

# ***EEP 127- Brandon Miller: Leaders: Do You and Your Team Really Know Your Strengths?***

## **SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

strengths, empathy, leaders, people, emotional intelligence, brandon, clifton strengths, clifton strengths finder, understand, share, strengths finder, ability, situation, team, empath, human, curious, empath, person, approach

## **SPEAKERS**

Maria Ross, Brandon Miller

### **Brandon Miller 00:01**

I think any psychometric assessment that is effective gives with it the gift of self-awareness. I get to know who I am. I get to know who I'm not. I get to know myself and my best place, probably my worst place and everything in the middle. And if I can get to the point where I can know me that way, without judgment, I have climbed the ladder of emotional intelligence, I am now able to look at myself objectively, which allows me to then look at you in that way as well. I'm developing, you're developing, we can have compassion on each other for the journey, because progress always, always is going to be more measurable and more important than perfection.

### **Maria Ross 01:31**

Great leaders are self-aware about their own strengths and encourage their teams to be as well. They harmonize everyone's strengths including their own, so folks know when to lean in or rely on others. These leaders actively leverage strength to achieve high performance. But it starts with being willing and curious about your strengths. My guest today is Brandon Miller, author certified strengths coach and CEO of 34 Strong, a coaching and consulting firm dedicated to improving employee engagement. Brandon is one of the first seven certified Gallup Clifton Strengths Finder coaches in the world. Over 15 years ago, he was a very early practitioner of Clifton Strengths Finder, using it as the executive leader for a nonprofit organization. He has since coached hundreds of leaders to find and leverage their strengths for themselves and their teams. Today, Brandon and I talk about the Gallup Clifton Strengths Finder, in case you don't know what it is, and I share a little about my results from 2016. And how they lead to researching and writing the empathy edge. Brandon shares why you as a leader should care about strengths-based development, and the role emotional intelligence plays in it. We discuss the strength of empathy, and how it influences organizational outcomes. And Brandon tells us about the times when he's had to recommend decision makers use empathy to support their teams. We even talk about the shadow sides of some of the strengths, a fascinating discussion that all you leaders and aspiring leaders will just love. And Brandon has a very special offer for all of you at the end. So, stay tuned.

**Maria Ross** 03:17

Welcome to the show, Brandon Miller, thanks for being on the empathy edge.

**Brandon Miller** 03:22

Thank you, Maria. It's great to be here today.

**Maria Ross** 03:25

I'm excited to have this talk with you about strengths and the role of empathy. And we were just talking before we started recording that you are one of the first seven certified Gallup Clifton Strengths Finder coaches in the world. And it was a Strengths Finder assessment. That led me down my path to writing the empathy edge. And now doing this podcast because empathy showed up, shockingly to me in one of as my one of my top five strengths. So yay, to the strength's finder.

**Brandon Miller** 03:59

Yay

**Maria Ross** 04:01

So, tell us a little bit about your story and your work.

**Brandon Miller** 04:04

Sure. So, I learned about Strengths Finder. In a fun way. I was sitting at my desk one day, and I was a leader in an organization more of a middle type manager. And one of the executives came in and he said, Hey, I found this book in the airport. And I think we should do this, which was always code for you should do this. Yeah. And so, I grabbed the book, and it says, Now discover your strengths. And I thought, huh, how interesting. And so, I tore into it. And I quickly found out that if once you read through the introduction, there's like this little tear out at the back. So, I didn't read it all, just jumped to the back, grabbed the tear out, went online and took this assessment. And I gotta tell you, I got these results back these words and as I'm reading the descriptions, I'm literally saying to myself, did somebody follow me? Like did somebody like crawl into my head because I had never used the word maximum Laser arranger activator as words that I would say describe me. But these were so accurate and so detailed. So I, I was hooked, I thought, oh my gosh, this is awesome. And then I was invited to a half day training. And the training was essentially someone connected to our organization that had had a training from Gallup directly. And this was at a time before certification was even an option as a portable certification. So, I got to go to the class and sit in be a fly on the wall, get all the data. And so then we had our whole team in the organization take it, and I got to be the one to talk about all the results. And as soon as I don't know that three month period was over, I just said, I, this is what I want to do just want to do for a living. I want to talk to people about their strengths. I want to help position them to do what they do best every day. Because why would we want to spend so much time talking about what's wrong with you? This makes no sense. And that that does play into me being a maximizer. That is that that's just a part of who I am. Naturally, I've learned. And and so then that blossomed into a business.

