



Strengths Academy

Building a Team through Strengths-Based Leadership in Higher Education

Azusa Pacific University



Outline

Why strengths and team building?

Strengths Development Model

Understanding and Managing Self

Understanding Others

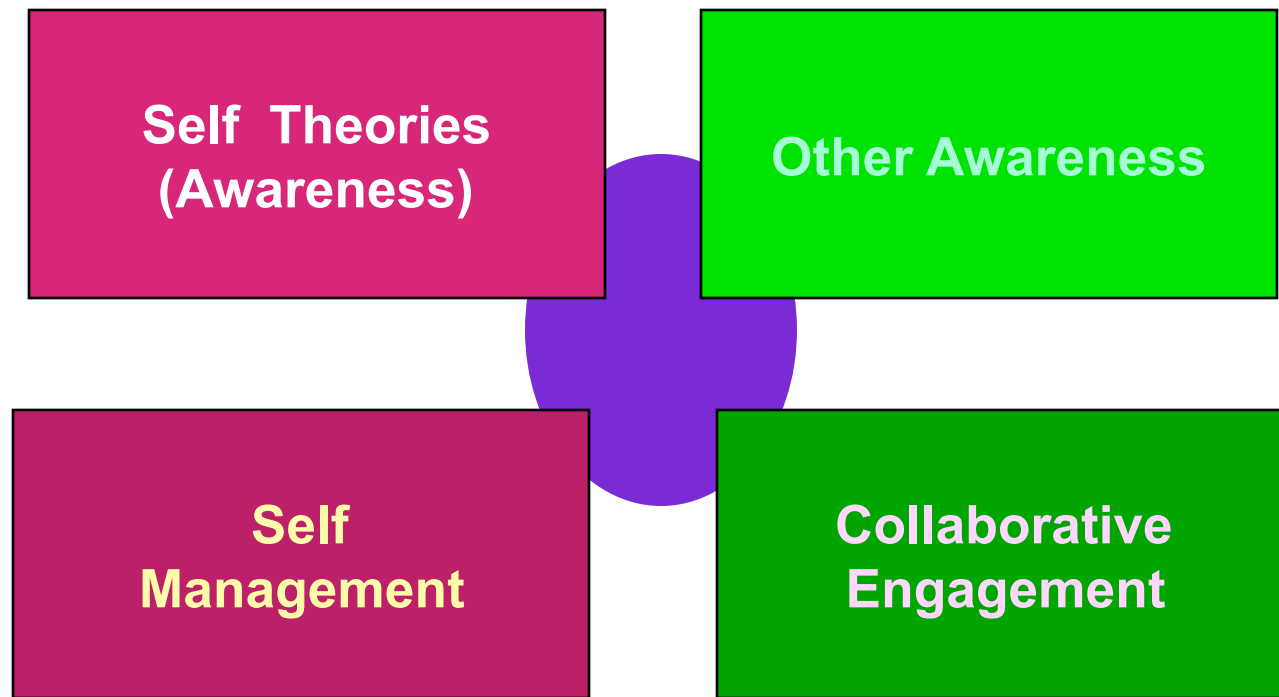
A Strengths Approach to Self- and Other-Awareness

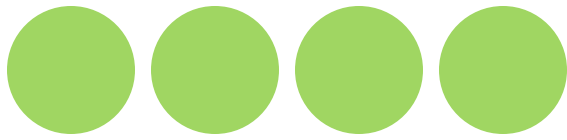
Self Transcendence





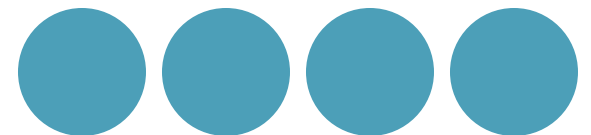
Strengths Development Model





Overview of Strengths Development in Teams

- Brainstorm
 - What are the benefits of using a perspective that emphasizes strengths as opposed to weaknesses in a team environment?



