

Character Strengths Are Critical to Successful Conflict Management in the Workplace

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Agenda

- Recap on positive psychology
- Research on strengths
- What are character strengths?
- Character Strengths Matter

BLUF

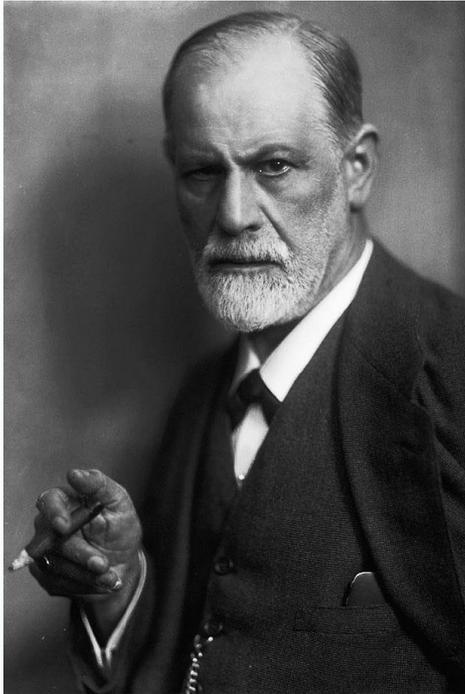
- Identify Strengths in Self and Others helps to build Strengths of Character.
- Knowing and using your strengths and the strengths of others will strengthen your effectiveness.

What is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology is the scientific study of psychological well-being and human flourishing

Where is this being applied today?

- ▣ United States Army
- ▣ The Gallup Organization
- ▣ PwC
- ▣ Geelong Grammar School
- ▣ DC Courts



Sigmund Freud

Figure out what is
wrong.

Fix what is **wrong.**



Martin E.P. Seligman

What is **right** with us?=
What makes us **strong?**

Prevent.

Causal Relationship



Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005

Happier People...

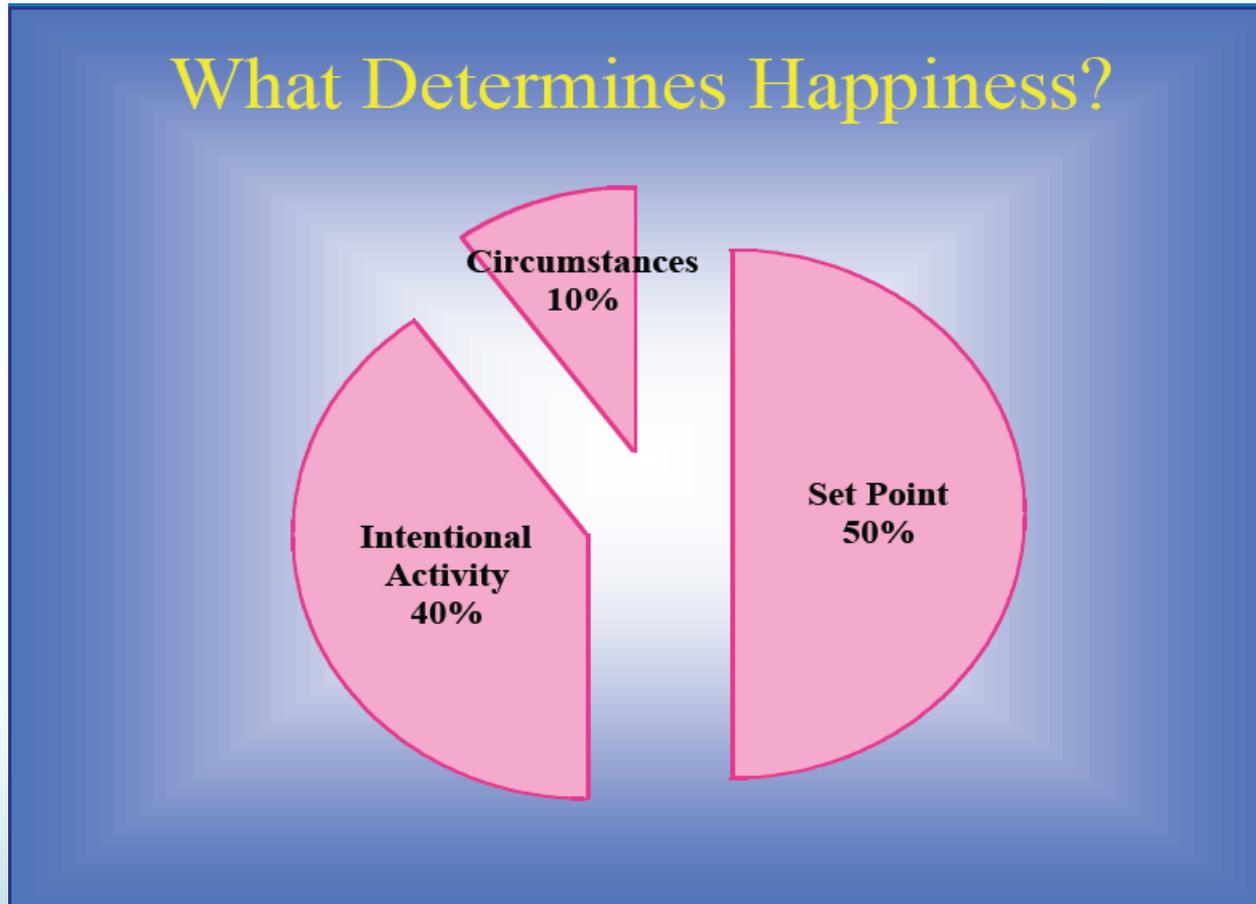
- Improved self-confidence and leadership, warmth, sociability, more friends and higher supervisor ratings
- Higher incomes