**Maria Ross** 06:06

So, tell folks who are not familiar with the strength's finder give us a 32nd description of what it is because we're both throwing throwing on terms that people are familiar with. So just quickly

**Brandon Miller** 06:17

Thank you.

**Maria Ross** 06:17

Recap it for us

**Brandon Miller** 06:18

Thank you. Thank you. So, for those listening, this Clifton Strengths was developed by a gentleman named Dr. Donald Clifton. So, it's been called Strengths Finder. And then some years back, they rebranded to Clifton Strengths for his legacy. And Dr. Donald Clifton, in his graduate studies, and this was around the 1950s. So, he had just come back from World War Two was in his doctorate program for psychology. And he had he had a burning question. His question was, why is it everywhere I turned, every book I read, seems to be focused on human disease and neurosis. And his question was, where are all the books that tell us what's right with people? Where's all the research around human greatness and talent? And so that was it. The that was the flip that switched in his mind. And that was going to be his life's work is dedication to understanding human excellence. And so, he went on the greatest talent search in the history of talent searches, 2 million people worldwide were surveyed. And it wasn't just random, it was people known to be really strong, standout performers. And then they would try to understand what is it that they did that helped them to be successful, and they work backwards. And they understood those to be talents, simple patterns of behavior that could be productively applied. And from that they built what today is a psychometric assessment, I'm leaving out a lot of the math and a lot of the detail, but they boiled it down to 34. Clifton Strengths are strengths. And when a person takes this assessment, they can be ranked in order from their most intense strength number one, to their least intense strength number 34. And it's wonderfully comprehensive list of what is it that you do great, but also, some areas to know, this is probably not for me, it's not an area that I thrive in probably need a partner here, probably this system gives that kind of insight.

**Maria Ross** 08:13

Yeah. And what I love about it is it's really great for groups, because it's really understanding group dynamics, and the ability to collaborate and why certain groups, you know, just perform an innovate and do all the things and other groups are just a train wreck. And when you realize that maybe you have too much of one strength in a given group, or you've got these untapped strengths in a group that you're not leveraging, right, because of the strengths of other people crowding that out, you know, so it's really under I love it's just understanding like, the makeup and the psychology of what everybody's bringing to the party. That's right. And it's like the best kind of horoscope you could ever you could ever get. Because I you know, you're so right, it does tell you things that you're like, Hmm, I never would have you know, if asked what my strengths were, those would not be you know, one of mine was Winning Others Over. Whoo. Right. And I never would have described it that way. Or even that wouldn't have been like my top of mine thing. If I was being asked by someone what my strengths are. What I love about the strengths finder is it uncovers these things. And then you start to look back at your career and

your successes and your challenges. And you realize where those strengths were present the entire time, you just didn't know what they were called.

**Brandon Miller** 09:31

Yeah. Was a fan favorite. So every room we go into the train, we got to know the whoo

**Maria Ross** 09:37

Whoo I love it. And wait for the Whoo. Well, that is incredible. And it does explain for everyone the meaning of your company name 34 strong. So, let's get into it. What role does emotional intelligence play in strengths-based development? Because that's the thing where people fall back on like, oh, emotional intelligence is just not my strength or empathy is just not my strength. And they I kind of find they use it as an excuse not to develop that skill. True, what do you find is the role of emotional intelligence when you're trying to assess your strengths.