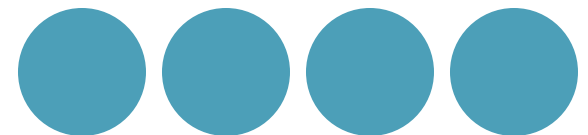


Why Develop a Strengths-Based Organization?

Research Indicates:

- Only **16%** of the U. S. workforce is actively engaged at work and believe they are doing what they do best.
- **52%** of the U.S. workforce is currently NOT in a job that is a good fit for them.
- Morale, teamwork, productivity, energy, and commitment all improve when we are engaged in our work.

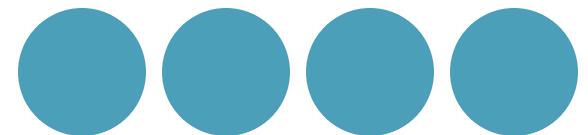
Source: The Gallup Organization





What Leads to Engagement?

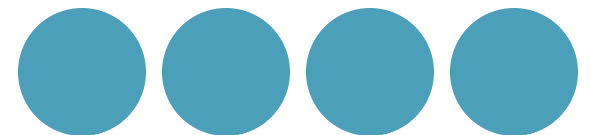
- Believing that what you do is important and congruent with your value system
- Having good relationships with at least one other person at work and knowing people care about you
- Knowing what is expected of you and being given the resources you need to do your work
- Having a chance to discuss your progress





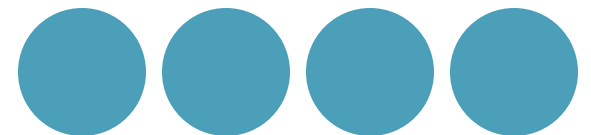
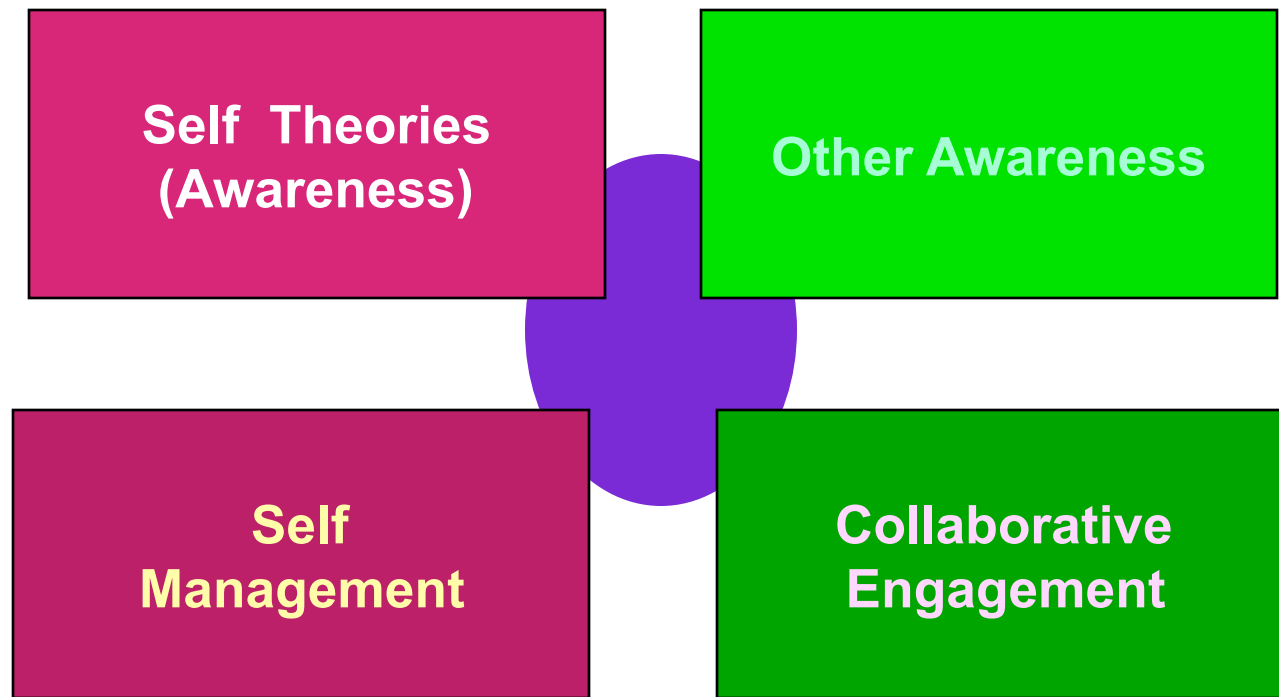
Engagement (continued)