Well-Being Matters

- Higher income
- More friends
- Longer marriages
- Less colds (and illness)
- Less cardiovascular illness

Lyubomirsky, S; King, L and Diener, E. (2005, Fisher, 2000)

Is it possible to change your level of happiness and well-being?



Two Flawed Assumptions

- Each person's greatest room for growth is in his or her areas of greatest weakness
- Each person can learn to be good at almost anything

When in reality...

- Each person's greatest room for growth is in the areas of his or her greatest strength
- Each person's talents are enduring and unique

Interesting Statistic...

People who have the opportunity to focus on their strengths every day are **6x** as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than **3x** as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general.

Teams that report using their strengths every day...

- Higher – well-being
- Lower – turnover
- Higher – Productivity
- Higher – Engagement
- Higher – Customer Service

What is a Strength?

A strength is a pre-existing 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.

Alex Linley

CAPP (Centre for Applied Positive Psychology)

What's in it for you?

- Some recent research...
 - **People who used their strengths in new ways for one week, were happier up to 6 months later**
 - managers who emphasize strengths see performance improve by 36.4%
 - a focus on weaknesses can produce a drop in performance of 26.8%
 - employees who work in their strengths are more likely to achieve their goals
 - a strengths-based approach leads to lower levels of stress and higher levels of well-being

**We can choose what we focus
on...**

Character Strengths Matter: How to Live a Full Life



Character Strengths

Based on work by Chris Peterson
and Martin Seligman

- What is right with you?
- Who are you at your best?
- How are you already using your Signature Strengths (the strengths that best describe you)?
- How can you use your Signature Strengths to achieve optimal performance?
- How can you strengthen your team/negotiations through your focus on strengths?

All strengths are good...

- But we can't have them all!
- All of us have top strengths and bottom strengths.
- Your top strengths are called your Signature Strengths.

Signature Strengths

- One believes that he/she is being “true to oneself” when using the strength.
- One feels that he/she can't help but use the strength (when the opportunity to do so arises).
- When using the strength, one feels energized rather than exhausted.
- The motivation to use the strength comes from within the person. (No one else has to remind or persuade him/her to use it.)