**Brandon Miller** 10:12

So, I think the greatest gift that StrengthsFinder gives to the world is a very neutral vocabulary that one might use to describe themselves. And it gives you insights into where your greatest strengths probably lie, but also where your greatest liabilities potentially lie. And I think any psychometric assessment that is effective, gives with it the gift of self-awareness, I get to know who I am, I get to know who I'm not, I get to know myself and my best place, probably my worst place and everything in the middle. And if I can get to the point where I can know me that way, without judgment, I have climbed the ladder of emotional intelligence, I am, I am now able to look at myself objectively, which allows me to then look at you in that way, as well, I'm developing, you're developing, we can have compassion on each other for the journey. Because progress always, always is going to be more measurable and more important than perfection. And in the in the, in the world we live in where comparison is so deep, so built in with so much exposure to so many sources, I think the gift of allowing yourself to be who you are, and grow into the greatness that is within you, is a fantastic way that this really connects to emotional intelligence. And we were talking about this a lot, because we think that for leaders in particular, the one skill, they share that and it's the only one in fact, this was uncovered in some of gallops work with Dr. Donald Clifton as well. The only trait shared that successful leaders have is self-awareness. It's the only one, you could have all kinds of ways to get to success and leadership. That's the one. And it's the one I think that we all have equal opportunity to invest in and grow.

**Maria Ross** 12:12

I love that so much. And so much of my work and even other guests I've had on the show, we always start from that place of if you want to be a good leader, it's actually the internal work the inside job you need to work on first. It's not what more can I do or get out of my people. In order to be a better leader, it's got to start with that self-awareness, that humility, that ability to say, here's what I'm good at, here's where I need to shore up those skills, and also where I need to practice emotional intelligence, so that I can be that empathetic leader and I won't take everything defensively, I won't every different point of view as an attack. Only leaders that have that presence and that emotional regulation, are able to see different ideas and new points of view for the value that they they offer. And not as just like, Well, that didn't come from me. So, you know, it's not a valid idea,

**Brandon Miller** 13:09

Right. I think because this paradigm lives in the positive psychology space. It's what causes it to be so attractive to teams. Because the idea that, Oh, we're going to talk about what's right with all of us, we're going to build on our strengths. We're going to move away from focusing on my inadequacies, my weaknesses, that's a break. Can we do that more often? Yeah. And that's, and that's the draw. Right? And I'll Gallup did is they made the business case for it. They just simply showed, hey, guess what, when you talk to people in a positive way more about what's right, and what's wrong with them? Crazy thing, they like you more, they trust you, right, you work harder, they stay engaged with you at work, it's good business. And I think that's, that's the beautiful part of this is that as leaders grow in their emotional intelligence, to where they can start to see the benefits, so recognizing this actually works for me, but it works for me in such a beautiful way because I'm, I'm helping this person to engage, and I'm probably impacting their personal life outside of work are impacting the friend and the parent in the in the child and the human being they are outside of work, I get to do both.

**Maria Ross** 14:20

Right. Right. And like you said, you know, it's refreshing to think about what we're doing right versus what we're doing wrong. Let's talk about situations that you've encountered. We talked a little bit about empathy being one of the traits that's in the strength's finder. And can you give us a definition from the strengths finder of what it means when it says one of your top strengths is empathy?

**Brandon Miller** 14:45

Sure. So, is really important to mention disclaimer, that that the 34 Clifton Strengths are an intact vocabulary. So, the strength of empathy isn't the dictionary definition of empathy. And that's important because people can be empathetic, who do not have the strength of empathy. So they meaning I like to tell people, I've met leaders and empathy is number 34 out of 34. And, and I have to reassure them, this assessment did not call you a sociopath, I promise It didn't do that, hopefully,

