



The Importance of Focusing on Your Strengths

If you are going to change the world, it will be from leveraging your strengths; if you are going to achieve healthy relationships and inner peace, it will be from managing your weaknesses.

Kyle Parton

Have you ever wondered why employers commonly ask this question at job interviews, “*What are your strengths?*” This is because they want to hire someone who will perform like a superstar. Hiring an individual with the right qualifications, skills and experience will reduce the learning curve which gives them better returns on their investment. Superstars usually play to their strengths, and often times start building up such strengths from a place of inherent talent or skill.

Strength-based approaches can be a powerful tool for increasing motivation and performance in the workplace. Entities that went from good to great didn’t embark on “*a journey of being passionate about what they do*”, rather they “*choose to focus on things they can get passionate about*”. Experts like Tom Rath revealed findings that indicated that people who do have the opportunity to focus on their strengths every day are six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general.

A Study by Gallup showed that employees that focus on strengths more than weaknesses, feel more confident, productive and self-aware. The result is higher employee engagement, increased performance and lower attrition rates. Many people focus on their weaknesses instead of their strengths and sometimes doing that consistently is counterproductive.

It requires so much more energy and time to complete such tasks, often leading to burnout, low productivity and losing sight of the main goal. Channeling your energy into activities that are hard for you not only increases your stress, but can result in minimal returns. This could decrease your self-esteem. In this context, why put so much investment in what will yield little? It is advantageous to choose working smart over working hard by focusing on activities that will achieve greater results.

As put by Tom Rath, knowledge, skill and practice are important parts of the strength equation, each in turn acts as a force multiplier.

As described by John Maxwell, a recommended recipe is to focus 70% on strengths, 25% on new things and 5% on areas of weakness. For better job satisfaction and improved performance, you have to be deliberate about finding roles that you naturally excel in, while continuing to harness those specific skills. Doing so will help maximize potential, enhance competence, give you fulfillment and yield better results. The first step down this path is knowing what your weaknesses and strengths are.

How to discover your strengths:

- ◆ Dig for clues by looking at performance reviews where you received praise
- ◆ Ask for feedback from friends, family, colleagues and superiors at work
- ◆ Review your resume and curriculum vitae for common themes of achievements
- ◆ Understand your passion
- ◆ Take a strength-based personality test

If you had the opportunity to do what you do best every day at work, how would that make you feel? It will decrease the odds of feeling miserable on the job. Perhaps you find yourself working in a role that you don’t enjoy. Maybe it is time to consider either switching jobs or working with your management to find a role that is a better fit for you.

References: Tom Rath, “Strengths Finder 2.0”, New York, Gallup Press, 2007 | Jim Collins, “Good to Great”, (New York, HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2001) | Pamela Skilling, HOW TO ANSWER: What Are Your Strengths?, accessed on 04/26/21 at [How To Answer: What are Your Strengths? \(biginterview.com\)](http://HowToAnswer:WhatAreYourStrengths?(biginterview.com)) | Elif Suner, Why Leaders Should Focus On Strengths, Not Weaknesses, accessed on 04/27/21 at [Why Leaders Should Focus On Strengths, Not Weaknesses \(forbes.com\)](http://WhyLeadersShouldFocusOnStrengths,NotWeaknesses(forbes.com)) | T. Harv Eker, Why You Need To Focus On Your Strengths For A More Enjoyable & Successful Life, accessed on 04/26/21 at [Why You Need To Focus On Your Strengths For A More Enjoyable & Successful Life - T. Harv Eker Blog](http://WhyYouNeedToFocusOnYourStrengthsForAMoreEnjoyable&SuccessfulLife-T.HarvEkerBlog) | The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader by John Maxwell, accessed on April 29, 2021 at <http://files.soundview.com.s3.amazonaws.com/sample-summary/21.pdf>