

Abilities, Shm-abilities! What Are You Talking About?

by Jill Richmond-Covey and Bob Covey

I'm sure you've noticed that there are tasks that are really easy for you - so easy they feel like second nature to you - and others that are a struggle. My brother just seemed to know how to take things apart and put them back together again. I couldn't even imagine doing that, but when I was ten years old, I could sit and listen to the elderly lady down the street talk about herself for hours. I would put the pieces of her life together, see the whole and be fascinated by the journey she had taken.

Everyone has their strengths. My doctor swiftly sees the connection between my seemingly unrelated symptoms and knows just the right remedy. I marvel at the passion and clarity my daughter, a reporter, has as she writes tightly organized and swiftly moving stories.

Most of us think of these as learned skills, honed by experience, fueled by our interests, and indeed they are. But, the truth is, at the core of each of these activities is also an ability. My brother is wired so he can see solid objects and space in three dimensions in his mind. I have a natural orientation to people and how they work. I also see the logical connections between ideas, am drawn to concepts, and am good at seeing how systems work. My doc moves right in with her diagnostic ability to put things together. She loves to solve problems and communicate the solutions. My daughter is fluent at organizing ideas into words, and generating ideas about plotting out how to tell the story.

All of these abilities can be measured. The Highlands Ability Battery uses worksamples - or mental tasks, designed to measure one of nineteen different abilities. Tight timing ensures the worksample measures only the target ability. Scoring reveals the ease with which a person is able to do worksamples relative to the population on average. Over the past 75 years, a great deal of research and development has gone into the evolution of this instrument. We know that after age 15, a person's

*Everyone
has their
strengths.
Let us
help you
find yours.*

results will not change substantially despite subsequent education and experience.

We know that when certain abilities are present they are so compelling that they demand to be used. Some abilities have been demonstrated to be genetically linked. Researchers have found several common ability patterns. These patterns are often associated with certain occupational groups or work roles, which gives an indication of

the type of work or type of work role that effectively use these abilities.

The greatest benefit from taking the Battery comes when you understand the nature of each ability, how and where it is used, and what the advantages and disadvantages are of a specific score. In addition, we can teach you how your abilities relate to each other, creating a kind of abilities framework. Your abilities framework dynamically interrelates with all of the major aspects of the self - body, personality, interests, attitudes and values, spirit - to create the whole you.

The more deeply you understand your ability profile, the more consciously you can make choices about studies, career and other life interests. You can evaluate potential college majors or career fields that fit with your natural abilities. You can brainstorm ways to restructure your current job to maximize use of your ability profile. You can develop skills that further optimize use of your strong abilities. Nearing retirement, you can identify abilities you didn't utilize in your career and find new fulfillment in these important years. Clients refer to the Battery over and over, using it as a guide during life transitions, charting a career path, or working out on-the-job frustrations.