**Maria Ross** 15:23

I think, yeah,

**Brandon Miller** 15:25

let's both hope, meaning, if empathy textbook is I can put myself in your shoes, I can feel what you're feeling. And out of my compassion, I can take action I can do I can say I can give, I can share. All of us, every human can do that, differentiating that to the strength of empathy. So these are people that can sense the feelings of others without asking or even being invited to it, they can pick up on the nuanced behaviors of people in their sphere that they know and others they don't, or just the general mood of the room. And paths have the ability to leverage that knowledge to build trust, create intimacy, open doors, thoughtful listening, some of the best listeners, I know are very high in empathy. And they're very good at tuning in. One of the other parts of that strength is mirrored neurons. So the ability to listen with their heart, and to mirror back, the posture, the tone, even sometimes the rhythm, the Keydets in such a respectful, soothing way that the listener knows I'm being being thought of here. So that, that it's such a broad, beautiful strength, it when we think about one group in particular, we work with is in the medical field, many nurses, high empathy, many of them, and what they share is that this drink is so cute at

times that they've actually had to learn how to turn it down. Because it flows so strong, they've had to learn how to turn it down. So, they're not over internalizing,

**Maria Ross** 17:01

Right. And they have to set boundaries very clearly. Otherwise, they lose themselves and

**Brandon Miller** 17:07

Or exhaust themselves, right, or it's it because it's literally, I knew my children at different stages. One of them in junior high had a friend, and my daughter said, Gosh, she cries all the time. And we would go I wonder why. And she goes, she doesn't know. And so, she got over, I was so curious, I bet this kid is really high in empathy. Sure enough, just really in tune to sadness and happiness. And the moments that make not all the way sure how to filter him yet not always sure how to know when it's me when it's not me. And then that's how the strength is grown the talent, the recurring pattern of of that ability to pick up nuanced behaviors, tone, posture, movements, is something that happens raw, but as it's grown, wow, has such powerful use as a strength for effectiveness in human human development, human relationships.

**Maria Ross** 18:03

It really does. And we've talked a lot on this show about the fact that, you know, Curiosity is the number one trait of empathic people. And, you know, if you are, if you are a leader at work, who is curious about, you know, you've got a growth mindset, you're curious about how things are done, you're curious about how people are feeling you're curious about what motivates individually, each of the members of your team? Yeah, you know, I would be willing to bet that you if you are a curious leader, you probably have some empathy and you some empathy, strength, some empathy, talent, because I think that's really about getting outside yourself, and being willing to be curious about someone else's experience or point of view or idea or how something is done. You know, when we lack that curiosity, we don't even engage, we think we have all the answers inside of us. That's right. So, I love that. What situations have you had where you've had to recommend decision makers use empathy to support their teams? What's one of the processes you've shared with them to achieve a healthy emotional intelligence? I bet that's the million-dollar question. Everybody listening wants to know.

**Brandon Miller** 19:12

Well, I think there's a couple really important points in the first one is a watch out. So, we encourage leaders to be very aware of when they move to frustration, start to have a sensitivity and awareness of what brings you to frustration,

**Maria Ross** 19:29

What triggers you, yeah.

**Brandon Miller** 19:31

What's the doorway before anger, what moves you there? And sometimes it's a trigger other times it's because you didn't have breakfast? Like, what is it? What is it that that causes? Because frustration in the space of curiosity that you're describing can be turned to fascination? I wonder why I'm feeling this way. Wonder what's happening here. And I can maintain objectivity because emotional intelligence at

