

Choose better...

LEADERSHIP



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When have you been ‘your best self’?

Think about **three times** in your life when you were at your best - when you felt that **your best self was able to shine through**, supported by others and put into action in the world. The moments or situations when you have felt **energised, true** to who you are and living into your **full potential**.

What was happening at those moments?

Allow yourself to think of stories from all contexts and time periods.

For three of these memories, write a few bullet points about the story of what happened. Think about the context, the role you played, the actions you took, the characteristics you displayed, the results, and the reasons behind your actions.

Paint a really detailed picture.



I feel I was at my best helping a local NGO develop a strategic framework and evidence based practice for their community leadership development work.

They had been in existence for ten years and had learned a lot in that time, but had not been able to translate that into a compelling forward strategy.

By building relationships and trust, and taking time to understand the organization, I used my knowledge and experience to help them move in a new direction and expand their influence and impact.

I am passionate about creating positive change. By sharing with them a vision of their potential and opportunity, and incorporating their ideas with mine, we have created something entirely new through which they can continue to grow and develop community leadership capacity in the future.



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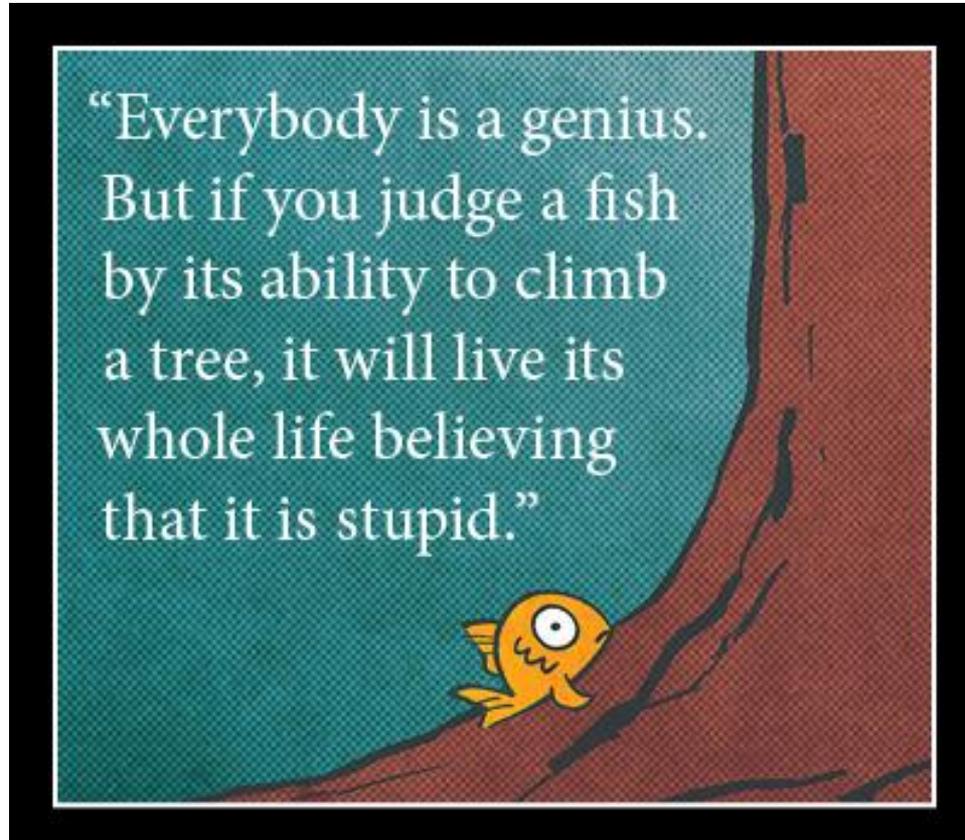
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Because of our negativity bias, we need to actively (consciously) pay attention to the positive



Strengths = What is *right* with you

Strengths based questions ask...

What is **right** with you?

Who are you at your **best**?

What would change if you brought your '**best self**' to each situation?

Taking a strengths-based approach

Talking and thinking about strengths creates opportunities for us to **enjoy what is right**, not dwell on what is wrong.

It encourages people to **think in terms of strengths** rather than weaknesses, to **concentrate on capacities** rather than shortcomings, to **focus on abilities** instead of inabilities.

