
• religiousness
• zest
• humour
• kindness
• hope
• beauty
• forgiveness
• curiosity
• social intelligence
• teamwork
• leadership
• creativity
• bravery
• learning
• fairness
• perspective
• modesty
• perseverance
• honesty
• self-regulation
• prudence
• open-mindedness
• INTELLECT
• CONSCIENTIOUSNESS
• NICENESS
• POSITIVITY

Appendix E

LIfo Survey

Introduction

The Life Orientations® Personal Style Survey will help you identify your unique strengths in normal and unfavourable circumstances. Life Orientations® are the way you look at the world - what's important to you, how you get the most out of situations and how you interact with others.

Directions

This is not a test with right or wrong answers. You will be given a descriptive statement, followed by four possible endings. You are asked to indicate the order in which you feel each ending applies to you. In the boxes to the left of each ending, fill in the numbers **4, 3, 2,** and **1,** according to which is **most like you (4)** and **least like you (1).**
Please fill in this example

Most of the time I try to:

☐	+	do what is right
☐	+	get things done
☐	+	do things the right way
☐	+	do things that will be liked

Do not use 4, 3, 2, or 1 more than once

If the statements that follow in this survey have two or more endings that seem equally like you, or are not like you at all, please rank them anyway, even though it may be difficult. **Each ending must be assigned a rank number of either 4, 3, 2 or 1.** However, remember that you can use a rank number only once within the block of four endings.

Once you have completed a page tear it out using the perforations and continue with the next page. Once all three pages are torn out, the scoring method will become clear.

Page one

Once you have completed this page tear it out using the perforations and continue on to the next page.

LIFO
LIFE ORIENTATIONS®

01. I want to act in a:

- [ ] + sincere and ethical manner
- [ ] + confident and decisive manner
- [ ] + prudent and cautious manner
- [ ] + friendly and outgoing manner

02. I am most likely to talk to others in a:

- [ ] + composed and organised style
- [ ] + polite and modest style
- [ ] + lively and entertaining style
- [ ] + straightforward and clear style

03. I make others feel that I am:

- [ ] + a competent person
- [ ] + likeable and capable of having fun
- [ ] + reliable and will never let them down
- [ ] + calm and objective

04. In a disagreement with others I want to:

- [ ] + gain their trust by being fair and sincere
- [ ] + convince them to accept my argument
- [ ] + demonstrate that I am objective and thorough
- [ ] + make sure that there is a positive climate for discussion

05. In conflict or stress I may:

- [ ] + stick stubbornly to my views and refuse to discuss things further
- [ ] + give up my rights and concede to others
- [ ] + be anxious and try to smooth things over
- [ ] + be autocratic and insist on having my own way

06. Sometimes I appear to others to be:

- [ ] + forceful and unconcerned about their views
- [ ] + hard to understand, political or insincere
- [ ] + gullible and easy to take advantage of
- [ ] + withdrawn and unwilling to deal with feelings

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Page two

Once you have completed this page tear it out using the perforations and continue on to the next page.

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07. I want to persuade others by:

- ☐ + emphasising the key principles and long term benefits
- ☐ + highlighting the positive outcomes for everyone
- ☐ + presenting a logical and factual argument
- ☐ + making my points in an entertaining, light and diplomatic manner

08. In relating to others I am most likely to be:

- ☐ + reserved and objective
- ☐ + honest and helpful
- ☐ + sensitive to them and adaptable
- ☐ + decisive and quick to put ideas into action

09. I make other people feel that I am:

- ☐ + energetic, competent and influential
- ☐ + friendly, tactful and likeable
- ☐ + dedicated, sincere and conscientious
- ☐ + rational, organised and practical

10. When facing failure I feel it is best to:

- ☐ + acknowledge my shortcomings and stop trying too hard
- ☐ + try even harder to succeed even if I have to do it all
- ☐ + be doubly careful and cover my losses as best I can
- ☐ + be optimistic and prepare a good explanation

11. If I do not get what I want I am likely to:

- ☐ + withdraw from discussion and stick to what I believe
- ☐ + concede and give others what they want
- ☐ + suggest ways in which we can resolve our differences
- ☐ + exert a lot of pressure to force them to give me what I want

12. At times I may come over to others as being:

- ☐ + aggressive and irritable
- ☐ + inconsistent and manipulative
- ☐ + defeatist and helpless
- ☐ + uninvolved and distant

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Page three

Once you have completed this page tear it out using the perforations and follow the instructions for scoring the survey.