VIA Strengths: the Really Big 24

Peterson & Seligman (2004)

www.viame.org

1. **Wisdom**

- curiosity
- love of learning
- judgment/critical thinking
- creativity
- perspective

2. **Courage**

- bravery
- perseverance
- honesty
- zest/enthusiasm

3. **Humanity**

- love and be loved
- kindness
- social intelligence

4. **Justice**

- citizenship/ teamwork
- fairness
- leadership

5. **Temperance**

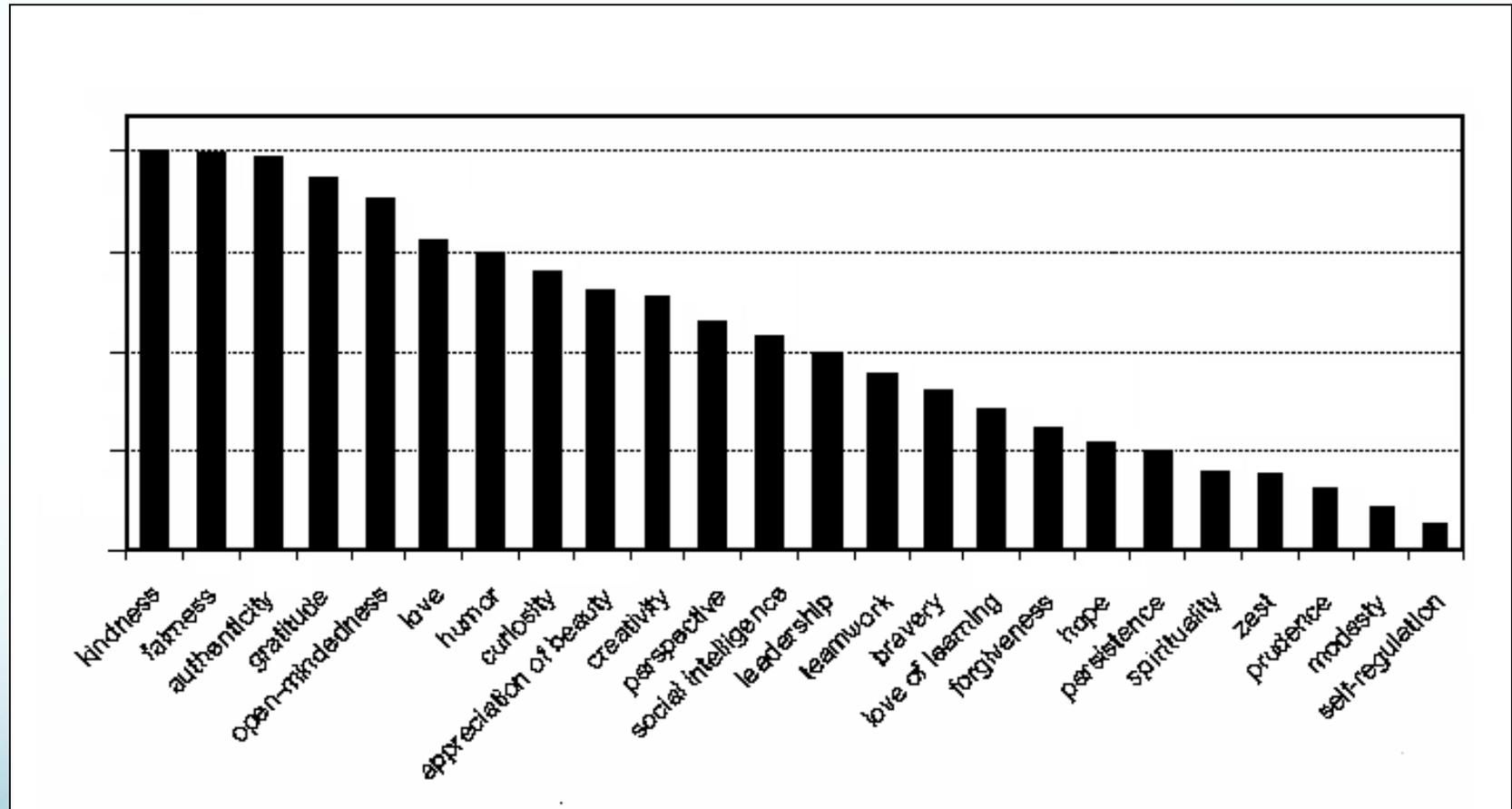
- forgiveness/mercy
- modesty/humility
- self-control/self-regulation
- prudence/caution

