CHAPTER 16

Strengths-Based Development in Practice

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People don't change that much. Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out.
Try to draw out what was left in. That is hard enough.

—Buckingham and Coffman, 1999, p. 57

THESE WORDS, SUMMARIZED from the interviews of tens of thousands of great managers studied by Gallup, articulate the simple notion underpinning strengths-based development. Rather than spending time helping their associates become well-rounded, many of the world's best managers have instead invested time in learning about the individual talents of each of their associates and managing with those unique talents in mind. This concept applies to not only managers but also educators, administrators, students, salespeople, leaders of faith communities, and essentially all who desire to heighten their self-awareness and change their paradigm from one of becoming average in many things to excelling in a few areas.

If many of the world's best managers agree on this simple premise, then everyone must think that way, right? Gallup asked the following question around the world: "Which would help you be more successful in your life—[rotated] knowing what your weaknesses are and attempting to improve your weaknesses, or knowing what your strengths are and attempting to build on your strengths?" (See Figure 16.1.) Those who chose to focus on their strengths and manage around their weaknesses were a minority in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Japan, and China—every country in Gallup's study.
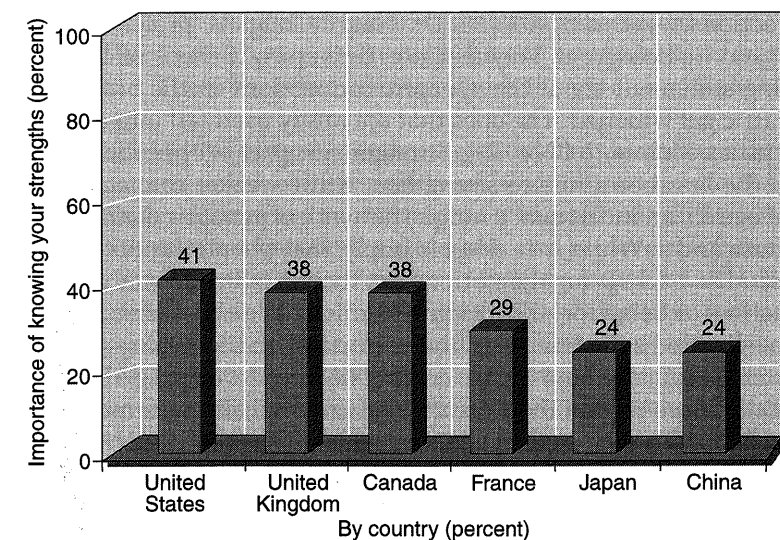
Figure 16.1 Results of a Global Gallup Poll Indicate That Those Who Choose to Focus on Their Strengths to Achieve Success in Life Are in the Minority. Reprinted with the permission of The Gallup Organization.

As is presented in this chapter, strengths-based development has potential that is just beginning to be realized. There is clearly a need to educate the world about positive psychology in practice and the importance of understanding and focusing on strengths. This chapter reviews the theory behind strengths-based development, introduces an instrument that has enabled hundreds of thousands of individuals to identify their themes of talent, reviews the impact of several strengths-based development interventions, and describes future research directions for strengths-based development.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF STRENGTHS-BASED DEVELOPMENT

While the opening statement of this chapter presents strengths-based development in simple terms, fully understanding the concept requires further explanation of associated terms, including strength, theme, and talent:

A strength is the ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity. The key to building a strength is to first identify your dominant themes of talent, then to discover your specific talents within those themes, and to lastly refine them with knowledge and skills. Talents are naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied. One of the three "raw materials" used in strengths building, talent naturally exists within you, while skills and knowledge must be acquired. (Clifton & Hodges, in press)

Talent is defined as naturally recurring. The field of neuroscience further clarifies this notion. Roughly, between the ages of 3 and 15, the human brain organizes itself by strengthening the synaptic connections used often, while infrequently

used connections weaken over time. Dr. Harry Chugani, professor of pediatrics, neurology, and radiology at Wayne State University School of Medicine, made the following statement about the synaptic connections in the brain: "Roads with the most traffic get widened. The ones that are rarely used fall into disrepair" (Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002, p. 21). Stronger synapses within the network of connections in the brain continue to strengthen, while weaker connections fade away. After about age 15, an individual's unique network of synaptic connections does not change significantly. While this doesn't imply that people cannot change, it does provide scientific backup for the notion that their talents, or recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior—don't significantly change over time. Individuals can develop a heightened self-awareness, they can stabilize their values and beliefs, and they can add knowledge and skills on the way to developing their talents into strengths. Still, it seems that their greatest return on their investment into development comes from focusing on the synaptic connections that are already strong.