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13. I feel that the way for me to get ahead in the world is to:

- ☐ = act according to my conscience
- ☐ = accomplish more than anyone else
- ☐ = follow a sound and practical plan
- ☐ = have good relations with as many people as possible

14. In solving the problem of working with a difficult person I:

- ☐ = am careful to stay within tried and tested approaches
- ☐ = treat them as fairly as I would like to be treated
- ☐ = try to understand their feelings and deal with their concerns
- ☐ = demonstrate that I have more power than they have

15. I come over to others as:

- ☐ = an assured person with a positive "can do" attitude
- ☐ = a fun person who can get along with everyone
- ☐ = a good hearted person who tries to be as decent as possible
- ☐ = a calm and deliberate person who "thinks before acting"

16. In conflict I feel that it is better to:

- ☐ = let the other person have what they want and set aside my own needs
- ☐ = fight for what I believe in
- ☐ = be silent and avoid losing anything
- ☐ = find a win-win situation rather than making enemies

17. At times when in conflict I can be:

- ☐ = aloof, cold and uninvolved
- ☐ = submissive and self critical
- ☐ = excessively concerned about other people's impression of me
- ☐ = inconsistent and domineering

18. When we are in conflict I sometimes make others feel:

- ☐ = resentful that I will not let them do what they want
- ☐ = confused by my inconsistency
- ☐ = sceptical of my ability to do anything right
- ☐ = upset by my apparent indifference and lack of interest

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Scoring method

Add your answers horizontally and place the sum in the lettered boxes.
Then add the boxes vertically as indicated by the arrows.

05000

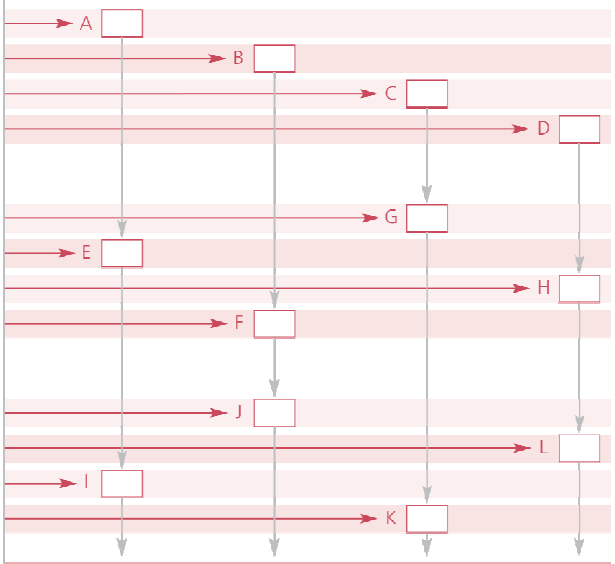
Personal Style Survey

Name:

Job Title:

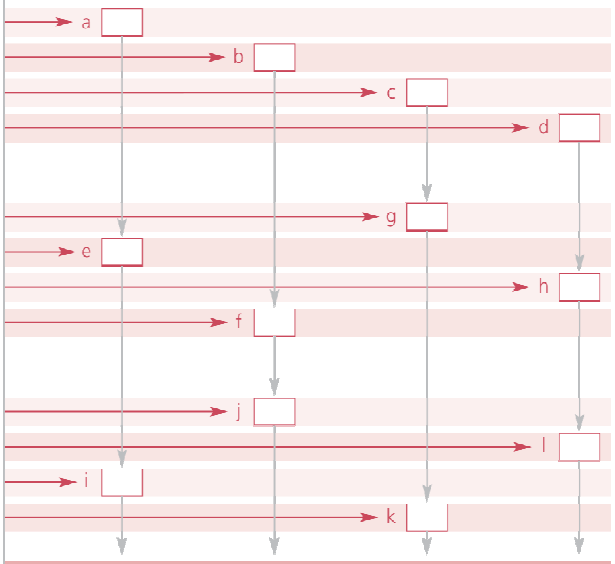
Male ☐ Female ☐

Date:



The total scores show your behavioural preferences under favourable conditions

TOTAL SCORES	SUPPORTING	+	CONTROLLING	+	CONSERVING	+	ADAPTING	= 90



The total scores show your behavioural preferences under unfavourable conditions (conflict/stress)

TOTAL SCORES	SUPPORTING	+	CONTROLLING	+	CONSERVING	+	ADAPTING	= 90

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Life Orientations®

This practical methodology is based on a sound psychological model that can be applied equally to individuals, teams and organisations.

Its three main influences are based on the work of Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers and Peter Drucker. This impressive background has been translated into a practical, effective tool that has been used in most countries of the world since the late 60s. To date over 8 million people have completed the survey.

There are many practical routes to enhance your performance once you have discovered your LIFO® profile. You will find suggestions on www.lifeorientations.com.

Life Orientations® Limited

Agent for the LIFO® Method in the UK and Eire
77 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4AA
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7379 3785 Fax: +44 (0)20 7379 7946
Email: action@lifeorientations.com www.lifeorientations.com

Appendix F

Sample Performance Plan
(retrieved from http://www.halogensoftware.com *24 July 2010)*

Instructions: Development Objectives Raise the Bar on Yourself Weight 15%
To continuously improve the company, we must continuously improve our knowledge, skills and abilities with regard to our Core Competencies. This is your opportunity to raise the bar on yourself in at least one area!

Select One or Two of the Following Core Competencies as Development Objectives

Mission Aligned
Understands and personally connects to the company mission. Supports the organization's strategic plan and ensures business practices are consistent with the mission. Sees beyond today; talks about possibilities; is optimistic.

Integrity
Is widely trusted; is seen as a direct, truthful individual; can present the unvarnished truth in an appropriate and helpful manner. Demonstrates a sense of responsibility and commitment to the public perception of the organization. Responds well to feedback and admits to mistakes.

Trust
Builds trust by communicating openly with other team members and following through on commitments. Keeps confidences; admits mistakes; doesn't misrepresent him/herself for personal gain.

