


Think **Differently**.
Connect **More**.

Lawyer**Strong**

**Making Lemons into Lemonade:
The Psychology of Neutralizing Lawyer Negativity**

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PDC
July 23, 2016
Naples, Florida



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Introductions

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Preview of the Workshop

- Lawyer Negativity – Interaction of Personality and the Context of Law
- Solution: *Think Differently; Connect More*
- “Think Differently” Skills + “Connect More” Skills
 - Three You Can Implement Now
 - Three More (of many)

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Lawyer Negativity: Interaction of the Context of Law and the Typical Lawyer Personality

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Context First

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We live in a VUCA world

- Volatile – related to the rate of change
- Uncertain – related to the difficulty with clarity about outcomes
- Complex – related to the interlinking causes and effects
- Ambiguous – related to the impact and meaning

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D Law Practice in a VUCA World IS

- High stakes, win-lose, adversarial
- Sometimes traumatic material
- Mistakes are enormously costly
- Personal responsibility for clients
- Often asked to do or to advise on things that hurt others
- Culture

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D Entering Law Students IS

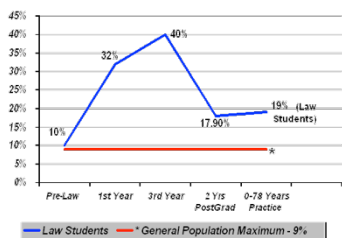
No significant “well-being” differences between law students and other college graduates going on to post-graduate work, but . . .



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D Depression Among Law Students IS



(Benjamin et. al., 1986 Am. Bar Found. Research, 225)

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Stressed Out Lawyers

ABA + Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation
15,000 lawyers across U.S.

- Reported **anxiety**: 19% of lawyers studied
- Reported **depression**: 28% of lawyers studied

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Stressed Out Lawyers

ABA + Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation
15,000 lawyers across U.S.

- "Between 21% and 36% drink at levels consistent with an alcohol use disorder"
- "3-5 times higher than the government estimates for alcohol use disorders in the general population"
- Highest incidence: among L's in first 10 years of practice
- Stress → drug & alcohol abuse, anxiety, depression, divorce, suicide

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2015 – Unhappy Big Law Lawyers


Ken Sheldon & Larry Krieger, >6,000 lawyers across U.S., - Correlation with Wellbeing

		>Billable Hour Req.
• Law review membership	0	
• Class rank	.12	
• Weekly exercise	.17	
• Higher income	.19	↑
• More Vacation Days	.23	
• Meaningful work (Intrinsic Value)	.30	↓
• Service (vs. Money) Motivation	.55	↓
• Close, satisfying relationships	.65	↓

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D **Negativity & Law Practice** 

1. Law requires negative thinking
2. Psychological challenges
3. Rapid change makes it worse
4. Lawyers are under prepared to cope




Picture Credit: Simrani, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/8624648@N08/13236378293>

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**That's the context.
What about lawyer
personality?**

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L **Negativity & Law Practice** 

1. Law requires negative thinking
2. Psychological challenges
3. Rapid change makes it worse
4. Lawyers are under prepared to cope



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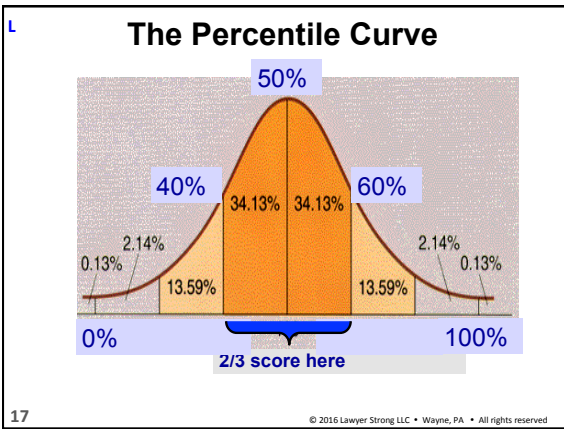
Who strives & thrives in this environment?

