



# Knowing Your Strengths and Weaknesses

## Identifying Your Strengths & Weaknesses:

- We know our obvious "Strengths" and "Weaknesses" - but how do other people see you? What about your blind spots - hidden talents or shortcomings you're not aware of?
- When we get clear on which talents or strengths other people value in us it gives us the chance to showcase these and strengthen ourselves.
- And when we know what other people consider as our shortcomings it gives us the chance, if we decide it's necessary, to improve ourselves OR improve how other people perceive us.
- This exercise is about asking people 'around' you for their feedback on your strengths and weaknesses so you can learn how to manage yourself, your work and your life better.

## Step 1:

Think of:

1. 3 people at work (if you can, pick someone below, equal, and above you in your work hierarchy)
2. 3 people from your personal life, and
3. 3 people from church, counsellor, or pastors.

Consider who is likely to take the time to do this for you and who will do a good job. Also, not everyone will feel comfortable doing this, so you may want to have some back-up names at the ready.

## Step 2:

Ask these 6-9 people from Step 1 above to write or email to you how they see:

1. Your Strengths and Talents
2. Your Weaknesses/How you Sabotage yourself

See the end of this Coaching Tool for a sample wording for your request. Also, think about whether you want to have a telephone or in person meeting with them afterwards to discuss their feedback.

## Step 3:

Once the feedback is back in, compare and contrast the responses:

1. What similarities and differences do you notice?
2. How does the feedback align with how you see yourself?
3. Write out what you've noticed about yourself from the feedback in the spaces below.

**Weaknesses:** ONLY include weaknesses that you have CONCRETE evidence for. If there is something in the responses that you think is inaccurate – you're probably right. However, if you're getting the same feedback from many people, there may be something to consider in more detail.

**Strengths:** Often we have strengths and talents that we're so good at we take them for granted. Usually when we enjoy something or find it easy, it's a strength! So, have you noticed any hidden strengths that you were taking for granted in your 360 feedback?



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What I've noticed from the feedback is .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What most surprised me was .....

I am most valued for .....

I could most improve .....

### Sample Wording for Email/Request to provide Strength and Weaknesses Feedback:

Dear     Their name    ,

I am currently working on a personal development plan - and would like to better understand how other people perceive my strengths and weaknesses so that I can be more effective.

I value your opinion as my     role in your life     and would really appreciate your honest feedback.

I would like to know how you see:

1. My Strengths and Talents - what do you value most about me?
2. My Weaknesses - how do I sabotage myself?

This can be as simple as a quick bulleted list. And please note that it would be very helpful if you could include SPECIFIC examples so that I can better understand your comments.

If you could get this to me by     date     that would be great.

I really appreciate your input and thank-you in advance.

    Your Name    

**FOLLOW-ON EXERCISE:** SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a tool commonly used in Business Strategy to identify Strengths, Weaknesses and drive out the Opportunities and Threats an organization has on the horizon.

Why not do your own personal SWOT and distinguish yourself by recognizing your unique skills, strengths and talents and planning strategies to manage your weaknesses and threats?