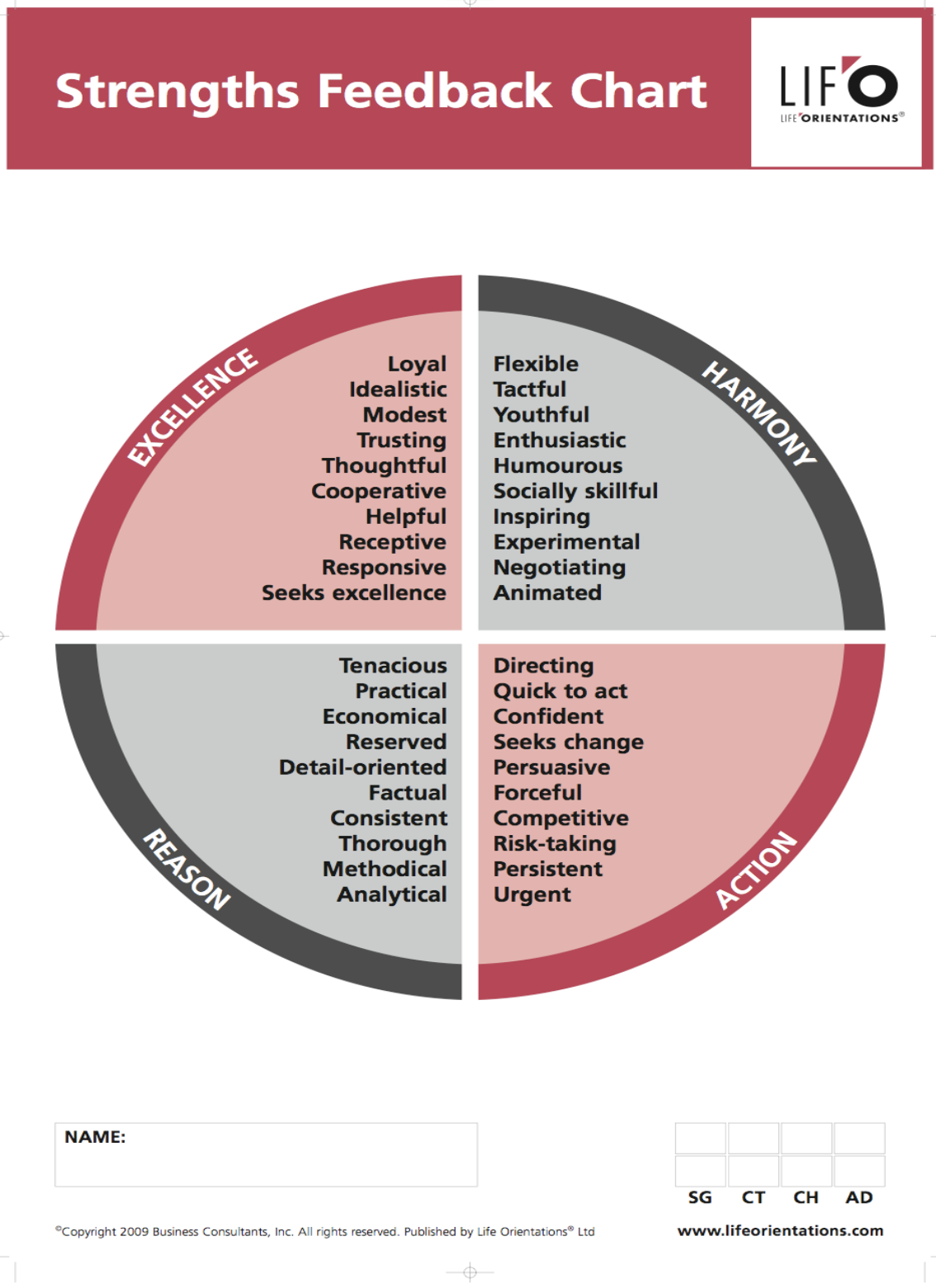
Accountability
Can be relied upon to handle a fair workload, meet deadlines and commitments and accept responsibility for actions. Demonstrates the ability to work independently.

Business Acumen
"Street Smarts" Knows how businesses and organizations work; knowledgeable in current and possible future policies, practices, trends and information affecting his/her business and organization; knows the competition and is aware of how strategies and tactics work in the marketplace.

Process/Organization Management
Good at figuring out the processes necessary to get things done; knows how to organize people and activities; understands how to separate and combine tasks into efficient work flow; knows what to measure and how to measure it; can see opportunities for synergy and integration where others can't; can simplify complex processes; get more out of fewer resources.