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The Normal Lawyer Personality LS

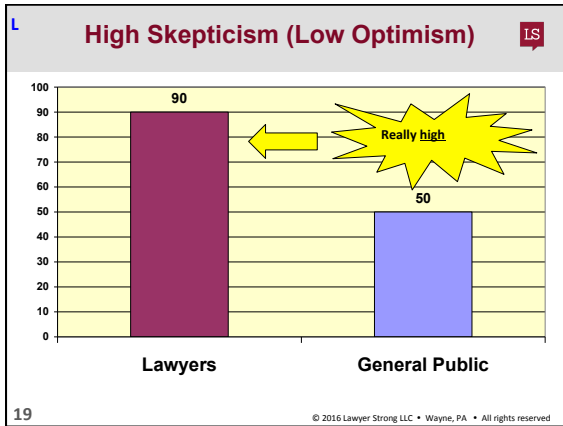
- People who become lawyers are outliers
- Let's look at data
- Caliper Profile
- 52 years
- 5 million+ college-educated subjects
- Over 5000 lawyers, including 225+ law firm leaders

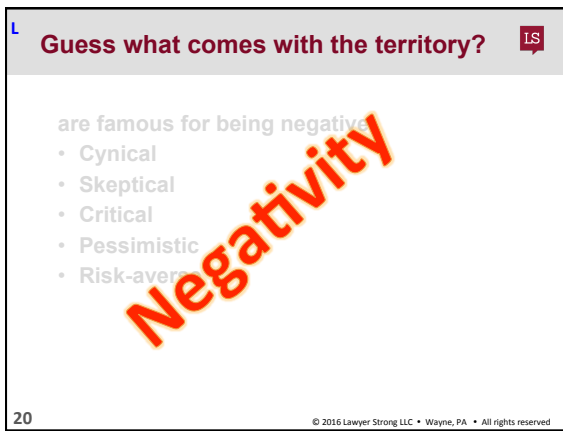
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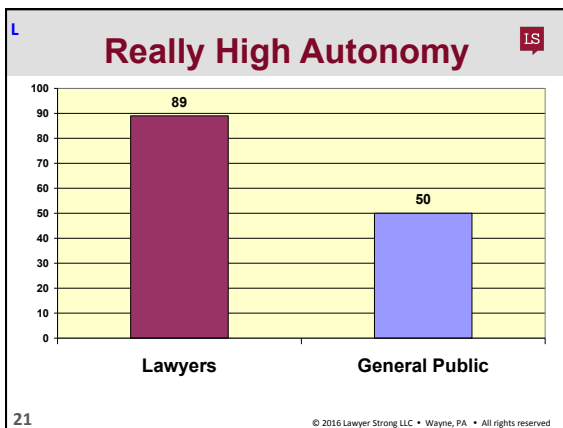


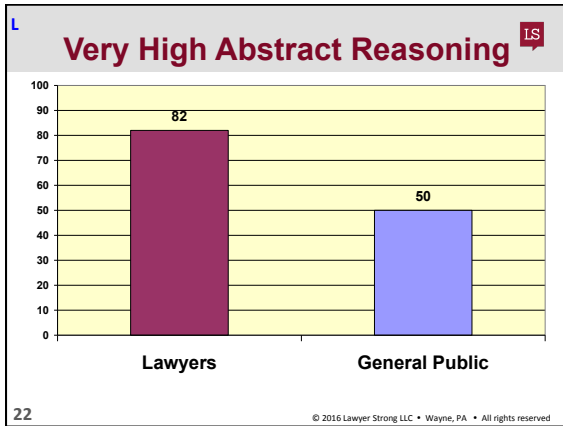
**Lawyers:
Outliers on 6 of the 18 traits!**

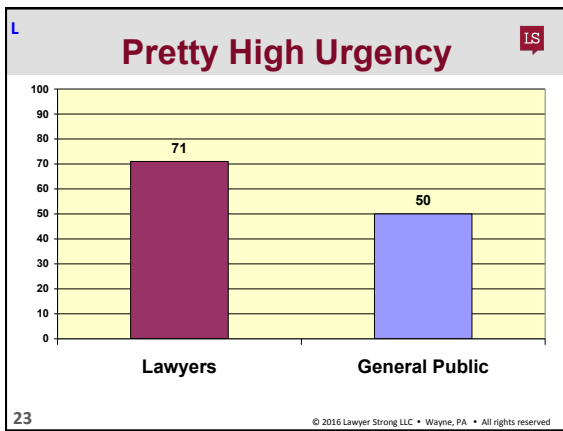
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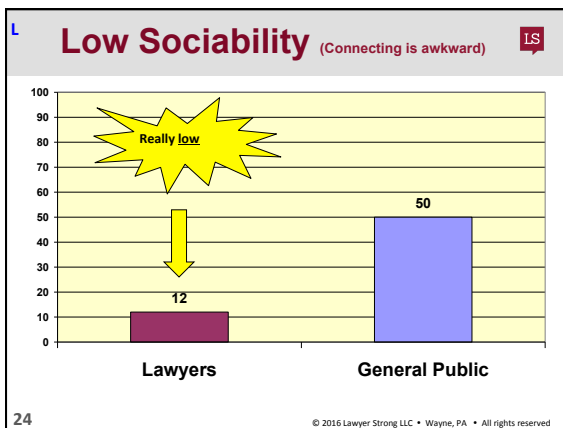


