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What Personality Theory is the basis of the CliftonStrengths Assessment?

By Brent O'Bannon | [Let's Talk Strengths](#)

What would happen if we studied what was *right* with people versus what's wrong with people?

Donald O. Clifton



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With so many assessments available, how do you know which one to use? In making that decision, you need to keep in mind what was used to create the assessment. Is it just this is what someone thought would be a good idea, or is it based on a solid framework?

There are a few key terms that are important to understand as you delve into the world of the Clifton StrengthsFinder.

Positive Psychology

The CliftonStrengths assessment is based on Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology is an approach to psychology from the perspective of healthy, successful life functioning. What are the differences in Positive Psychology from Traditional Psychology? Traditional Psychology focuses on people's problems and how to deal with them directly. Positive psychology offers the chance to help find the inner strengths of a person focusing more on proactive steps to use their abilities.

This focus is what Donald Clifton was talking about when he said, "What would happen if we studied what was *right* with people versus what's wrong with people?"

Talent (a natural way of thinking and feeling) x Investment (time spent practicing, developing, and building your knowledge base) = Strength (the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance). This is a simple formula for a profound concept. It builds beautifully on the Positive Psychology principle of helping people find their inner talents and then proactively making an investment in that talent to refine it into a strength. This formula was introduced in the bestselling book *StrengthsFinder 2.0*

Talent is your natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving. They're the inherent natural abilities you can apply to your life. Once you uncover your talents, you must invest in them. This investment goes past knowing your strengths; you must practice using them and add knowledge and skills.

Neuroscience

The Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment is rooted in and based around neuroscience – *“a scientific discipline studying the structure, development, function, and genetics of the brain.”* Through the use of cognitive MRIs, neurologists can see the brain’s activity when subjected to certain stimuli. In short, your brain literally lights up when it’s functioning in an area of strength.

Assessment vs. Psychometric

A psychometric assessment is an *“objective measurement of skills and knowledge, abilities, attitudes, personality traits.”* In a psychometric assessment, you don’t know what sorts of questions are being asked, or why. The Clifton StrengthsFinder only gives you 20 seconds to answer before moving on to get your gut reaction.

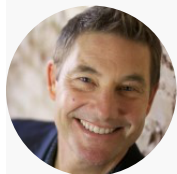
The Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment is a psychometric assessment that measures the things you’re naturally good at doing – so good you may not understand your results because you think, *“doesn’t everybody do that?”*

So what you may think. Why do I need to know any of this about Clifton StrengthsFinder? Our culture has, for so long, focused on developing or fixing our weaknesses. StrengthsFinder gives us an invitation to focus on what is right and strong about *you*. Because of this, anyone can use the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment to help build strong people, strong teams, and a strong culture. It is this place of strength that significant and long-term impact can be developed. Now, as never before, we need these strong people, teams, and culture.

How are you investing in your talents? In what ways are you practicing your talents and adding to your knowledge and skills? Let me know in the comments below.

Are you interested in learning more about how you can incorporate Clifton Strengths

Finders into your life or business? Want to know how to put your strengths into practice and add knowledge and skills? Check out my website at www.brentobannon.com for more ideas and classes that will help you on that path. Want to talk to me about this or any other issues schedule you free Ask Brent Anything call.



Brent O'Bannon

Without continual growth and progress, such words as **improvement, achievement, and success** have no meaning.

Benjamin Franklin

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