

Book Response

Student's Name

Institution

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1. Knowledge, Skills and Talents

Part A

Knowledge, skills and talents are three basic pillars of leadership, according to which the managers are judged or evaluated taking into account what they know, how they do things and what sets them apart from other individuals in terms of personal traits. The key to effective leadership is founded on the definition and difference between these notions. Knowledge is defined as the facts that the leader is aware of, and thus recognizes, and can be learnt from experience, research and discussions with colleagues. In essence, the facts that are relevant to one's line of work are actually what make up their knowledge.

Skills on the other hand refer to the way the leaders do things, in terms of how they need to carry out certain tasks within the workplace. Skills are transferable from one person to another. They can be learnt by watching another individual performing the task or simply by reading about them from a guidebook. The importance of skills lies in the fact that they are practical in nature and thus engage the individual in question.

Talents are the contentious aspect of leadership as they are often innate and cannot be learnt during the life. They motivate or inspire people to do what they like without looking for external reasons and compulsions. According to the authors of *Now, Discover your Strengths* talents are divided into three categories where the striving ones give a person the reason to do what he/she does. The thinking talents explain how the person looks at situations and problems while the relating ones tell how the individual relates with other people.

After defining these three factors, it is easier to point out and understand the differences between them. The first one lies in the fact that while knowledge and skills involve learning,

talents are innate and embedded in one's personality and thus they can only be discovered and nurtured but to learnt. When attempting to create an effective team, knowledge is very important but skills are dominant. The difference between these notions is that skills do not need a lot of motivation when knowledge is present, but at the same time without knowledge, skills become ineffective. This implies that knowledge can still be relevant without the skills but the reverse isn't applicable. Another main difference is that while skills and knowledge are easily identifiable, talents need more time to examine and evaluate the abilities that one possesses. That's why the basic function of the leader lies in understanding their teams and encouraging the existing talents to be discovered and nurtured to their full potential.

Part B

I believe that I am very knowledgeable in management with respect to communication, organizing, planning, monitoring and evaluating a work force. Essentially, this is because I have learnt this information and fully understand the concepts involved in each of them. In addition, thanks to my extensive education in the given field I am knowledgeable about organizational behavior and management itself. This information should be considered as important one because it covers the strategies that are required to run the company effectively.

With regards to skills, I have computer ones that are invaluable in the administrative functioning of any company. This makes me relevant to the present organizational environment where computers are the key tools in running day-to-day activities. I also have good communication skills that can help me to communicate clearly and appropriately to various kinds of people with different personalities. This is valuable to the company because versatility is a key aspect in successful organizational management and the ability to communicate regardless any gender, generation, religion or ethnic boundaries.

Speaking about my talents, I believe I have the striving ones that give me ability to focus relentlessly once I fulfill a certain task. This implies that in most cases, it is almost impossible to distract me from my set goals and objectives and more so when I am looking forward to the end products. This also means that I am likely to be very productive within the company and thus they should be interested in my personality.

2. Results of the Strength Finder Inventory

Part A

My top five themes revealed in the strength finder inventory are strategic, relator, communication, focus and achiever ones. The first theme implies that I tend to seek solutions to problems and tough situations as they appear, and this often compel me to seek alternative routes to my set goals and objectives. This means that I have an eye for problems and sticky situations, which I often examine for a short before establishing their pattern or trend. This helps in arriving at a solution and often appears to be effective in dealing with the situation at hand. In essence, being strategic is about finding new answers to problems that are otherwise considered too complex. Thus, it requires having an open mind that foresees the obstacles and possible solutions in every option in terms of decisions and choices within the company. Moreover, while other people may see only difficulties, the strategic individual will see the possible alternatives to overcome those barriers successfully.

Relator theme implies that I am good at establishing relationships with people and in most cases I also succeed in sustaining these connections. First, I must contend that I am a good interlocutor and thus expressing myself has never been a problem for me. Excellent communication is the skill that helps me to get along with others because it is more comfortable to work with people who I can talk to and who can talk to me freely as well. These relationships

enable me to be at ease, more productive and focused on the goal, since I am assured of a support force that involves a group of people working towards the same goal as I am. As my results showed that I am a relator, I believe that my communicative strength enables me to work best with the people that I regard as friends. Here, relationships form the basis of all work interactions that enable collaboration, mentoring and organizational learning in general.

The communication theme in my inventory is mostly about my ability to share thoughts without hesitation. I can express my thoughts effectively and without mincing words especially when I meet an interested audience. I am also a culturally competent individual because I understand the cultural aspects that affect communication and I am thus able to get along with people from various ethnic backgrounds without offending them or going against their norms and expectations. This means that I am well versed in communication and self-expression, which makes me a good interlocutor.

Focus, as a theme in my inventory implies the ability to decide the course of action and stick to it to the very end. As stated earlier, one of my greatest talents is the ability to focus on something and resist distraction effortlessly. Having focus implies being able to prioritize one's engagements and sticking to the set goals for as long as it takes to accomplish the set task. On one hand, this could be the difficult assignment and one can consider that there are by far too many distractions in the working process and personal environment. But this is a talent and the mechanisms involved in it are somewhat rather complicated for explaining. The key thing is that once I tell myself to take a certain direction, it becomes very difficult to get me off that course without a sufficient justification. I tend to keep going back to my initial point until the set goals are achieved, thus making me a good task manager.

According to the strength finder inventory I'm also an achiever. It is basically someone who finds solace in working hard and being at their optimal productivity at all times. The theme of an achiever implies that as an individual, I am more at ease when I am productive and thus I am likely to challenge myself beyond my abilities at every chance that I get. The trick here is to get as involved with my work as possible in order to maximize my chances for success in every task I perform. On one hand, this can cause difficulties in multi-tasking as I invest all my energy in the task at hand. On the other hand if the second task I have to perform is relevant to my set goals then I am more likely to accomplish it as well. The bottom line in an achiever's life would be the set objectives, where the greatest motivation lies in accomplishing as much as possible within a certain period of time.

Part B

Before taking the inventory, I didn't think much of my strengths. I simply thought of myself as the average individual with a lot of knowledge on the subject, as well as, a number of relevant skills and talents. I even thought that my communication skills are my strongest suit. The inventory shows that I am indeed a good interlocutor. It also proves that communication is on my top five themes' list but it isn't really my strongest side as I had initially thought. It turns out that my ability to involve myself in a task is far better than my talking power. The inventory thus made me appreciate my ability to work relentlessly without giving up or getting deviated from the task at hand. This is a good sign for me, as distractions are the greatest problem when seeking to accomplish one's goals. The fact that I am an achiever implies that I can isolate myself from any distractions as far as I have a task to accomplish.

Before the inventory, I also didn't appreciate my ability to get along with other people and didn't appreciate how this contributes to my performance as an individual. The fact that I am

a relator implies that I am more at ease while working with people, unlike those who work better on their own. This makes me a good team player and thus from now on I know that I tend to perform better when I am in a team. This information will improve my involvement in groups because now I see that I was avoiding them at times, fearing of my ability to 'play with others'.

Another piece of misinformation that I had about my strengths before taking the inventory is connected with respect to strategy. With my high concentration abilities, I didn't think much about having to seek alternative solutions to any obstacles when accomplishing a task. There has always been an assumption that I am too careful and that is why I always notice loopholes that can be exploited for finding solutions when dealing with a problem. Thus, now I see things differently and realize that I am simply a strategic personality but not too careful as earlier believed.