- Knowing your opinions count
- Working with individuals who are committed to doing good work
- Receiving recognition for work done well and the encouragement to continue to develop your talents and skills
- Having the opportunity to do what you do best every day
 - Gallup Organization Research





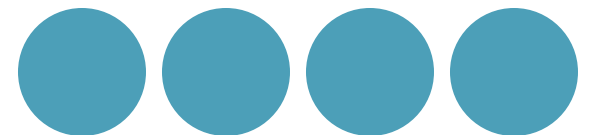
Strengths Development Model

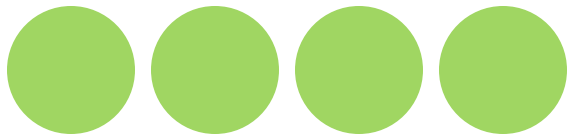




Self Theory

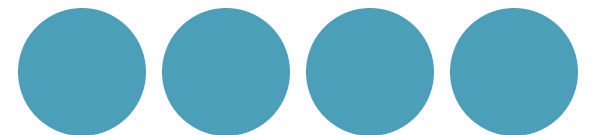
- Teams start with individuals.
- Individuals create self theories that tell them how they are going to function in teams.
- Strengths are a tool for developing enhancing and positive self-awareness

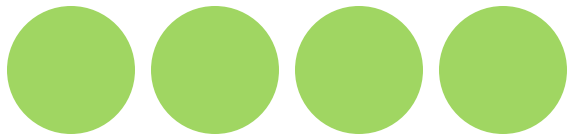




Strengths and Self Theory

- Discuss with the group the strength(s) that you work out of most often
- Discuss how they can be misperceived.



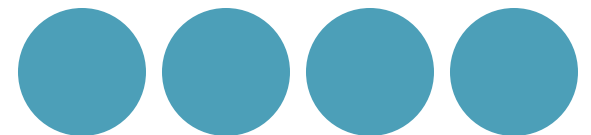


Self Theory Is the Theory of Attention

“Individuals choose what they will attend to, ignoring all other stimuli in order to focus on one conversation, one string of printed characters, or ... one breath in and one breath out.”

(Schwartz, 2002, p. 17)

William James argues that the ability to fix one's attention on a stimulus or a thought and “hold it fast before the mind” was the act that constituted “the essential achievement of the will.”



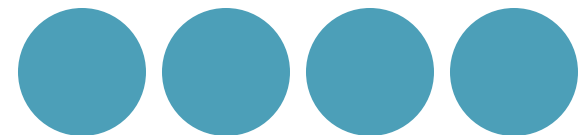


Self Theory Is the Theory of Attention

What we focus on changes the biological structure of our brains and creates a biological self-fulfilling prophecy.