Strengths = What is *right* with you

- good at and enjoy doing
- patterns
- thinking, feeling or behaving
- excite, energise and engage
- perform at your best

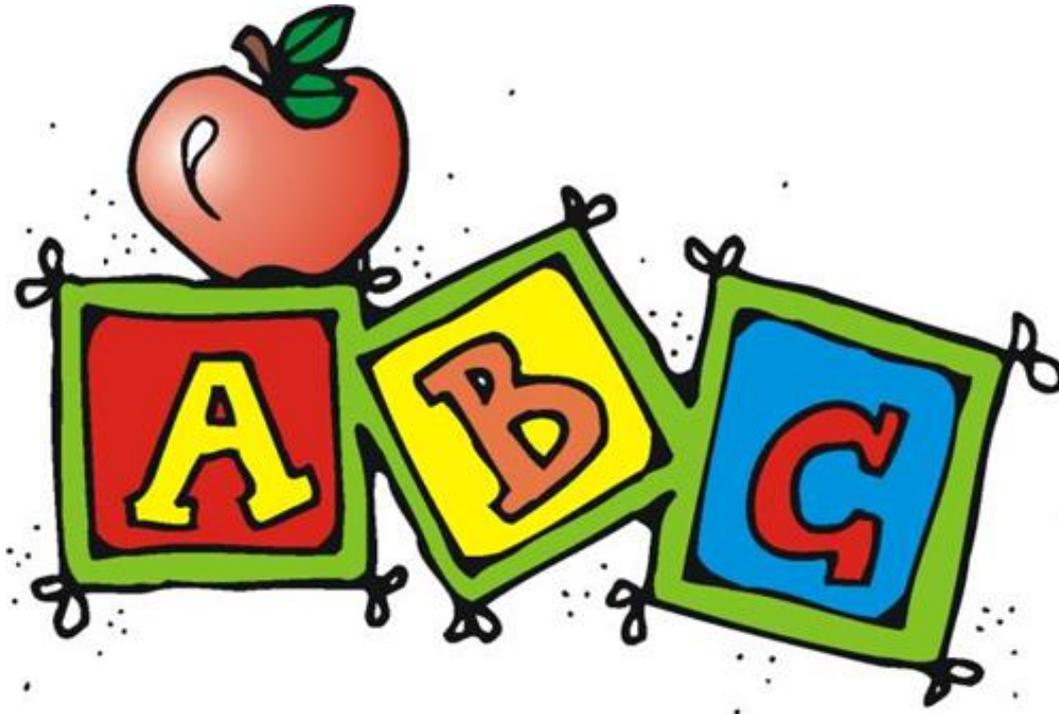
What are **your** strengths?



What are five things that you like doing and are good at?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Why focus on Strengths?



The evidence for strengths



People who focus on their strengths

1



Are happier

Studies have found they report lower levels of depression, higher levels of vitality and good mental health.

2



Experience less stress

Studies have found they report higher levels of positivity; and in particular the character strengths of Kindness, Social Intelligence, Self-regulation and Perspective appear to create a buffer against the negative effects of stress and trauma.

3



Feel healthier & have more energy

Studies have found that greater endorsement of character strengths is associated with a number of healthy behaviors including leading an active life, pursuing enjoyable activities and eating well.

People who focus on their strengths



4

Feel more satisfied with their lives

Individuals who are satisfied with life are good problem-solvers, show better work performance, tend to be more resistant to stress and experience better physical health.



6

Experience faster growth & development

Studies have found that positive self-monitoring and strengths building are particularly suited to circumstances when you're learning something new, something difficult or something perceived as difficult



5

Are more confident

Studies have found that both strengths knowledge and strengths-use are significantly associated with self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-acceptance and self-confidence.

People who focus on their strengths



8

Feel more satisfied and experience more meaning in their work

Studies have found that people who use four or more of their top character strengths at work are more likely to experience job satisfaction, pleasure, engagement and meaning in their work.



7

Are more creative and agile at work

The feelings of authenticity, vitality and concentration created by developing strengths help people to better adapt to change, engage in more creative and proactive behaviors, pay more attention to detail and work harder



9

Are more engaged in their work

Studies have found that employees who have the opportunity to regularly use their strengths at work each day are up to six times more engaged in what they're doing.

And for Managers...



And managers who focus on people's strengths experience improved team performance and greater success

Studies have found that leaders who focus on the strengths of employees benefit from lower levels of staff turnover, higher levels of productivity, more satisfied customers and greater profitability.



Strengths and You

You at Your Best – Strengths and Talents

Strengthsfinder

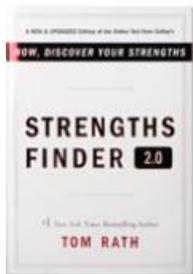
34 talents across 4 domains

Taken by >16 Million people

Includes talent, knowledge and skills

What do you do well?

