

Strengths Defined

Natural strengths are talents that you are born with. When you use them, you feel energized, time often appears to disappear, and you feel like you are in flow with what you are doing. Natural strengths may differ from developed skills and knowledge that require more focused attention and effort to learn. These natural strengths, built on and coupled with learned skills and knowledge, help you maximize your talent. For example, you may have a natural talent for drawing, if you do not cultivate and develop this talent it does not go away. However, it is not visible and potentially realized. Greatness is born out of developing and strengthening your natural talents.

As a general rule, society focuses on our deficiencies. If instead, we focus on our strengths we optimize our potential and produce excellence. We know that when people focus on their strengths they are highly successful and leaders in their field. Being aware of your talents is the first step in making the most effective use of them. You will want to be cautious not to overuse them for when overused they may become a deficit, for example, a detail person taking more time than necessary.

All of these principles can be applied equally to individuals, groups, and organizations.

Exercise

You may wish to do this exercise for yourself, with a learning partner(s), or with your team.

1. List your natural talents.
2. Set stretch goals and develop a plan to bring them to excellence.
3. Describe what natural talents and strengths look like when overused.
4. Develop a strategy to self-correct when a strength is over-used.
5. List talents and developed strengths (learned skills) that will be helpful in your plan for leadership excellence.

Coaching questions:

In what way can you use your talents and strengths to help you reach your goals?

What stretch goal will you set for yourself today?