At the individual level, strengths-based development involves three stages: identification of talent, integration into how the individual views himself or herself, and behavioral change (Clifton & Harter, 2003). This process involves many steps, including identifying things done at excellence, claiming them as strong points, naming them, sharing them with others, consciously thinking about how performance can be maximized if behaviors and talents are aligned, adding necessary knowledge and skills, and actively using the talents whenever possible.

In the identification of talent phase, individuals increase their level of self-awareness. They capitalize on opportunities to claim particular themes of talent. In the integration phase, individuals are more able to explain the behaviors that take place because of their top talents. They begin to define who they are in terms of their talents. Finally, in the behavior change phase, individuals tie their successes back to their themes of talent. Further, they report increases in satisfaction, productivity, and other outcomes as a result of their focus on what they do best.

Traces of talents can be identified in several ways, including spontaneous reactions, yearnings, rapid learning, and satisfaction (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). Spontaneous reactions are subconscious, immediate responses to a given situation. These glimpses of talent may be observed in a person who naturally takes charge of a situation without being asked to do so, a new employee who quickly introduces herself to her coworkers, and a student who willingly volunteers to stay after class to help a fellow student with his homework. Yearnings may also provide clues to talent. A passion for a new hobby, a need to keep things neat and tidy, and a desire to learn a new language could be indications of talent. Others identify talents through examples of rapid learning, whether it is in a new role at work, geometry class, or violin lessons. Finally, satisfactions from positive activities provide clues to talent. If someone enjoys the process of planning a family reunion, reading a technical paper, or giving a speech to a large audience, the chances are that they are appealing to one or more of their talents.

Monitoring thoughts and behavior over a period of time can provide important insights into identifying themes of talent. Other means of talent identification are available as well. The Gallup Organization designed a web-based assessment called the StrengthsFinder (available at http://www.strengthsfinder.com) to assist in the talent discovery process by measuring the predictability of patterns of behavior within individuals. The StrengthsFinder presents individuals with pairs of statements, sorts the responses, and presents the results in the form of dominant

patterns of behavior, or themes of talent. Thirty-four themes of talent have been identified to capture prevalent patterns of behavior recognized through Gallup's study of excellence. These themes are areas where the greatest potential exists for strengths building.

The conceptual basis of StrengthsFinder is grounded in more than three decades of the study of success across a wide variety of functions and more than 30 countries. StrengthsFinder identifies an individual's themes of talent, which, when supplemented with relevant knowledge and skills, can be developed into strengths. For this reason, StrengthsFinder serves as a starting point for self-discovery in strengths-based developmental programs. This initial diagnostic tool provides insights that are reported back as themes and supplemented with developmental suggestions customized to the individual's top themes and his or her role. The themes help individuals form a language of success on which they are able to articulate what they do well. Specific developmental programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of clients. In addition, audience-specific books have been published and are available in the popular press for employees (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001), salespeople (Smith & Rutigliano, 2003), students (Clifton & Anderson, 2002), and members of faith communities (Winseman, Clifton, & Liesveld, 2003).

Strengths-based development has been applied in several different settings, with programs designed for leaders, managers, salespeople, customer service representatives, nurses, teachers, students, and more. The StrengthsFinder assessment is available in several languages and, at the time of writing, had been completed by nearly one million individuals from more than 40 countries. Strengths-based developmental programs vary depending on the audience. Various programs may include the StrengthsFinder assessment, online learning, classroom instruction, and one-on-one consulting or executive coaching (visit http://www.gallup.com/university/ for a partial listing of strengths-based developmental programs).

OUTCOMES OF STRENGTHS-BASED DEVELOPMENT

Strengths-based development has been linked to positive outcomes in a variety of studies across a range of domains. Individuals participating in strengths-based development report changed behaviors in follow-up surveys. More direct relationships between strengths-based development and attendance, grades, and per-person productivity have been identified. In other cases, strengths-based development has been linked to increases in employee engagement, which has been meaningfully linked to business outcomes including profitability, turnover, safety, customer satisfaction, and more (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Still other studies arrive at increases in positive psychological or positive organizational behavior capacities such as hope, subjective well-being, and confidence. This section reviews several studies that provide evidence of the impact of strengths-based development on positive outcomes.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS

Gallup researchers conducted brief web-based surveys to study the impact of strengths awareness on participant behaviors (Hodges, 2003). E-mail invitations were sent to study participants 75 days following their completion of the StrengthsFinder assessment through the *Now, Discover Your Strengths* web site (http://www

.strengthsfinder.com). Invitations were sent to participants who provided a valid e-mail address and consented to being contacted in the future. A total of 459 surveys were completed during a period of several weeks in the autumn of 2002. The survey consisted of open-ended items as well as five-point "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" Likert-type items.