its core, is thinking with our frontal lobe. That's just thinking logically and carefully and at times slowly through a situation so I can see the whole field. When we move out of EQ we move into to enforce. Yeah, very much. And now we're reacting. And we've lost our creativity, we're moving away. So, the first is a watch out, pay attention to those spaces, because it's possible that what is moving you there isn't that someone is doing something wrong. It's they're doing something different. And differences, when not understood can be annoyances, when well understood are advantages. And so high leaders that want to excel and empathy, really, as you said, very well, they become interested and curious. And I want to I want to know, in that discovery mode, what is it that helps move you on the on the more proactive side empathis. In You said this will also take a customized approach to human development. They recognize that a one size fit all that one approach is very ineffective. It's good for establishing standards, such as human resource policies that we should all follow. Not great for coaching, not great for individualizing an approach to help people succeed. So, empathis have a an opportunity, because they they do naturally want to do that as a strength, those who don't share that as a top strength, can learn how to ask, learn how to pay attention learn. As one point, we talked about learning styles, different ways that people are going to process and retain key word retain, just because you taught it doesn't mean they got it. That's not a given. Because some people have to get their hands on it, others need to just talk it out. Others just read the book and off they go, they can study it and go, Well, that's three very different styles of learning and paths become attuned to that. What style works best, and how do I help you get there. And I'd say the last one is conflict resolution. And paths have an incredible ability, especially if they there's a string called Harmony, especially if they also share this, they're very good at seeing each person's point of view, very good at it sensing where the frustration is, I can hear that in you, I can hear this in you let's think about and look at and work through, where the where we've, we've lost, we've lost the intelligence side, we've lost the cognitive approach, we're now at base emotional responses, let's try to get up to where we can all see the field, understand where we're all coming from. So, we can move forward with some level of intent and focus.

**Maria Ross 22:44**

So, much good advice to unpack in there. That's wonderful. What would you say is the biggest hindrance you found in leaders, if you found it in leaders, being told they should strengthen their empathy? Maybe should is a bad word. But, you know, in this, has there been any rebuttal objection from leaders that you've heard about why they shouldn't strengthen their empathy?

**Brandon Miller 23:13**

So this is slightly in jest, but true, if, if the person is narcissistic, it's very difficult, right? So if if I have to be right, if I if I, the same time, and just as strong cannot be wrong, I cannot be wrong. Empathy will elude. It will elude because that's, that's base, you know, impulse emotion. And it's tough. So, ego leaders can struggle with empathy, because their filter runs back to self, it runs to self. So, leaders that need the cards to always fall in their favor, struggle with this idea, because to them, empathy equals weakness. It's not a strength, it's me somehow capitulating my power situation, and I don't want to let go of my power. What I love to see in the working world today is we're starting to see a dismantling of that erroneous paradigm that your power is not found, in the position that you hold the title you keep the the volume of your voice, the threats that you can make, that's not where your power is. Your power is in followership. How many people line up gladly and willingly to follow you and not just because you Pam, but they they believe that they can trust you. They believe you care about them. They think that

you're a safe place. You're a safe person, you create an environment that's safe, and that you inspire them. You motivate them for their future and leaders who can see the power of that influence, have have great success on the lifetime journey of emotional intelligence that they see themselves on a sojourner on the road. This is a whole life journey, and I'm making progress As I go, and I'm okay when I'm wrong, and I'm okay when I'm right. And I can look at both without judgment and just keep advancing.

**Maria Ross 25:06**

Right. And we've seen examples of, of well-known leaders like Mark Cuban comes to mind, someone who admits that early in his career, he was not that guy. He was not about empathy. He was about just getting it done and being successful and, you know, take no prisoners. And he has sense, he has since seen what went wrong in those situations and where it actually impeded his success. And now, you know, it's sort of like he's turned over a new leaf, and said, you know, no, empathy actually is important for leaders. And to your point, you know, we talk a lot on the show about debunking the myths of empathy. Empathy is not being nice, it is not just doing what people ask you to do. That's submission. That's not empathy. And it's also not agreeing with people. So, you can have, you can make really tough business decisions as a leader, but you can do them with empathy.