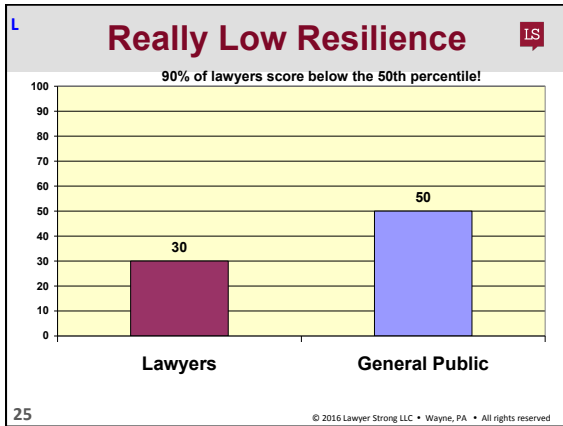


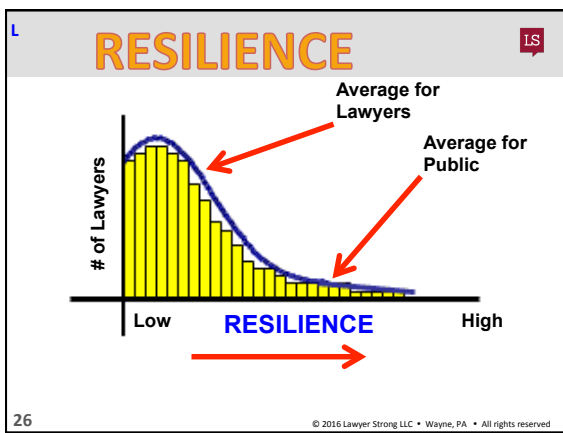












Solutions

1. Eliminate stress??
2. Or, respond differently: "Resilience"

Think Differently.
Connect More.

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Picture Credit: Jackie Kingsbury, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/57301215@N00/2782122467>

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Resilience Training: A Proactive Response

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What Does “Resilience” Look Like? IS

- a) Durability in the face of adversity – High resilience individuals tolerate life’s bumps in the road better
- b) The ability to bounce back once you do suffer adversity

Both aspects can be developed through Resilience Training.

And, practice!

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A Resilient Person Shows: IS

- a) Enhanced well-being
- b) Goal striving
- c) Good relationships

Resilience Training also enhances life satisfaction and general well-being.

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P **Resilience & Adults:
What We Learned from the Army** **LS**



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Three Techniques Now

1. Measure

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D **We Have Talked About:** **LS**

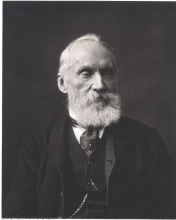
- a) The Context of Law Practice
- b) Lawyer Personality
- c) Interaction of a and b producing low well-being, depression, etc.
- d) Resilience Training as a Response
- e) Producing well-being, satisfaction, collaboration, engagement, etc.

Where would you focus your measurement effort?

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D **Measurement** **IS**

"I often say that when you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind...."



Lord Kelvin

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D **Measurement** **IS**

What do you express in numbers in your firm?

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D **Measurement** **IS**


"What gets measured gets managed."

How do you manage what gets expressed with numbers in your firm?

What do you do with the numbers?