Three survey items were written to serve as indicators of behavioral change as a result of the participants' strengths awareness. The first item was written to broadly measure the impact of strengths awareness on lifestyle. Fifty-nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Learning about my strengths has helped me to make better choices in my life." The second behavioral change survey item focused more specifically on individual productivity as an outcome measure, with 60% of respondents stating that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Focusing on my strengths has helped me to be more productive." The third survey item is closely aligned with the field of positive psychology. Through this item, 63% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Learning about my strengths has increased my self-confidence." Other studies on the relationship between strengths and self-confidence are reviewed later in this chapter.

While the study results point in a favorable direction, it should be noted that these study participants took part in a very minimal strengths-based developmental intervention, consisting only of having had the opportunity to read *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, complete the StrengthsFinder assessment, and receive a printed copy of their top five themes of talent. Participants in more intensive strengths-based developmental interventions are currently being invited to complete the survey items identified in this review. Preliminary results show that more intensive interventions, including classroom instruction and individual coaching with a trained consultant, yield a higher magnitude of positive results on each survey item than in the minimal intervention reviewed here.

DIRECT IMPACT ON OUTCOMES

Several recent research studies have explored the impact of strengths-based development across various contexts. The following section reviews examples from both education and the workplace.

Education   Strengths-based developmental interventions have also been shown to positively impact educational outcomes. Gallup researchers conducted a 4-year study at a Midwestern U.S. urban high school from 1994 to 1997 (Harter, 1998). These studies involved training a random selection of teachers to administer talent-based interviews to incoming freshmen in each of the four years of the intervention. Following the interviews, the teachers provided individualized feedback to the students, highlighting their patterns of strongest talent identified through the interviews. The research team tracked absenteeism, tardiness, and grades for all of the students associated with the study during this important first semester of high school. Weighted average effect size correlations were calculated to measure the impact across the four years of the semester-long strengths-based interventions. Meaningful differences were observed between the study group of 807 students and the control group of 841 students on all three outcome measures. The

study group had 3.8 fewer days absent per student (0.33 standard score units), 0.78 fewer times tardy per student (0.31 standard score units), and grade point averages that were 0.15 standard score units higher than the control group.

Colleges and universities have also served as a context for strengths-based development. A recent study was conducted with college freshmen enrolled at a private, faith-based university (Williamson, 2002). The researcher set out to determine if there was a difference between a study group of students introduced to strengths-based development and a control group who was not. A random sample of first-year English writing students was invited to participate in the program. This study group of 32 students participated in an intervention, including the administration of the StrengthsFinder assessment during a summer orientation program, participation in two one-hour presentations on strengths theory and presentation of individual StrengthsFinder results, and a one-on-one advising session with a trained StrengthsCoach. A control group of 40 students, randomly selected from the same sections of the English writing course, completed the StrengthsFinder survey during the summer orientation program but did not receive feedback on their results or participate in any group or individual strengths-based advising. First-semester college student success at the study site is defined as, at a minimum, completing 12 credit hours of coursework with a 2.0 GPA or higher. Although the high school GPA and ACT scores for the study and contrast groups were not statistically different, the first-semester college academic results differed among the two groups. Only 2 of the 32 students in the group participating in the strengths-based intervention failed to meet the minimum standards expected of first-semester students, while 8 of the 40 control group students failed to meet these standards. Further, the college GPAs were significantly higher for the study group ($p < .05$) at the conclusion of the first semester.

Workplace   Strengths-based developmental interventions have taken place in various workplace domains, including a Southern California auto parts warehouse. The Toyota North American Parts Center California (NAPCC), composed of 400 employees on 54 work teams, underwent a strengths-based intervention with an objective to build effective work teams (Connelly, 2002). The intervention began with warehouse associates completing the StrengthsFinder to identify their themes of talent. Many lunchtime learning sessions were conducted to answer any questions and to deliver StrengthsFinder results to individual associates. Next, NAPCC managers attended a 4-day course designed to introduce them to the theory and practice of managing themselves and their teams according to their strengths. Finally, warehouse associates at NAPCC came together on a Saturday at 6:00 A.M. for a half-day team-blend session designed to move individuals from thinking about their own strengths to thinking about the strengths of their team members to optimize team relationships and performance. Quantifiable business results were attributed to the strengths-based intervention when, within a year of the intervention, per-person-productivity at the warehouse increased by 6%. These results were in sharp contrast to the previous three years, when quarterly productivity figures varied either positively or negatively by less than 1%. Further, two teams who underwent a more intensive strengths-based developmental program realized a 9% productivity increase over a period of just 6 months.

IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Many strengths-based developmental interventions have led to a quantifiable impact on the employee engagement metric. Employee engagement is measured by 12 questions (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999) selected for their comprehensiveness, performance-relatedness, and actionability (Harter, 2000). The employee engagement metric is designed to enable managers to take necessary steps toward increased levels of engagement and improved performance in response to employee ratings. Employee engagement is measured at the business-unit level and has been meaningfully linked to performance outcomes, including customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, employee turnover, and accidents (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002).

While several studies have shown linkages between strengths-based development and the entire employee engagement metric, one employee engagement item in particular, "opportunity to do what I do best," has a strong conceptual relationship to strengths-based development. This item also has strong research evidence linking it to success, defined as above the median performance within an individual's company, across work units. A recent meta-analysis of more than 10,000 work units and more than 300,000 employees in 51 companies indicates that work units scoring above the median on the "opportunity to do what I do best" item have 38% higher probability of success on productivity measures and 44% higher probability of success on customer loyalty and employee retention (Harter & Schmidt, 2002).

To further illustrate the impact of strengths-based development on employee engagement and business outcomes, Clifton and Harter (2003) reviewed data from 65 organizations, all of which were involved in employee engagement interventions. A study group consisted of four companies that had used strengths-based development, and a control group was made up of 61 organizations that had not. The study group exceeded the control group on employee engagement from year 1 to year 2 ($d = 0.65$) and even more dramatically so from year 1 to year 3 ($d = 1.15$). Utility analyses, conducted to determine the difference between the study and control groups, yielded an increase in annual per employee productivity of more than $1,000. This equates to more than $1 million for an organization of 1,000 employees and more than $5.4 million for the average-size company in the study. Further tangible value from the study may be realized through further utility analyses on other performance outcomes, including turnover, profit, safety, and customer satisfaction. Focus groups and follow-up interviews with staff participating in strengths-based development programs widely report an increased understanding and respect for their coworkers and report that they work together better as a result of knowing, accepting, and working to develop the strengths that their peers bring to the table.

An example of an increase in employee engagement in response to strengths-based development is found at St. Lucie Medical Center in Florida (Black, 2001). This 150-bed hospital was the place of work for 700 nurses, clinicians, and support staff. High turnover and low morale were barriers to the hospital's success. In 1998, the hospital ranked in the bottom quartile of Gallup's worldwide employee engagement database. However, a closer look revealed that, although the overall hospital scores were low, there were several engaged work groups within St. Lucie. The leadership of St. Lucie decided to study the talents of the top leaders, and eventually

of employees across functions, through structured talent inventory interviews. This information was used to build teams that allowed each employee to flourish according to his or her innate talents. Just two years into the strengths-based development and employee engagement intervention, St. Lucie's staff turnover had declined by almost 50% and the employee engagement scores had jumped to the top quartile of Gallup's database. Furthermore, the hospital's percentile ranking for patient satisfaction jumped by 160% in comparison to its peers.

As with the employee engagement metric, research on congregational engagement indicates that members of faith-based communities who regularly have the opportunity to do what they do best within their faith communities are more engaged than those who do not. Further, engaged members have higher life satisfaction, give more money, volunteer more, and are more likely to invite others to participate in their congregations (Winseman, 2002). In a 2001 study of congregational members, 66% of congregation members who had invited someone to participate in their congregation within the last month also strongly agreed with the statement, "I regularly have the opportunity to do what I do best." Further, 50% of those polled who volunteered two or more hours per week also stated that they regularly had the opportunity to do what they do best. The benefits of strengths-based development seem clear and quantifiable through the congregational engagement metric within the context of faith-based communities.

IMPACT ON OTHER POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASURES

Empirical research suggests that strengths-based developmental interventions have a positive impact on positive psychological and positive organizational behavioral constructs. The field of positive psychology, defined as "the scientific study of optimal human functioning" (Sheldon, Frederickson, Rathunde, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), has grown in popularity over the past several years. Several researchers have applied positive psychology to the workplace (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). Building from the foundation of the positive psychology movement, recent attention has been paid to positive organizational behavior (POB), defined as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" (Luthans, 2002, p. 59). Three POB constructs receiving recent attention have been hope, subjective well-being, and confidence.