**Brandon Miller 25:59**

You know, and it's a great point, because there's, there's paradigms of leadership. So some leaders naturally start permissive, and some start authoritarian. And we all aim for authoritative or strengths based because that combines the right level of directive, the accountability piece with the human warmth, and building human connection. So, empathes, can at times start permissive they can, they can start more of the I want you to like me, not just follow me. And then other strengths can start more authoritarian, you'll do what I say, Because I said so right? Well, both styles, as time goes by are not effective. They're not authoritative leadership tries to combine both. And it's a journey for many of us. And it requires a healthy dose of emotional intelligence to move there. Because even to operate in a strength space, I need to be able to look at you and see your potential and acknowledge that you're not there. And it's my job to help you get there. Well, that's, that's the work of the work, that's the hardest thing to do as a leader is to help people grow and develop because you can't do it for him, you do a lot of things for him can't do that cannot grow for them. And so that influence and impact help them do that. An authoritative strength based approach, what it simply does, is it has me trying to sort through the things that keep you from that space, build trust with me that I really do want to help you get over here, and here's better than there. So, if you'll trust me, I'll help you get to here. And that might be here as in still with me and accompany, or here in your next adventure beyond. But that's my interest. And that's when we can all, you know, think about the aspirational part of leadership is growing into those places.

**Maria Ross 27:45**

Well, and I think, you know, let's not gloss over what you're saying, also, as part of it, I see that you can get there is part of it, I'm going to show you that it's possible, right, there is a motivating factor there, you know, you are not a lost cause. And you know, in some cases, the empathetic leadership play is to realize that someone's in a role that might not be capitalizing on that person's strengths, because nobody wants to come to work and fail every day either. And so, there's also space for if I understand your strengths, and I understand your motivations, and I'm looking at this role you're currently in that

you're flailing in, you know, a good leader can see why, and might be able to say, okay, maybe we need to put you in a different role. Maybe we, you know, whatever needs to be done.

**Brandon Miller 28:36**

You know, I, I'll share with you that in that paradigm, we do see that quite a bit. It'll depend on economic realities, and how much people need a job. But people will sometimes say what they have to say, to get into a job and recruiters role here and repeat what they want to repeat to help people get the job, right. So, all of that plays in. And then you end up with folks. And this is the absolutely the broadest part of the market, that are taking jobs because they need to put food on their table. And they're working in more of a blue collar or production or different spaces. And even in those cases, recognizing maybe you didn't think about this job, when you thought about what you wanted to be when you grow up, but it's respectable, and you can work hard. And I can respect you in the process and show you that I do care that you do a good job and find the parts of the job that you find more fulfilling than others and even then build into the strength of the role as much as on the professional side. I can even then look for places where this might not be a fit. Let's talk about an off ramp that's that that feels good to both of us. It's not scary, who I'm letting you go. It's let's transition. Let's help you move to another place.

**Maria Ross 29:50**

Well, and the thing I like about the StrengthsFinder too, is that it gives everyone a common language. So, you know if we if we as a team, all take the strengths Find her. That's actually something that's bonding us together. Yeah. And I know, you know, Brandon, there's your Wu coming out again, you know, like I can we can even use it to defuse tension or conflict. If we understand, you know, we have that common language to talk about our strengths. Have you? Is there a story you can tell us about a team that was maybe like, the most transformative culture that you worked with? I mean, I'm sure you have many, but can you give us a before and after?

**Brandon Miller 30:29**

Sure. So, we do a fair amount of our a fair amount of our work in the government space. And then we work in private sector, mostly mid-size, mid family, privately held businesses type situation. So government has some very difficult circumstances. And and what can occur is that people can get into positions for life, I mean, that they are in those positions, and they're very well regarded at times protected. And so, a level of disengagement can set in that when we go to measure it, it just over indexes in the wrong way more disengagement than they do have engagement. So, we've come into a situation where on a scale of one to 100, ranking the team, they were a 1%, Team 1%. And the meaning we had, the best I had for this leader was well, we have nowhere to go but up. That's the best for you today. And we're going to start the climb right here. So, what what got us here isn't going to get us there. So now let's begin to really dig in. And to this leaders credit to this team. They really did. They really wanted to understand why their team was where they were and how they could engage us over the course of coaching and workshops and training and focus grouping and really, reshuffling how they approach leadership. Within two years, they went from 1% to 90%, top rate team, and they and they stood out because they're this this this building that housed 1000s and 1000s, of civil servants. And this team was like a curiosity. Like, what in the world happened to these people? What did you put in their water? What what happened?

