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Strengths & Weakness Self-Awareness Exercise

Key sections from personal career support planning workbook provided for free
by

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Your Name:

Date:

Why Am I Doing This?

Today, it is not easy to stand out, just because you have a good education, or speak multiple languages, it does not mean you will land a great job or even get an interview.

There are around 100 qualified candidates out there for every job or position, at every stage of your career. Every promotion has to be earned. Someone has to have a reason to trust and invest in you!

You need to know what makes you good, strong and to understand why you are known for what it is you do or have done.

You have a value, a brand, a reputation and people know this about you, if you think I am joking, please ask your mother, or your wife, or your colleagues, the ones who care and can open those "trusted" doors to new adventures and opportunities.

YOU ALSO NEED TO MAKE A PLAN

THIS IS WHY YOU ARE INVESTING TIME IN YOURSELF



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What makes you special?

What is your special thing?

What strengths do you have that stand out?

Pepsi and Coca-Cola are strong brands, yet everyday they compete in the shops or supermarket and battle using their strengths. In a company, there can only be one Head of R&D, one CTO or CEO, yet many believe they can run a department or company and are never chosen. Why?

Let us start by looking at the dreaded strengths and weaknesses we all have.

People with a strong personal brand are clear about who they are. They know a lot about themselves and maximise their strengths.

Please remember, when you build a personal brand, it will mean asking some horrible and nasty questions. Not just you thinking what you think, you do need to ask someone else.

This external feedback can validate what you think or believe to be your "star" or "best" qualities.



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Step 1 The Outer Layer

1. What was the most successful project that you have ever tackled?
Why was it successful for you?
2. When you worked as part of a team, what was the most important role you ever fulfilled and why?
3. When you were faced with an overwhelming or really difficult obstacle, what was the "real" skill you utilized to overcome it?
4. What are the strengths that others acknowledge in you?



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Step 2 One Inner Layer

1. What skills or strengths are repeatedly mentioned by people about you?
2. What skills do you enjoy using often, regardless of the types of task you must work on?
3. What skills have you got which you do not like using very much?
4. Which strengths and skills are going to be the most helpful in your career?
5. What might be missing? Which skills do you need to build on or have not had the opportunity to practice to help you in the future.



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Step 3 Your Top 5 Strengths

Simply add in any order your top 5, it could be anything, from "social media networker," or "relationship-builder," to "creative" or "disciplined."

5.

2.

3.



4.

1.



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Step 3. Towards The Core "You Need To Ask Someone Else !"

You have given your perspectives and written some things down, yet to others who may have experience using these skills or strengths, do they agree?

What are your choices or options?

1. Brave - post your strengths on your social media page and see what comments or ratings occur when you ask your friends or contacts to rate the top 3.

2. Very Brave - Use a free tool like Survey Monkey or similar and make a self-assessment form, asking those who know you to respond. It is important that these people be honest and tell them this exercise is about personal development or learning to verify your own profile assessment.



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Step 4 Weakness Is Not a Problem As Long As You Are Aware

Everyone has weaknesses, from Winston Churchill to Roger Federer and Usain Bolt. These weaknesses might simply be areas where energies have not focussed on; those areas you think are not so important or just do not interest you. A weakness can be something harmless, or even worse, harmful to you or your job.

The source or reason for the weakness could be anything. Examples include:

1. A lack of interest in the topic: for example, thinking up creative marketing ideas may be something that just never comes to mind.
2. A need to learn or receive training: maybe you decided not to complete a course, or get an SAP user certificate. The dislike of being in front of a keyboard could be a real reason behind this.
3. You just may not be able to handle the work, project or task: you are human and sometimes it does take more than 1 person or a person with more time on their hands. Just because someone else did it, does not mean your personal situation can allow for this.
4. You may be using a strength too much: speaking and communicating instead of listening. Or overuse: being the go to person could work against you. Being too flexible or helpful can make you appear indecisive or not willing to make a decision or commit.

It is really important to know both your strengths and weaknesses, because only then do you know when to say "no" to those tasks or activities which do not support you or seem to have real purpose.



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Step 4 Really Get to Know Yourself

We start with a few questions you may know the answer to:

1. What weaknesses have people told me about, or that I am aware of?
2. When playing sport or working in a team, what role do I try to avoid that may be important to my sports or life goals?
3. When a major obstacle looms, or one I need to avoid because it seems too great a problem, what causes me to give up? Or - do I know when is the right time to ask for help?
4. What was the least successful project that I have ever worked on, what was my role and what problems or issues tripped me up?

What do I think are my top 3 weaknesses? Which ones stop me moving forward with people or work?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



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Step 4 What Do Others See As Your Weakness?

Time again to seek the opinions of others, the truth may hurt, yet at the same time, it will still be helpful.

1. Did you find any of your identified strengths being listed as a weakness? If so, please write them here.
2. Did anyone identify a weakness that you were not aware of? If so, please write it or them down here.
3. Look at the weaknesses listed in 1 and 2, are any in your opinion not essential to your career goals? Not having a tidy desk may not be a problem, nor essential, so may not need to be a great focus point for development.
4. Which weaknesses are important? Which ones are the ones which you need to get that next job, promotion or simply help you in the best way?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.



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Step 5 Reducing Your Identified Weaknesses

There are a number of tools easily searchable on the Internet to help you to develop a small plan to help you address your own weaknesses and to make them less visible or a problem. One is shown below:

Area	Description	Action Required	Actioned (Y / N)
Reduce The Pain	Think about a team situation, you may be weak in one area, someone else may be stronger. Share the activity until you improve	List those activities you are not good at, speak to colleague or team member.	
Manage Weakness	Focus on those weaknesses which could be holding you back, expect to not do so well as working on a topic or project where you are strong. It takes time to be good in a weak area.	Question 4 of Step 4 should be listed here. How will you try to manage the weaknesses identified?	
Overcome And Get Stronger	Try to take on opportunities to build up your skills. Seek help, find someone who can give you advice or even support, read books, the list could be long.	Identify skill building opportunities and create an action plan, write them down, and think about sharing the points and plan	

From the table above, you could go mad. So, list all you think you need and in the end tick one or two off the list. There is no reason to self-analyse yourself to infinity or beyond, some people have done so and yet, starting small with 3 could achieve better long-term results.

What weaknesses would make sense to invest my time in, or would you like to become a strength?

Weak Skill To Be Converted	Current Level	Mentor / Activity	Resources Or Opportunity Required
1			
2			
3			