

“Follow your own path of least resistance by letting your strengths determine the route you take to your desired end result.”

J. Niblick, Innermetrix, Inc.

If you would you like to increase your self-awareness, we have some of the best tools in the market to help you do that. Please call Roslynn Shortt at **886-8876** to arrange to complete a “Self-Discovery Profile” package including three separate diagnostics, reports and one-on-one debriefing. This is the highest leverage development action you can take!

Become GREAT by taking the easy way!

“Energy follows the path of least resistance”
- a scientific principle

Nature will always try to conserve energy. Flowing water will take the path of least resistance. If it encounters a rock in its way, it will GO AROUND IT. If it must cross a road, once it establishes the initial path, it can create a mudslide because all the drops of water will follow the same ‘easy’ route. Nature seems to shrug and ask– ‘why make it more difficult?’ If, in nature, the easiest and most productive path is that of least resistance, why not take it when developing ourselves and others?

I recently worked with a person who told me a story about how he did just that:

He is very much a ‘people’ person who really enjoys talking with others. He relates easily to all different kinds of people. He is relaxed with them and finds that most people enjoy being with him also. At the same time, he dislikes solitary activities that require him to study, research, and synthesize data. He is not good at details and lacks the patience to read lengthy reports.

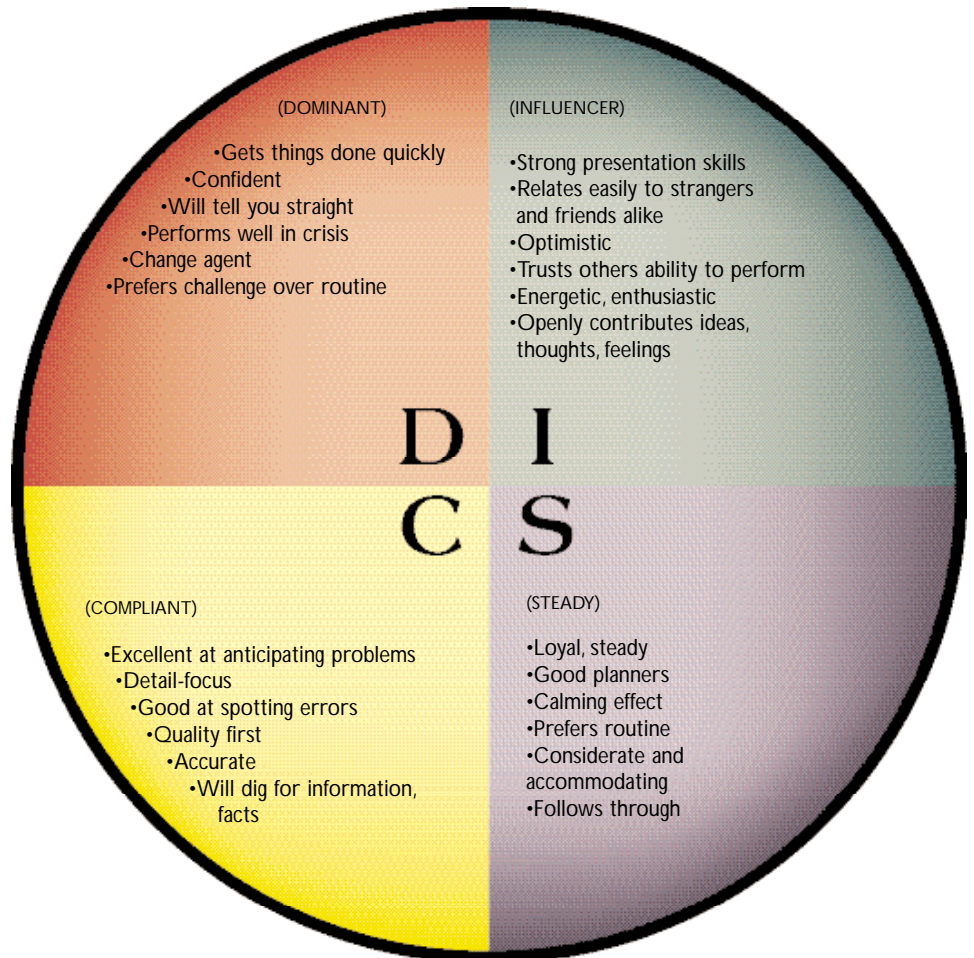
He was working toward a University degree part time and one of his assignments was to write a paper discussing a topic from five different perspectives. The thought of closeting himself in the library to research each perspective and then write about it was hugely depressing. He wasn’t sure if he was even capable of doing that, but knew absolutely that he would abhor doing it.

He asked himself – “Is there an easier way to do it?” and he came up with one. He invited five different professors to have a coffee with him. With each one, he chatted about the issue from a different perspective. He then went back and wrote the paper.