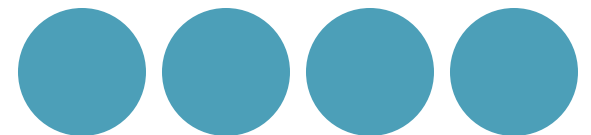
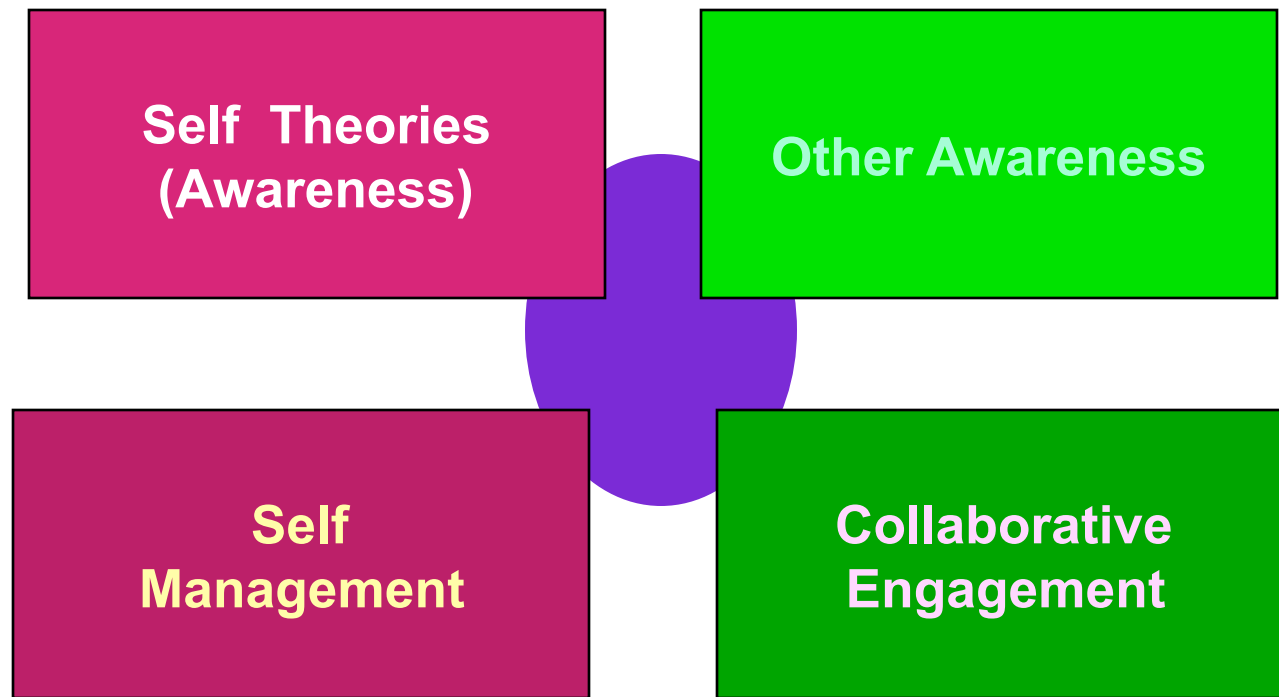
- “I propose that the time has come for science to confront the serious implications of the fact that directed, willed mental activity can clearly and systematically alter brain function, that *the exertion of willful effort generates a physical force that has the power to change how the brain works and even its physical structure.*”

Schwartz, 2002, pp 17-18





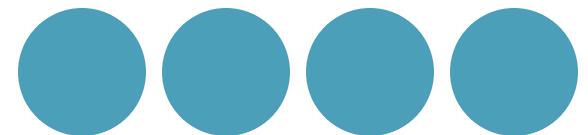
Strengths Development Model

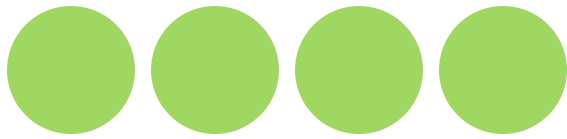




Team Experience Activity

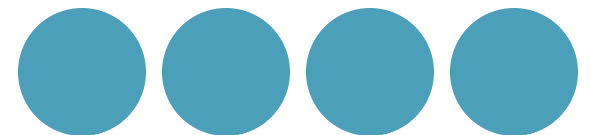
- Spend a few minutes writing your answers to these questions.
- Form groups and share your insights.
 - Describe the role you usually play on a team.
 - How does that relate to your strengths?
 - What is the best experience you have had on a team?
 - What is the worse experience you have had on a team?
 - Of all the teams you have been on, you chose those two teams. Why do they hold your attention?
 - Does your history with teams affect the way you behave in teams currently?





