“We’re not all designed to be straight A students, celebrities, world class athletes or the CEO of a major corporation. But we are designed to make the most of the skills and abilities we do possess. Perhaps the most splendid achievement of all is the continuing quest to surpass ourselves.” ~ Dennis Waitley
Donald Clifton – Father of Strengths Psychology

- He began studying unique strengths of leaders in the 1960s
- Gallup conducted more than 20,000 interviews with leaders in all fields from around the world
- Not one leader had the same set of strengths
- Led to development of web-based StrengthsFinder
What is StrengthsFinder®?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is…</th>
<th>It is not…</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an assessment that identifies talents that come naturally to you</td>
<td>a career instrument or meant to tell you want to do or what you should do; it should not be used to determine a major or a career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an assessment that has been analyzed for technical psychometric characteristics, including validity and reliability</td>
<td>a quiz or test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intended to facilitate personal development and growth that will contribute to the achievement of your increased well-being and success</td>
<td>something that will be used to label, stereotype, or put you in “a box”</td>
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<tr>
<td>focused on encouraging you to spend time &amp; energy developing your talents</td>
<td>focused on encouraging you to ignore or disregard your weaknesses</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
About Strengths-Based Approach

• About self-awareness and action on that awareness

• About natural tendencies or talent

• Approach can inspire individual and organizational growth
Why Focus on Strengths?

• As you develop and use Strengths, achievements will naturally follow.

• If you focus on your Strengths, you can go from average to excellence. If you focus on your weaknesses, you may only go from poor to average.

• Top achievers invent ways to use their Strengths (and ways to manage their weaknesses).
Strengths Building Equation

**Talent**
(a natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving)

**Investment**
time spent practicing, developing your skills, and building your knowledge base

**Strength**
the ability to consistently provide near-perfect positive performance

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Influencing

Help team to reach more people/larger audience, "sells" teams' ideas & achievements externally, brings a voice to the team

• Activator
• Command
• Communication
• Competition
• Maximizer
• Self-Assurance
• Significance
• Woo
Relationship Building

"Glue that holds the team together", "creates groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum of their parts."

- Adaptability
- Connectedness
- Developer
- Empathy
  - Harmony
  - Includer
  - Individualization
  - Positivity
  - Relator
Strategic Thinking

Keep people focused on potential and the future, absorb and analyze information to help make effective decisions

- Analytical
- Context
- Futuristic
- Ideation

- Input
- Intellection
- Learner
- Strategic
You at your best...

• Which of your talent themes fit you best and why?
• What surprises you about your talent themes?
• In what ways do you use your talent themes each day?
Scavenger Hunt

• Find one or more people with a theme different than your own.
• Ask for an example of how each person used that theme or the benefits of that theme.
Scavenger Hunt

• Find one or more people with a theme the same as your own.
• Talk with them and notice how you experience this theme differently or similarly.
If Don’t Use Your Strengths at Work

You May....

• Dread going to work
• Have more negative than positive interactions with your colleagues
• Have negative feelings towards your company
• Achieve less on a daily basis
• Have fewer positive and creative moments
• Feel unmotivated

Source: StrengthsQuest
Strengths & Your Career

• Your themes do not match one career field, instead they help you understand how you can be successful in your career of choice

• The best people in a role deliver the same outcomes, but with different behaviors (strengths)

• Utilize the ‘Career’ section of the ‘Student Action Items’ report

• When you find a career that fits you work doesn’t really seem like work

Source: StrengthsQuest
Finding your Sweet Spot
Now What--Individually?

• Seek to learn more about your Top 5
• Visit STRENGTHS.UMN.EDU
• Visit STRENGTHSQUEST.COM
  – Choose an action item and act on it
• Talk to people about your Top 5
• Reflect, reflect, reflect!