

Executive Summary:

❖ Book: Strengthsfinder 2.0 – Tom Rath

❖ Overall Summary:

- Strengthsfinder 2.0 is primarily a dictionary describing the 34 strengths that are most commonly found within the workplace. Within the book Tom asserts that a critical failure of modern American culture is our emphasis on overcoming or fixing our weaknesses. Instead he suggests the true path to success involves identifying your strengths and maximizing them. In pursuit of this, the book offers an online survey to find your top 5 strengths and then within the book each strength features a description, quotes from people with the strength, 10 action items to invest in your strength, and 3 tips for working with those who have the strength.

❖ Highlights from the book

- (Page ii) A Gallup poll of 10 million people worldwide stated that only 1/3 of the workforce “strongly agree” that they have the opportunity to do what they best everyday
- (Page iii) A more recent poll of 1,000 from the above sample revealed that not one person who strongly disagreed with the above statement was emotionally engaged at work.
- (Page iii) Another study, by the author, found that people who are able to do work based on their strengths are 6 times more likely to be engaged at their job, and 3 times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life
- (Page iv) A study on manager management style found that employees who were ignored had a 40% of being disengaged at work, 22% of employees whose managers focused on weaknesses were disengaged, and 1% of employees whose managers focused on strengths were disengaged.
- (Pages 4-5) The author highlights a misguided American maxim that “You can be anything that you want to be, if you just try hard enough” is flawed with a story of American icon Rudy Ruettiger. He showcases that despite the years of practice and constant perseverance all of his efforts amounted to one play that lasted a few seconds in a game that was already assured to be a victory.
- (Page 7) The author further demonstrates how deep rooted the world’s focus is on fixing weaknesses and ignoring excellent with the statistic that 77% of parents worldwide believe a student’s lowest grade deserves the most time and attention (at the expense of ignoring excellent grades).
- (Page 8-9) The author urges that what people should try to do is recognize their strengths and find people who can compensate for their weaknesses by presenting a story of a shoemaker who while skilled in craftsmanship was a horrible sales person. It wasn’t until he met a partner that could handle sales that he went from small town seller to world renowned crafter.
- (Page 9) The author offers an improved maxim: “You cannot be anything you want to be – but you can be a lot more of who you already are”
- (Page 12) When not performing in your strengths you are 6 times more likely to be disengaged from work
- (Page 20) The author provides an informal formula that Talent x Investment = Strength. Talent being natural ability, investment being time spent improving it, and strength being overall maximum potential you can reach

- (Page 22-24) The author highlights that aside from finding your strengths with the book you can find out your weaknesses and your strength's blind spots so that you can start managing a way to overcome them. The author talks about this due to pointing out that initially you may not always have the opportunity to work within your strengths.

❖ Analysis & Recommendations

- After reading this book I believe there are two main ways to utilize this book to its fullest potential. The first, as will be described below, is using it to try to increase your own potential within the workplace. The second is to evaluate your team to determine whether or not your strengths effectively complement each other and how to best maximize each other's potential.
- Method 1: Realizing your potential
 - First of all, this book is only effective if you can determine your strengths using the online assessment that is provided with the book
 - Once you have determined what your top 5 strengths are use the books index to find the page numbers of each of your strengths
 - Next for each strength read the description to get an idea of what your strength entails. Note that if the description isn't clear enough you can also read the provided quote, but they are not strictly necessary to read to understand the strength
 - Now review the provided list of 10 action items and markdown 1-3 for each strength that you feel confident you could implement
 - After compiling the list of 5-15 action items, select 1-3 that you can start working on within the next week
 - Now start working on fulfilling your action items and once you successfully completed one select another from your pre-compiled list. As those too run you can then return to the book to find more action items to implement
 - Eventually once you have finished a majority of the items you should be working in your strengths
- Method 2: Realizing your team's potential
 - This method involves having everyone within your team take the online assessment and create a public document that lists each person's top 5 strengths
 - Once the document is complete and everyone has had a chance to read their strengths' descriptions, review your team's collective strengths
 - After the review, list the page numbers for each strength and read the "Working With Others Who Have...[strength]" section for each strength your colleagues possess. These sections should help guide your group as to how to best work with each other and give advice on what strengths best complement each other
 - Adjust how your team works with each other as needed after the review, and if you find that there are a few core strengths missing that could maximize the function of the group look to find fellow employees within the organization that could fulfill the role. Secondly, if you find that one particular strength is overrepresented consider if you need to change the composition of the team or the function of the team