Other Awareness

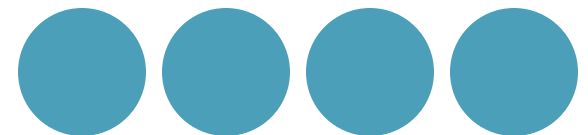
- What we focus on in others affects how we interact with them.
 - John Gottman's work on successful marriages
- We sort people according to our mental categories. Our categories create our stereotypes of people and influence our judgments of those people.





Other Awareness

- We often ascribe motives out of our lens and values.
 - “Responsibility” people tend to feel that people who are late to meetings are disrespectful of others’ time.
 - “Adaptability” people tend to feel that structured individuals are rigid and lack creativity
- How can we develop strategies to avoid these situations?
- How can a strengths approach help with “other awareness”?

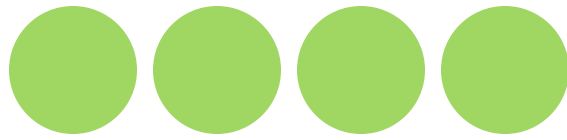




Other Awareness

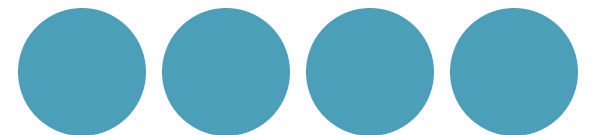
- Discuss what values arise from the strengths you share.
- Discuss what type of people would naturally gravitate to and away from this strength.
- Are there any strengths that you would have a hard time working with or understanding their perspective?