**Maria Ross** 32:20

Exactly. This is what I'm always talking, I'm so excited, I'm gonna interrupt you. This is what I'm always talking about, about the fact that these these, the ability to create a micro culture of empathy and find success, doesn't rely on your CEO making a mandate. If you start operating with empathy and succeeding, people are gonna go, Oh, I like the way Brandon operates. What's he doing over there? What's exactly what's in the water over there. So, I love that this is a real life example of that.

**Brandon Miller** 32:48

So, that leader went on to a higher level of influence, and was given the ability to take what had happened with their team to the entire department. And so now the entire department is endeavoring to follow a path that worked with relative micro team compared to the department. And now that's that's what's more, but it's built upon proven success. This process works. It does take time. So for those that are, come on, how come it hasn't happened? Because people don't respond. That way. They didn't get here fast. They're not going to leave here fast. It takes time. And what they really want to know is Are you for real? Yeah, are you for real? Because empathy. Here's here's the, here's the piece about empathy Empath leaders know that Empath followers sniff out BS like nobody's business. And when you lead teams, and you will always have because empathy is a common strength out of the 34 empaths. will know are you snowballing this to look good? Or do you really intend for this to be our culture and we like to say if you can, if you can convince the empath, you have a chance Yeah, because if they believe you, yeah, and they can see through the veneer, but they believe you you can you can start to win over and you just got to pass the 50% market engagement once you get more people engaged in the not engaged. Now you're running downhill with the wind at your back, you have momentum, and it's all going to come down to believability, which as you and I know, Empath leaders are believable, because you actually like you think they genuinely are sincere about the change that they're they're initiating.

**Maria Ross** 34:27

Absolutely. Okay, I'm gonna throw you a curveball question just for fun. Do you ever look at famous leaders and try to guess what their strengths are on? Grindr? Sure. So, can you give us an example?

**Brandon Miller** 34:38

Oh, sure. I used to look at President Obama. And I mean, what strikes you as he's such a powerful speaker is oratory. I mean, just so well put together so in strengths language, I would say he has very high strategic is so fast on his feet so quick. You cannot catch him without a quip or a comment. He's very good. Very good soundbite guy right very talented. But high communication has strengths to find it because he can weave it into a story. He can he can show emotion so I I used to watch him with on go wow, look at those strengths just work how quickly He's spinning and moving, which I know politics is a lot of you got to gotta stay gotta stay nimble because they're coming in all directions, right? And then I mean that respectfully, like you just, it's just the way of the world that you gotta you gotta move. I was intrigued by that, with his adaptability do that.

**Maria Ross** 35:31

What about any business leaders that you know?

**Brandon Miller** 35:34

So, one who's pasty jobs? We like to say that he's the poster person for the strength of ideation. So, someone who could take, you know, this device

**Maria Ross** 35:45

That was not a top strength for me.

**Brandon Miller** 35:48

Yeah. So, when I, when I look at, like this device, I'm not holding in my hand that I that that just it calls it, you know, allows me to use it as computer respond to things it plays music, it does all these things. The person who envisioned this, it's just it's amazing. And that's it. Ah, they don't live in the confines of our way of thinking they're always stretching us what's next? And they add to tell Ada, it can't be done is to challenge them, to show you all the ways that can to add to say, it's just how we've always done it idea to like, oh, no, it isn't no more. And so, ideation futuristic, is something that you can see what jobs because he was looking ahead, while while while just, I mean, literally, I did a training for a group at Tesla. And this group at Tesla, half of the room had come from Formula One, and the other half had come from Apple. It's like, super tech geniuses, meet supercar geniuses. And it was so interesting to hear the stories about jobs, and then to hear the Formula One people and then it talks about Elon Musk was like, wow, and just how they all interpolate and work together was pretty, pretty amazing.