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D **Measurement** **IS**



Online Wellbeing Assessments and Activities
www.workonwellbeing.com

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D **Measurement** **IS**




Online Wellbeing Assessments and Activities

- 501-2000 employees, \$1585/year
- Individual reports
- Organizational reports
- Training activities

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D **Measurement** **IS**




Online Wellbeing Assessments and Activities

- **Individuals**
 - Global, Domain, and Work Wellbeing
 - Includes “Flight Risk” (Intention to Quit) and “Self-Determination”, Effort, Competence, Pride, Meaning, Resilience, Strengths Use, Degree Valued, and more
 - Changes over time

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D **IS**

Measurement




Online Wellbeing Assessments and Activities

- **Organizations**
 - **Summary Data**
 - On all individual components
 - Changes over time

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D **IS**

Measurement



Online Wellbeing Assessments and Activities

- **Organizations**
 - **Free texts responses to questions such as:**
 - What one thing, more than anything else, makes your organization a great place to work?
 - What one thing, more than anything else, needs to change to make your organization a great place to work?

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Three Techniques Now

1. **Measure**
2. **Find the Good**

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Why Positive Emotions?



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Find the Good

- Think of something good in your life – something that’s gone right, a success, a pleasure – in the last 24 hours. (That you could tell a person next to you!)
- Share your stories.
- When listening, question for depth.

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Find the Good: Research

- Record three good things at night before going to bed for one week:
 - Major reductions in depression
 - Happier
 - Better sleep
 - Better relationships

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P **Find the Good: Variations** **IS**

- Five good aspects of one thing
- All the people, known and unknown, who made a good experience possible
- The good in the bad

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P **Channel the Yellow Lab in You** **IS**



This is why the dog is happier


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Three Techniques Now

1. Measure
2. Find the Good
3. Gratitude


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Yes, all of these are payoffs for Gratitude 

- Reduce physical symptoms (fewer colds, headaches) (plus lower levels of biomarkers for inflammation)
- Produce greater life satisfaction
- Make people more optimistic about the coming week
- Create higher states of alertness, attentiveness, determination and energy, and reports of sustained better moods
- Result in fewer absences
- Cause people to be more helpful to others
- Lead people to report fewer hassles in their lives
- Foster better sleep quality
- Create an increased feeling of being connected to others
- Generate higher productivity

Source: Robert Emmons, *Thanks: How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier* (2008)

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Gratitude Tips 


- “Please” + “Thank You”
- Gratitude Journal
- Gratitude Visit

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Three Techniques that Require Training

1. Meaning


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P Why Care about Meaning at Work? 

(Michael F. Steger (2009). Meaning in Life in Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology 2nd Ed. 679-687)


<p>MORE MEANING...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement • Fulfillment • Commitment to firm goals • Effort • Intrinsic Motivation 	<p>LESS MEANING...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnout • Workaholism • Depression • Anxiety • Absenteeism • Cynicism
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P Connect to Your “End User” 

- University Call Center: When employees met scholarship participants, weekly revenue increased by 400%
- Patient’s photo in file: Doctors wrote 29% longer reports & made 46% more accurate diagnoses
- Assembly of surgical kits: Nurses who met those who would use the kits worked 64% more minutes and made 15% fewer errors

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P How to Build Meaning at Work 

(Dik, Byrne, & Steger (2013). Toward an Integrative Science & Practice of Meaningful Work & Kim Cameron, Positive Leadership)

- Employees should feel respected and valued for their unique contributions
- Give employees autonomy in executing duties
- Provide work that builds HQ relationships/sense of community
- Give employees all of the resources & info needed to do their job effectively
- Provide work that has a positive impact in the world (and TALK ABOUT IT)

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Three Techniques that Require Training

1. **Meaning**
2. **Millennials and Empathy**

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The Millennials (Twenge) IS

- The Silent Generation (Brokaw: “the Greatest Generation”; born 1925-1945);
- The Baby Boomers (Boomers; born 1946-1964);
- Generation X (GenX; born 1965-1981); and
- Millennials (GenMe, also known as GenY, nGen, and iGen; born 1982-1999)

Source: Generational Differences in Work Values: Leisure and Extrinsic Values Increasing, Social and Intrinsic Values Decreasing by Jean M. Twenge, Stacy M. Campbell, Brian J. Hoffman, and Charles E. Lance, Journal of Management Vol. 36 No. 6, September 2010 1117-1142

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Research shows that . . . IS

- Are more socially minded, team-oriented, altruistic, civic-minded; hate conflict
- Want more structure in their lives
- *Expect constant feedback*
- Texting is preferred communication method
- Money, fame, image important
- **40% lower empathy than previous generation**
- **THIS IS A PROBLEM!!!**