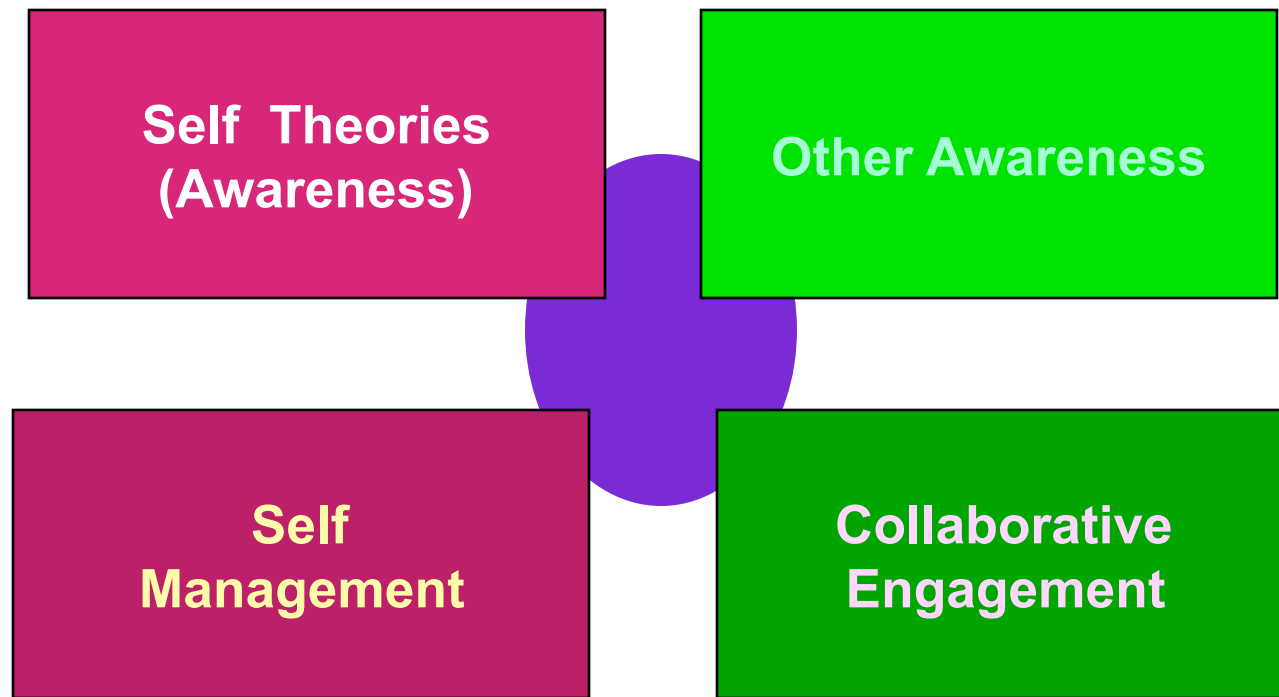
Teams and Perspective Taking

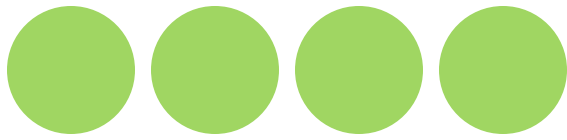
- Great teams are established by learning to take another person's perspective.
 - Requires a reduction in the need to be right, and in control
 - Requires a strengthening in the ability to suspend judgment
- Working groups breakdown out of an underutilization of each others strengths





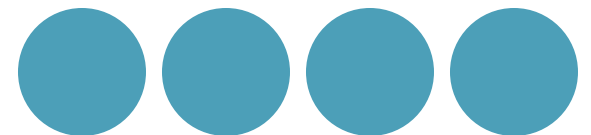
Strengths Development Model





Collaborative Engagement

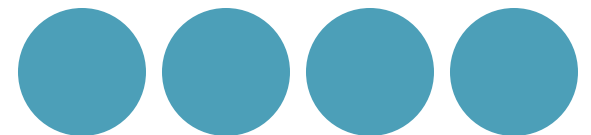
- Team Dynamics
 - Change
 - Communication
 - Trust





Strengths and Change

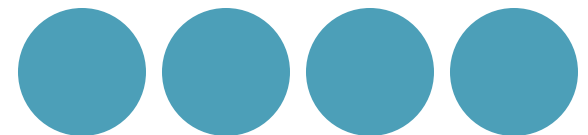
- Get with a person that shares a similar strength and discuss how people with your strength respond to change.
- Is there a difference if the change is imposed or self initiative?

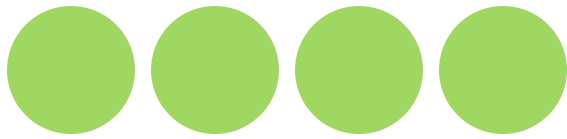




Strengths and Communication

- Different strengths prefer different modes of communication.
- Examples:
 - Intellection** – give me time to think about it.
 - Analytical** – I need to ask questions and have a chance to understand the rationale behind decisions – the prove it mind
 - Competition** – I need to know how others are doing and how I relate to that.
 - Significance** – I need to know that what I am doing is making a significant difference.
 - Positivity** – If my work environment is really negative I will burn out faster than other strengths, I am important on teams
 - Ideation** – I need to have an opportunity to be valued for my ideas
 - Activator** – enough talk let's get to it!