Hope Hope is a positive psychological capacity consisting of two components: agency, or goal-directed determination, and pathways, or planning ways to meet goals (Snyder et al., 1991). State hope (Snyder et al., 1996) describes an individual's present goal-directed thinking. State hope can be developed and has been used as a measure of ongoing goal-related activities in many domains (Snyder, 2000), including the workplace (Peterson & Luthans, 2003). Suggestions for developing hope include clarification of goals, simplifying the goals into smaller steps, developing alternative plans, taking pleasure in the process, and being strategic in overcoming obstacles (Luthans & Jensen, 2002).

Two empirical studies offer evidence that strengths-based developmental interventions can increase levels of state hope. A three-month study consisted of undergraduate business students participating in a strengths-based intervention over the course of the academic term. At the beginning of the semester, a pretest

with several positive psychological assessments, including the six-item State Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1996), was administered to the students. Next, students completed the StrengthsFinder assessment and were provided access to online learning about strengths. Then, the students took part in 30-minute one-on-one consulting calls with an individual trained to administer strengths feedback. Finally, at the conclusion of the semester (approximately two months following the consulting calls), students completed a posttest identical to the pretest given at the beginning of the academic term. Analysis of the pretest-posttest data revealed that state hope scores increased by 0.36 standard score units over the three-month interval.

The second strengths-based intervention providing evidence for the development of state hope is from a study conducted at a Midwestern United States rehabilitation hospital. This study involved an organizationwide pretest with items designed to measure self-awareness, hope, and subjective well-being. The pretest was administered to hospital employees via the Internet in May 2002. Employees then had an opportunity to complete the StrengthsFinder and receive a printed report of their top five themes of talent with suggested action statements associated with each theme. Twenty-four hospital employees were trained as StrengthsCoaches. The coaches' names and contact information were made available to associates, and the associates were encouraged to schedule and complete feedback sessions designed to teach them more about their themes of talent and how they could build them into strengths. Approximately one year later, hospital employees were invited to complete the online posttest (identical to the pretest with the exception of an additional item at the end asking employees to rate the extent to which they received feedback on their StrengthsFinder results within the past year). A total of 488 employees completed both the pretest and the posttest. Forty percent of the 488 employees strongly agreed with the statement, "In the last year, I have received feedback on my StrengthsFinder results." These 40% were identified as having actively participated in the strengths-based developmental intervention. While the overall level of state hope at the hospital remained relatively unchanged from the pretest to the posttest, the 40% of associates who received feedback on their StrengthsFinder results increased in hope significantly more than the other 60% of employees ($p < .001$). In fact, the group of associates who actively participated in the strengths-based intervention was the only group who increased in state hope from the pretest to the posttest.

Subjective Well-Being Subjective well-being (Diener, 1984) can be distilled into three components: positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976). The life satisfaction component is of particular interest to workplace research as it has been linked to job satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989). Further, job satisfaction has been linked to job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Emerging research suggests that workplace well-being and performance are "complimentary and dependent components of a financially and psychologically healthy workplace" (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003, p. 221). Life satisfaction scores have been shown to increase over periods of outpatient therapy (Pavot & Diener, 1993), suggesting that it is state-like and able to be developed.

The strengths-based intervention at a Midwestern rehabilitation hospital described earlier also served as a test site for changes in the satisfaction with life component of subjective well-being. The pretest and posttest included the

five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Again, of the 488 employees who completed both the pretest and posttest, 40% strongly agreed when asked if they had received feedback on their StrengthsFinder results within the past year. The group of employees who maximally participated in the program increased in satisfaction with life significantly more than the other 60% of employees ($p < 0.05$).

Confidence Confidence draws heavily from Bandura's (1982) work with self-efficacy. *Self-efficacy* is defined as, "an individual's conviction (or confidence) about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context" (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998b, p. 66). Self-efficacy, or confidence, can be developed through positive feedback, mastery experiences or performance attainments, vicarious learning, and physiological or psychological arousal (Bandura, 1997). A meta-analysis illustrated a strong link between confidence and work-related performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998a).