Source: U. of Michigan Institute for Social Research

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Solution IS

- Empathy is a learnable/teachable skill, even though we all start with a personality “set point”
- Research shows these things work (usually in combination):
 - Elevate positive emotions (people don’t learn empathy when they’re in a negative state)
 - Reading novels
 - Coaching/Feedback
 - Role modeling

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Three Techniques that Require Training

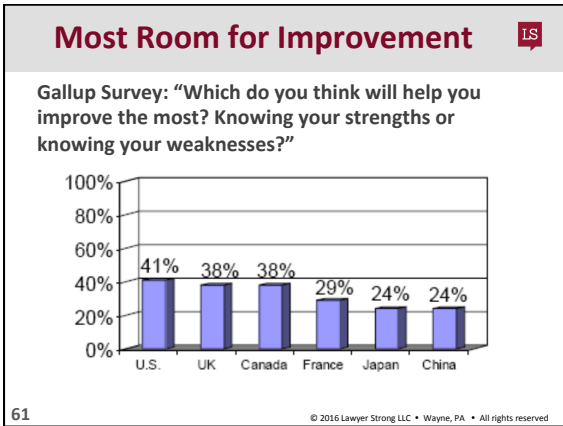
1. Meaning
2. Millennials and Empathy
3. Strengths

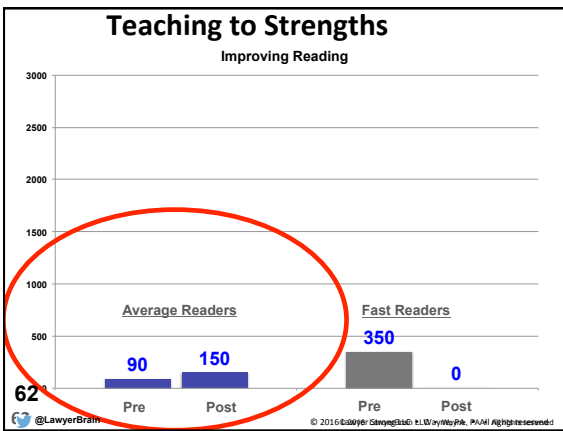
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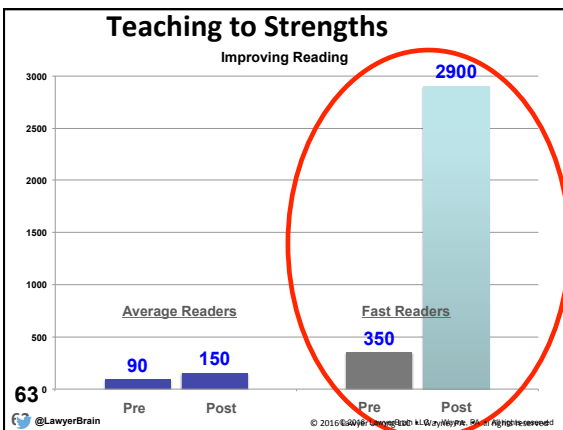
Most Room for Improvement IS

Which do you think will help you improve the most? Knowing your strengths or knowing your weaknesses?”

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Strengths & Individual Excellence IS

- Strength + Knowledge + Deep Practice = EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE

Does paying attention to other people's strengths matter?

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PEOPLE WHO FOCUS ON USING THEIR STRENGTHS ...



are **three TIMES** as likely to report having an excellent quality of life

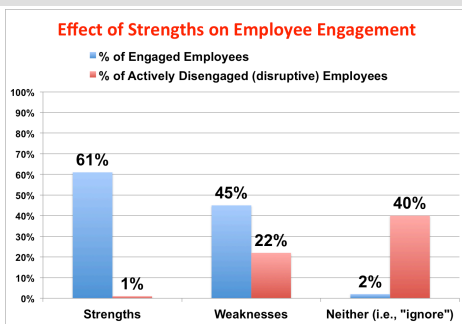


are **six TIMES** as likely to be engaged in their jobs

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Effect of Strengths on Employee Engagement IS



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Strengths – Two Lenses IS

CHARACTER STRENGTHS MATTER
HOW TO LIVE A FULL LIFE

Edited by SHANNON FULLEY, MAPP & KATHRYN BRITTON, MAPP

A NEW & UPGRADED Edition of the Online Test from Gallup's

NOW, DISCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS

STRENGTHS FINDER 2.0

#1 New York Times Bestselling Author
TOM RATH

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Foster This Emotion IS

Blind Beggar video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzgzim5m7oU>

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Thanks!

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