6. **Transcendence**

- appreciation of beauty & excellence
- gratitude
- hope/optimism
- humor
- spirituality

Distribution of Character Strengths among U.S. Adults

Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006



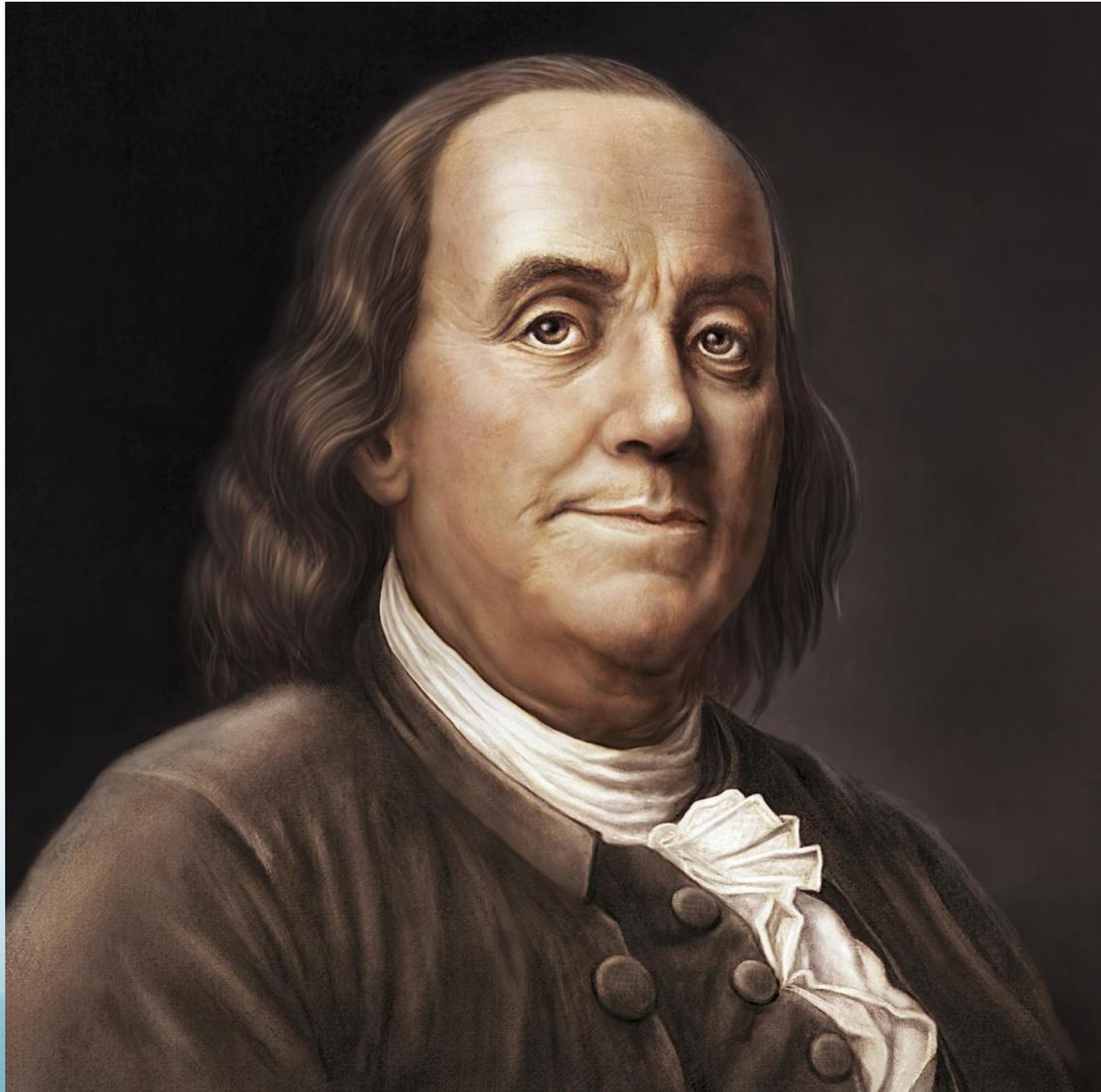
Name the Signature Strength...