Talents/skills



Realise 2

Assesses 60 strengths according to the three dimensions of *energy*, *performance* and *use*

Taken by >50,000 people around the world

What energizes you?

Strengths/weaknesses/
learned behaviours



Values In Action

24 character strengths across 6 virtues

Taken by >3 million people

Psychological ingredients for displaying virtues or human goodness

Who are you?

Core character

VIA INSTITUTE
on CHARACTER

V.I.A.

V I A

values in Action

How we like to work
rather than **what** we like to do

Development of VIA

What are the conceptual and empirical means of describing positive human development?





Character Strengths vs. Talents

Character strengths are valued for moral and intrinsic reasons and provide a pathways for developing other strengths of talent, interest, skill or resources.

Hand-eye
coordination and
ability to read the
play = talent
strength



Persistence to
practice =
character
strength

Character Strengths: summary

- VIA – Values in *Action*
- Universally valued across cultures and throughout history
- All 24 strengths exist within each of us
- Your strengths are stable and dynamic
- You can develop strengths that you value
- Strengths are interdependent
- You can overuse, misuse and underuse your character strengths

The VIA – How was it for you?

“Yes, that’s me”

“Why is that strength down there?”

“That’s nothing like me!”



ACTIVITY: VIA results debrief

1

What was your reaction to your results?
What question(s) does this raise?

2

How are you currently using your top signature strengths?

3

Can you see any of your top strengths in the 'Best Self story' you shared earlier?

***“The things that make me different
are the things that make me.”***



A.A. Milne

Signature strengths



'Owning' your Signature Strengths

- Important to 'own' your signature strengths
- Different perspectives:
 - Your own gut feel
 - From family, friends and colleagues
 - Signature strength criteria
 - VIA survey

What are your signature strengths?

ACTIVITY: Signature Strength speed-dating

1

Share a conversation with someone in your group about how each of you use your signature strengths

2

Find someone who shares the same signature strength(s) as you. Have a conversation with them about how they action the particular strength(s)

3

Find someone who has a signature strength which is the same as one of your lesser strengths. Have a conversation with them about how they action this strength