Appendix G

LIFO Feedback Chart



Appendix H

Lifo Leadership Strength Feedback Chart

Appendix I

Lifo® Leadership Functions

Leadership Functions	Lifo® Leadership Styles			
	Supporting/Giving	Controlling/Taking	Conserving/Holding	Adapting/Dealing
Instilling Mission and Purpose	Reminding everyone of shared values	Telling people what to achieve	Studying situation and explaining relevance of goals	Building consensus about what people want
Driving Action	Inspiring people with a vision of possibilities	Expressing urgency and pressing for higher achievement	Providing a plan and monitoring compliance	Showing people how to get what they want
Making Decisions	Collaborating with others or referring decisions upward	Swiftly choosing a clear course of action	Thoroughly reviewing what's involved and then deciding	Announcing but perhaps revising depending on reactions
Solving Problems	Encouraging group participation	Acting independently or consulting with experts	Analysing data, evaluating options, and proceeding step-by-step	Experimenting and exploring possibilities
Delegating Tasks	Trusting subordinates, showing patience, and reviewing if needed	Assuming competence and providing minimal supervision	Giving detailed instructions and reviewing periodically	Inviting others to take on tasks and reviewing informally
Giving Feedback	Focusing on needs for improvement or failures to meet the highest standards	Rewarding successes and pointing out failures	Assessing performance objectively	Offering frequent positive remarks
Communicating Information	Sharing and requesting information to keep in touch	Giving and asking only when needed	Providing and requiring a lot of regular documentation	Keeping in touch informally

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Appendix J

Strengths Technology Exercises

Appreciating your Strengths Exercise

This exercise will help you identify your strengths and feel more confident in using them.

1. Distribute Lifo® Strength Feedback Chart
2. Mark your most preferred strengths under favorable conditions
3. Have participants give each other feedback about the strengths you see in one another.

Strengths Discussion Exercise

Discussing strengths is also an important way to learn to appreciate your strengths. Some seed questions include:

1. Describe your most preferred strengths and how you use them in your work.
2. How are you strengths similar or different from those of your coworkers?
3. What strengths do you see in yourself that others do not recognize?
4. What strengths do others recognize in you that you don't see in yourself?

Moderating Strengths Exercise

1. Using the Strengths Feedback Chart
2. Then take green dots and circulate round posters – "what I think you should do more of" (**Extend)**
3. Then red – "what I think you should do less of
4. Find a strength that colleagues believe is very characteristic of you but have also given you the "red dot – do less" feedback.

Working in pairs identify:

1. How you overuse this particular strength
2. A specific situation when you overused this strength
3. What triggered the overuse
4. What were the early warning signs.

ABC Exercise

Adapted from Reivich & Shatté (2002).

1. Identify what set off a series of stressful events by looking for the **A**ctivating event or actions/situations over a period of time (A)
2. Discover how your values (***B****eliefs)* are about to be threatened and what your internal dialogue (conscious or unconscious) focused on (B)
3. Be clear about what you then actually did and the **C**onsequences of that behavior (C)
4. Ask how you could reframe the stressful even trigger.

Uncovering intentions

1. Identify two situations: one where things went well and one where they didn't. In each case ask:
2. What did I want from this situation? Why – what would that do for me?
3. Keep asking until you uncover the true intention.
4. Repeat until your deep-seated goals become clear.

Your Most Effective Work Environment

1. Label your strengths
2. Mark on a scale of 1 (very little) to 10 (great deal) how often you get to use that strength
3. Check off the following:
    a. I am happy with how frequently I use my strengths in my job
    b. I will discuss with my supervisor how my job could be modified to more closely match my preferences
    c. I will develop my strengths to more closely match my job requirements
    d. I will find new ways to use my strengths within my job

Extend your strengths

1. Find an issue that would be solved by using one or more of your lesser preferred strengths
2. Find the "what's in it for me" to use that strength, couching reply in terms of how it contributes to you achieving your goals and staying true to your values
3. Choose a low-risk situation to practice it and use new strategies to bolster its use (e. g. using check-lists if trying to increase planning). Gradually increase the "new muscle" and begin to build the habit.

Journaling to extend perspective

We all have different ways to look at the world and make sense of what is happening around us. We instinctively look through the eyes of our most preferred strengths. Another way to use a lesser preferred strength is to extend our perspective by asking the questions that spring out of the drivers of our least preferred style:

Supporting	**Controlling**
Is it fair?	What are the opportunities?
Will it benefit all?	What's the bottom line?
Is it the best?	Who's in control?
How can I help?	What's next?
Conserving	**Adapting**
How does it work?	What are people's opinions?
Who does what?	Is it disruptive?
What are the trade-offs?	Can it be changed?
Can I try it out first?	Will it gain acceptance?