What a great example of taking the path of least resistance! Rather than wasting energy ‘overcoming his weakness’ he used his strengths. Not only did he complete the assignment, but he enjoyed doing it. Wouldn’t it be great if you could do that more often?

You can! First of all, be clear about your strengths. Then find ways to get your work done by using your strengths to maximize efficiency and minimize your weaker areas.

Strengths of different styles



“Managing your problems can only make you good, whereas building your opportunities is the only way to become great.”

Jim Collins wrote this statement in regard to how good companies become great ones. I think it can just as easily be applied to developing people.

Putting your energy toward eliminating your weaknesses won't give the payoff that leveraging your strengths will give.

But please don't confuse eliminating your weaknesses with understanding them. The most successful people understand themselves very well. They understand both their strengths and their weaknesses. This understanding allows them to use their strengths to compensate for their weaknesses and in such a way that others may not even notice that there is a weakness.

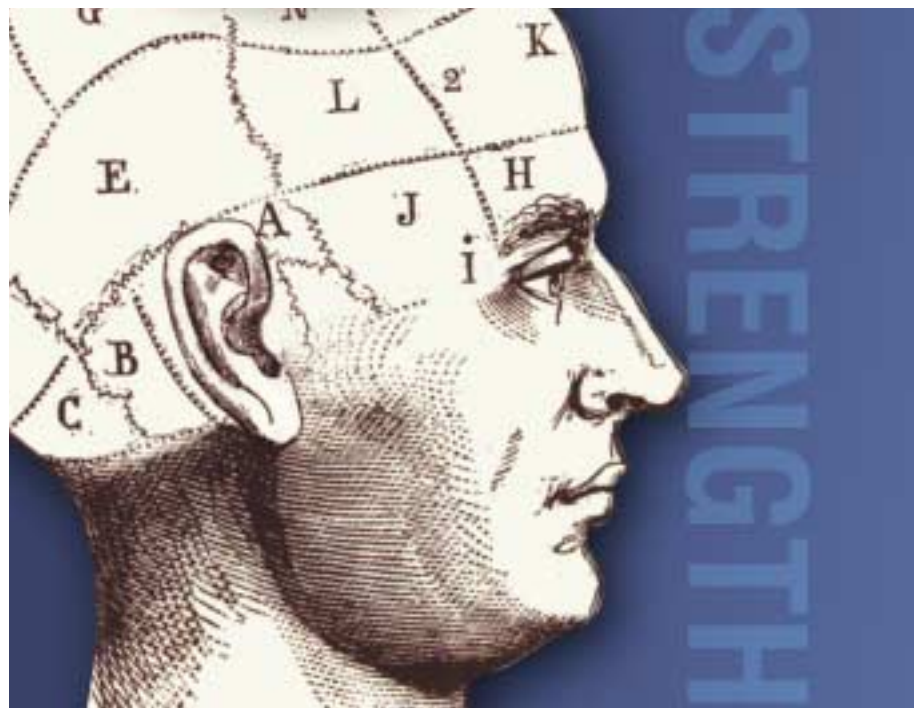
Such people also have a high level of self-acceptance. They accept the reality that no one excels at everything. So rather than focusing on what they don't do particularly well, they focus on what they do. This level of self-acceptance also allows them to let other people have weaknesses. In developing others, they don't look for the things to 'fix', but rather for the unique gifts and talents that can be leveraged.

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.

M. Buckingham & C. Coffman

For example, many people seek harmony and dislike confrontation. Concerned with the impact of their message, they prefer to communicate indirectly. Direct communicators find this highly frustrating and view anything less than open communication as a weakness that must be improved. Instead, try accepting indirect communication as simply the fallout from the STRENGTH of wanting to be a caring, concerned, helpful and cooperative team player. Provide them with a way to anonymously contribute comments and ideas (such as a suggestion box), or non-threateningly test their ideas first with one or two co-workers before presenting them to the larger group.

Do you know the strengths each individual brings to your team? Have you communicated to each person how you view his or her strengths? Are team-members using the strengths of each other to the greatest advantage? How could the team increase its productivity if the members leveraged these strengths more often? How can the team-members best 'complement' one another? Is one team-member's weakness another team member's strength?



Helpful Resources:

→ Buckingham, Marcus & Coffman, Curt. *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers do Differently*. 1999. Simon & Schuster. ISBN 0-684-85286-1

Based on the Gallup Organization's massive study of managers across a wide variety of companies, the authors conclude that the front-line manager is the key to attracting and retaining talented employees. The book explains how the great managers differ from the mediocre ones. One key difference is that they build on each person's unique strengths rather than trying to fix his weaknesses.

**Would you like to recommend a book or resource?
Please send a review and why you like it and we'll post your recommendation!**