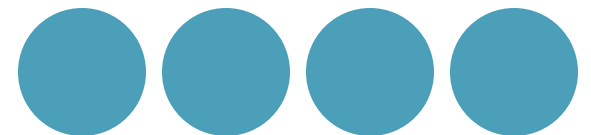
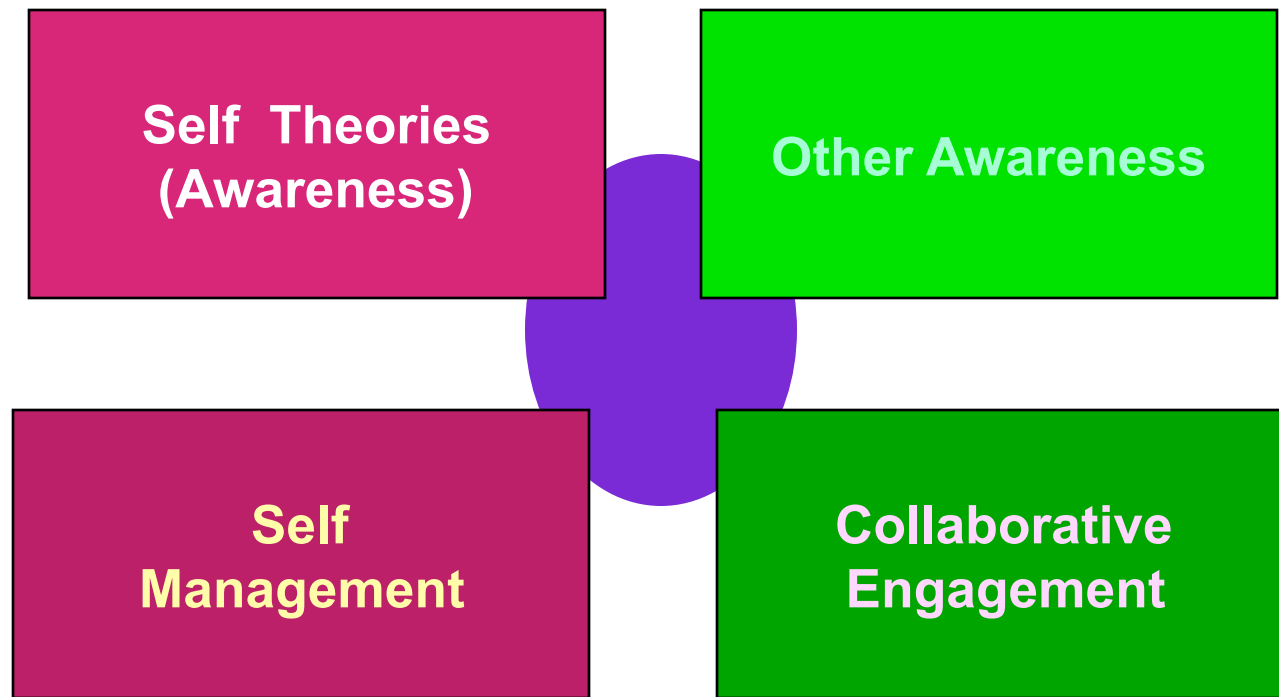
Team Building and Trust

- How does knowing your team's strengths affect the level of trust?
- Different drivers of trust:
 - Respect
 - Understanding
 - Congruency
 - Communication
 - Forgiveness
- Can you see how strengths relate to these drivers?





Strengths Development Model





But What About My Weaknesses?

- There is a difference between our weaknesses and the shadow side of our strengths.
- Managing our weaknesses includes:
 - Using our strengths to develop new approaches
 - Partnering with others
 - Delegating to others
 - Learning the skills and/or knowledge needed.
- Addressing the shadow side includes:
 - Recognition when our strengths are hindering excellence
 - Developing techniques to utilize our strengths in positive ways





Self Management

Find someone that has at least one strength the same as you.

- **What can be the shadow side of this strength?**
- **How do you manage this strength?**





Concluding Thoughts ...

No punch clocks means
I produce of my own accord

You bestow credence on my talent
So I give my best willingly

Not asking what I cannot produce
But rather that which I can

Offering a chance to be and do
Here it feels as if my efforts count

And mostly I can build a fortune
Not from money but respect.

Snyder & Lopez, 2007, p. 407





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