Appendix K

Character Strength's Continuum

Character Strength	Underuse	Strengths zone	Overuse
Wisdom			
Creativity	Conformity	Creativity	Eccentricity
Curiosity	Disinterest	Curiosity	Nosiness
Judgment and open-mindedness	Unreflective	Judgment	Cynicism
Love of learning	Complacency	Love of Learning	Know-it-all
Perspective	Shallowness	Perspective	Idealism (BB)
Courage			
Bravery	Cowardice	Bravery	Fool-hardiness
Perseverance	Fragility	Perseverance	Obsessive
Honesty	Phoniness	Honesty	Righteousness
Zest	Sedentary	Zest	Hyperactive
Humanity			
Love	Emotional isolation	Love	Emotional promiscuity
Kindness	Indifference	Kindness	Intrusiveness
Social Intelligence	Oblivious	Social Intelligence	Over-Analyzing
Teamwork	Selfishness	Teamwork	Chauvinism
Justice			
Fairness	Detachment	Fairness	Partisanship
Leadership	Compliant	Leadership	Despotism
Temperance			
forgiveness and mercy	Merciless	Forgiveness	Permissive
Modesty and humility	Baseless self-esteem	Modesty	Self-deprecation
Prudence	Sensation-seeking	Prudence	Stuffiness
Self-regulation/self-control	Self-indulgence	Self-regulation	Inhibition
Transcendence			
Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Oblivion	Beauty & Excellence	Snobbery
Gratitude	Rugged individualism	Gratitude	Ingratiation
Hope	Negativism	Hope	Pollyanna-ism
Humor	Overly serious	Humor	Giddiness
Religiousness and spirituality	Anomie	Spirituality	Fanaticism

Appendix L

"Flourish" program

Provisional structure and very provisional content – for illustration only at this stage:

Element of programme	**Activities**	**Objectives**
Pre-workshop activities *We are designing a 30-day calendar pad that will have a challenge, activity or thought piece per day. This will be send as part of the joining instructions and increase awareness and involvement 7 days before the first workshop*	Completion of questionnaires	To establish base-line SWB and SWL, VIA character strengths, learning styles, Lifo®
	Completion of domainal happiness map	Identifying key areas that participant will want to make a different in: establishing a very personal WiiFM
	Personal discovery and short challenges:	Increased awareness of physical fitness; raised interest for the program. Hopefully an "aha" moment
Workshop Day 1: Task (Meaning, engagement and accomplishment)	Content to include: setting meaningful personal goals, affirmation of self through understanding personal strengths and opportunities to capitalize on them; best possible self exercises; interventions to increase self-efficacy including time management: NLP techniques for anchoring resourceful state and finding personal resources for problem solving	Increased positive affect and anchored resourceful state to enable personally set objectives for the coming week to be achieved
Intervening week	Buddy system Activities directed towards goal achievement and finding meaning Using strengths in new ways Increased physical activity that fits for the person Completion of Lifo® behavioral strengths survey	Increased self-efficacy and sense of achievement. Building habits
Workshop Day 2: People (Relationships)	Understanding more about self: "aha" moments. NLP techniques for improving relationships; introduction to loving kindness meditation; **using Lifo® to understand others' strengths and communication needs** and building a domainal map of relationships; gratitude exercise/random acts of kindness *(altruistic acts of some kind).* Understanding personal stress profile (tendency to fight, flight, freeze and how to stop the triggers)	Reframing "difficult people". Increasing communications options according to others' needs; power of giving of oneself;
Two weeks of activities	Each day a challenge, activity or thought on calendar pad and additional prompts arrive on mobile phone/blackberry/email to stimulate new ways of working and keep momentum Buddy system continues CDs and further support materials Halfway point telephone call from a trainer to discuss successes and challenges	Maintain positive affect and continue to achieve successes over whichever domains individual has identified. Emphasis on increased physical activity Building habits
Evaluation	See note in Chapter 6	