A recent study with 212 UCLA students provides evidence that increased confidence may be an outcome of strengths-based development. This study took place in the fall semester of 2002. Students completed a pretest, participated in the strengths-based developmental intervention, and then completed a posttest. The intervention consisted of several classroom activities and homework assignments facilitated by the course professor, a trained strengths coach. The pretest and posttest consisted of identical surveys with items designed to measure participants' awareness of strengths, direction about the future, and level of confidence (Clifton, 1997; Rath, 2002). Ten items from the survey comprised a subscale measure of confidence, including items such as, "I am confident in my ability to build friendships," and "I am an academically confident person." The posttest scores on the confidence subscale were significantly higher than the pretest scores ($p < 0.001$), with an increase of 0.23 standard score units.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Strengths-based development involves the identification of talents, integration into individuals' view of themselves, and resulting changes in behavior (Clifton & Harter, 2003). This chapter reviewed several studies that illustrate the impact of strengths-based development on various outcomes, including productivity, educational performance, employee engagement, hope, subjective well-being, and confidence, across several domains, including education, health care, and the workplace.

While there are several examples of the impact of strengths-based development presented in this chapter, there is still much research that needs to be conducted on the topic. Numerous strengths-based developmental studies are currently underway. Longitudinal studies are being conducted to measure the impact of development over time. Several variations of developmental programs are being tested with various audiences to determine the most effective intervention for each audience. Strengths-based development is also being tested against the *Barnum effect*, defined as the tendency for people to accept very vague or general feedback as accurate (see Snyder, Shenkel, & Lowery, 1977, for a review of the Barnum effect).

Future research should explore relationships between strengths-based development and other positive psychological/positive organizational behavioral

constructs, such as resiliency. The Pygmalion effect, a self-fulfilling prophecy where subordinates perform better when expected to do so by their superiors, has been explored in education (Rosenthal, 1994; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) and management (Eden, 1990; White & Locke, 2000). Studies comparing strengths-based development and Pygmalion effects should be considered.

Further controlled experiments should be conducted to measure the impact of strengths-based developmental programs. Advanced statistical models, including path analysis, should be applied to measure causality and explore possible mediators in the relationship between strengths-based development and desired outcomes. Future research is expected to uncover further breakthroughs concerning the importance of strengths-based development and its linkage to performance improvement. Strengths-based development stands at the forefront of positive psychology in practice and offers much to professional psychologists, educators, managers, and others who wish to work from a positive psychological perspective.

CONCLUSION

The Positive Psychology movement has come about partially in response to the realization that, since World War II, the field of psychology has focused primarily on weakness-fixing and the treatment of psychological disorders. Global surveys indicate that individuals elect to focus on improving weaknesses to achieve success in life.

Current research indicates that there may be a better way. This chapter reviewed theory and empirical studies that offer support for strengths-based development as a means for performance improvement across various contexts. Our hope is that future developmental interventions will build from this solid research base and will focus primarily on the more positive strengths-based approach.

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CHAPTER 17

Positive and Creative Organization

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THIS CHAPTER OUTLINES the application of positive approaches in organizational practice. It discusses the role of work in the *good life* and some of the main strategies used in attempts to develop and sustain a positive and creative organizational culture. It introduces some of the main forms of organizational intervention at individual, team, organizational, and interorganization levels, such as addressing motivation, aiding personal development, building teams, introducing participatory working practices, empowering staff, developing and sustaining creativity, and encouraging networking.

The chapter notes that though much organizational practice and research is negatively oriented, many organizational interventions take a more positive orientation. It suggests that organizations can be accused of inclining toward a naive positivity in their acceptance of organizational interventions as curative. It argues that certain aspects of good personal and professional training go beyond either a purely negative or positive orientation to teach a metacognitive perspective that helps facilitate wise behavior. It concludes that work is important for well-being and that certain organizational practices can enhance satisfaction and aid performance, while noting that different practices may be needed for different personalities, sectors, and cultures.

WELL-BEING AT WORK

Work has long been recognized as a very important avenue for enhancing well-being and studies of life satisfaction often report higher levels of satisfaction among the employed than the unemployed (Warr, 1987, 1999). Exceptions include the healthy, voluntarily early retired with ample finances (Haworth, 1997).

Research into *flow* supports the notion that work provides opportunities for experiencing a state of well-being. Flow is a psychological state associated with well-being that entails the exercise of challenging skills (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). In several studies, Haworth (1997) and colleagues have found flow was more common in work than leisure. In contrast, Delle Fave (2001)

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*We dedicate this volume to the memory of
Donald O. Clifton, PhD, 1924–2003.*

*"The father of strengths-based psychology and the grandfather
of positive psychology."
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