**Maria Ross** 37:05

That's cool. Is there any strength? On the strengths finder? I know they all have shadow sides. Because I know I when I worked with my strength coach, we talked a little bit about that. But is there any strength? And the answer could be no. That's problematic.

**Brandon Miller** 37:24

To an extent they all are in the context that would facilitate that. So, one of the strengths that I think has almost no problems at all is positivity. Right? They're so good at taking a situation and finding hope in finding light and finding truth. And then there's times where they just need to put that in their pocket. Because people need to mourn. And so instead of cheering up in that moment, just wait positivity. Let them mourn. Yeah, it's okay to mourn. Sadness is a valid emotional.

**Maria Ross** 38:01

Right. We can let ourselves feel those things. We don't have to gloss it over.

**Brandon Miller** 38:05

Yeah, we can feel pain, you can feel sad. So so but but I tell many leaders like I can almost say that that little downside, at its amazing. Others are very much more polar. So, one of the really powerful strengths is command, just think of the word command. Yeah, so the strength of being direct and decisive and cutting through emotion and finding the clarion call to action. And you can think of all the places where that's really helpful, and really necessary. And command can be horribly misunderstood. Because it can come across as pushy and bossy and brash. Oh, up to me caring. Yeah, absolutely. Because it's an because it's so strong in its approach. And this is why I think, when we look at the

global landscape of strengths, command is very rare, less than 5% of people will have it were strictly positivity, much more common, many more of those you're going to meet, probably for good reason. When you just think of, you know, how about, you know, all our genetics and how we all got here? Probably healthy. We don't need as many of you, you know, you're special. And we need you when we need you. Right? It would be that amazing command which I happen to be a top 10 command like know how that works, but also know when now the perception is turning on you now it's not as

**Maria Ross** 39:35

effect now. It's not helping you it's hurting you.

**Brandon Miller** 39:37

Every strength has that potential.

**Maria Ross** 39:39

Alright, so I know you as we wrap up, I know you have a special little surprise for our listeners. And can you tell us about it? Yeah, absolutely.

**Brandon Miller** 39:47

So we like to give the gift of strengths. We're in a position right now where we're meeting different people through different opportunities. And we want to share with them the opportunity to learn their strengths. And so if someone reaches out to me at the information I shared with you. And in a message simply indicates, I'd like to learn my strengths, happy to provide it's complimentary. And then if they would like additional conversation, they'd like to learn more. We're happy to share that with them as well.

**Maria Ross** 40:17

Yeah, because normally you pay to take the StrengthsFinder. So, you're offering it for free, correct, complimentary version. Great. Well, I will put Brendan's email in the show notes. And you can email him directly at Brandon @34 strong.com. Again, I'll put it in the show notes. If you're interested in taking the strengths finder for yourself, and see where you land. And you'll have to let me know where you're where your strengths lie. So, Brandon, thank you so much. Where can folks other than the you know, I'm going to put all your links in the show notes, as we mentioned. But where can folks that are on the go find out more about you?

**Brandon Miller** 40:51

Sure. LinkedIn is a great place. I'm on there quite a bit.

**Maria Ross** 40:55

Great.

**Brandon Miller** 40:55

So, Brandon Miller 34strong. There's only one of me.

**Maria Ross** 40:58

Awesome. And I have a personalized note to let him know that you heard him on the podcast.

**Brandon Miller** 41:03

Yeah, and I want to connect when we drop a lot of content. They're very rich things that people use and seem to find enjoyable and happy to share.

**Maria Ross** 41:11

Awesome. Well, thank you so much for being on the show today. It was great talking to you.

**Brandon Miller** 41:15

You as well. Thank you.

**Maria Ross** 41:16

And thank you everyone for listening to another great episode of the empathy edge podcast. Please share it with a friend or colleague. Don't forget to rate and review those are important. And until next time, remember that cash flow, creativity and compassion are not mutually exclusive. Take care and be kind.