

Valuing Each Person's Uniqueness

Rachel is a vibrant, warm, creative individual. She's always encouraging and affirming. She never encounters a stranger, always investing in others by allowing them to share their stories. Most considered her extremely outgoing, until she began working as a receptionist. After working there for about a year, Rachel began to change. She became withdrawn, less talkative. She began taking her lunch breaks alone in quiet places. Her inquisitiveness about others all but disappeared. I had observed Rachel through this transition and tried to get her to open up about what was going on in her life. She was always vague about what was bothering her until one day I was in her work area and saw her situation a little clearer. I began a conversation that led to the StrengthsFinder assessment.

Rachel's results revealed that her number one strength was Individualization. As we talked about this it seemed that a light went on in her eyes. The problem she continued to encounter in her little workspace was that she overheard all the negative comments about others, usually their shortcomings. As someone talented in Individualization, Rachel saw the unique qualities of the people around her. Every time she tried to defend those individuals that she knew and was investing in, she was silenced and her opinion was not heard. She felt ignored and that her input did not matter. As time went on she began second-guessing her passion for people and her ability to see the good qualities in other people's lives. She quit sticking up for others and became despondent, frustrated, and hurt by those around her.

As someone with Individualization, Rachel was talented in seeing people's giftedness and uniqueness. Through our conversations I encouraged her that part of her role there was to help others see what she saw. As she began to do this with a little more confidence about her talent, things began to change. Today, Rachel is no longer overlooked and silenced; rather, she has been promoted to a supervisory role and helps to place people in the company.

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