- Name one or more of the Signature Strengths of the individuals presented.
- Refer to your handout for a list of strengths.

Eddie Murphy



Ben Franklin



Peyton Manning



Rosie the Riveter



Martin Luther King, Jr.



Mother Theresa



Jane Goodall



ADR

Alternative Dispute
Resolution



Identify Strengths in Self and Others: Key Principles

- **Know your strengths:** Knowing your strengths is as important as knowing your weaknesses.
- **Can't have them all:** No one can have all the strengths.
- **Shadow side:** Each strength has a shadow side that can get you in trouble or limit you.

You at Your Best

- Tell her about a time at work when you were at your best, when you were truly flourishing
- Share what strengths you were using
- Partner/audience will then tell you what additional strengths they heard

Debrief

- What did you notice?
- Did others add strengths you didn't realize?
- How could you use this in your work?

Activity – Identifying Your Strengths

- Write down your ‘At my best’ story
- What strengths were you using?
- Where might your shadow side come into play?
- Timing: 5 minutes
- Then – write down some of the strengths in the chat panel or raise your hand to share

HYPOTHETICAL

You are serving as a mediator for an institutional client. Prior to the mediation, a party says the following to you in private:

- I do not want this mediation to blow up into a shouting match.
- I am worried that there will be a great deal of emotion.
- We seem to agree on 4 of the issues but the last 2 are very tense and I do not know if we will be able to resolve this today.

How can you use your strengths in this situation?

Strengths Survey Discussion: Debrief

- What did you learn through this activity?
- What are examples of how you use your top strengths?
- What strengths have you developed through your work in ADR?
- What are examples of the shadow side of your strengths? What can you do to minimize the shadow side?

Identify Strengths: Applications

- How can your knowledge of Character Strengths help you to be a more effective team member and to build stronger relationships?
- What strengths do you need to develop and/or shadow sides do you need to manage?
- How can you help cultivate a willingness to ask for help (in yourself or a buddy/family member) by using a strengths perspective?
- How do you use strengths to rejuvenate?

Research on *Character Strengths*

- Shows that using your strengths (especially your top 'signature' strengths) in **new ways** leads to greater happiness for up to 6 months

The Book – ACT 1: Awareness

- What are VIA Strengths?
- What are **your** VIA Strengths? →
 - Go to <http://viame.org>
- Why are they important?
 - Well-being

ACT 2: Explore

Part 1 of *Character Strengths Matter*

- Stories and reflections
- Ways to build
- Read aloud passages to act “as if”

Ways to Build the Strengths

Forgiveness

More ideas?

<http://bit.ly/BuildCharStrengths>

ACT 3: Take Action

Part 2 of *Character Strengths Matter*

Apply ideas

- At home
- At work
- At school
- On vacation
- With small children
- With colleagues
- With family members
- With troubled youth
- With clients

Acting 'As If'

- What is it?
- How to do it?
- Exercise: Listen to the following passage
- What strength do you hear?
- What emotions do you feel?
- Timing: 5 minutes

Acting 'As If' Exercise

- Find a partner
- Both of you read the handout
SILENTLY
- One of you read one passage
ALOUD to your partner
- Both of you share your reactions
- Switch to read second passage
ALOUD to partner
- Timing: 5 minutes

QUESTIONS?

Action Plan

- What is your **top insight** from the talk today?

And

- What is the **one thing** that you will try when back at work?

Other People Matter

RESOURCES

Websites

The Values in Action (VIA) Institute website

CAPPEU website

Strengthsfinder

Positive Psychology Program blog

Books

Peterson, Christopher. *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Polly, S & Britton, K., eds. *Character Strengths Matter: How to Live a Full Life*. Delaware: Positive Psychology News, 2015.

Seligman, Martin E. P. & Peterson, C. *Character Strengths and Virtues*. New York: APA & Oxford Press, 2004.

Thank you!

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