Your choices for leading with your strengths

Choice

1

Focus on your
weaknesses

OR

**Choose to
acknowledge your
strengths**

Choice

2

Compromise on your
best self

OR

**Choose to act from
the best within you**

Choice

3

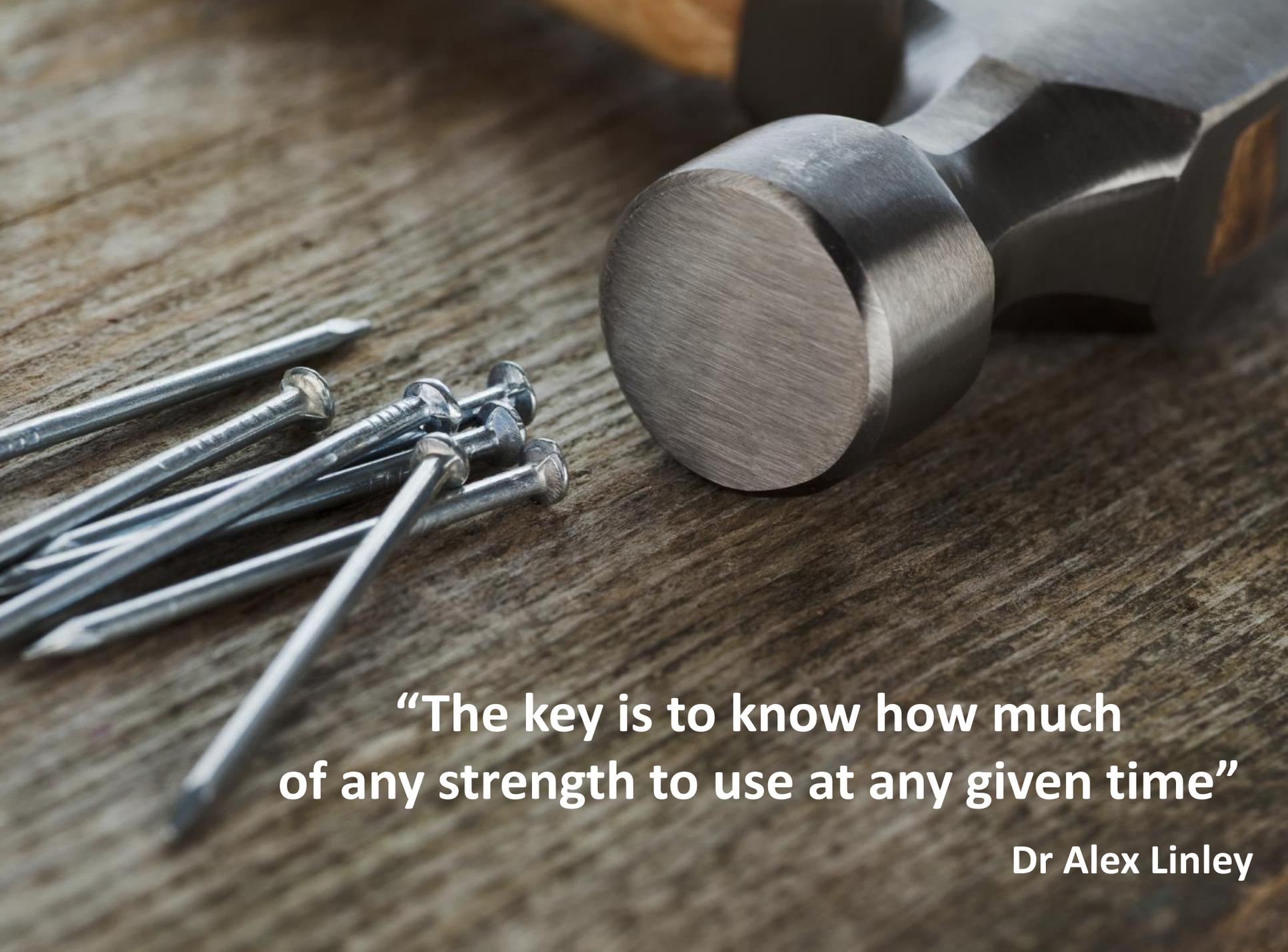
Accept your current
self-image

OR

**Choose to use your
strengths to become
who you want to be**

A dirt road splits into two paths leading towards a bright sun in a field under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a golden glow and long shadows. The sky is filled with large, dark clouds, some of which are illuminated from below by the sun, creating a dramatic effect. The road is made of light-colored dirt and has tire tracks. The field is green and appears to be a grassy area. The overall scene is one of a bright, open landscape.

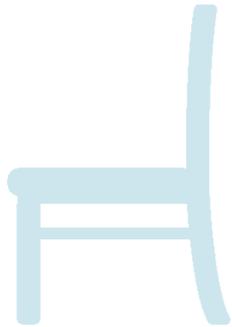
If you chose to acknowledge and use your strengths and act from the best within you, what new or different choices would you make?



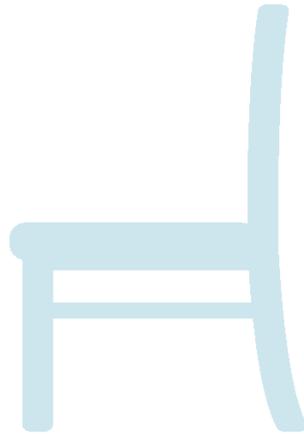
**“The key is to know how much
of any strength to use at any given time”**

Dr Alex Linley

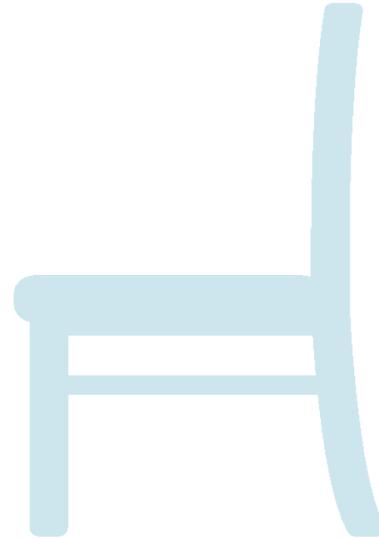
The Goldilocks Principle



Underplay



'Just Right'



Overplay

ACTIVITY: Applying the Goldilocks Principle

- When have you overplayed a strength?
- When have you underplayed a strength?
- When have you got it 'just right'?

Strengths and Others: Strengths based leadership



Remember this?



And managers who focus on people's strengths experience improved team performance and greater success

Studies have found that leaders who focus on the strengths of employees benefit from lower levels of staff turnover, higher levels of productivity, more satisfied customers and greater profitability.

Why focus on Strengths in others?





Everyone has an invisible bucket. We are at our best when our buckets are overflowing – and at our worst when they are empty.



Everyone also has an invisible dipper. In each interaction, we can use our dipper either to fill or to dip from others' buckets.



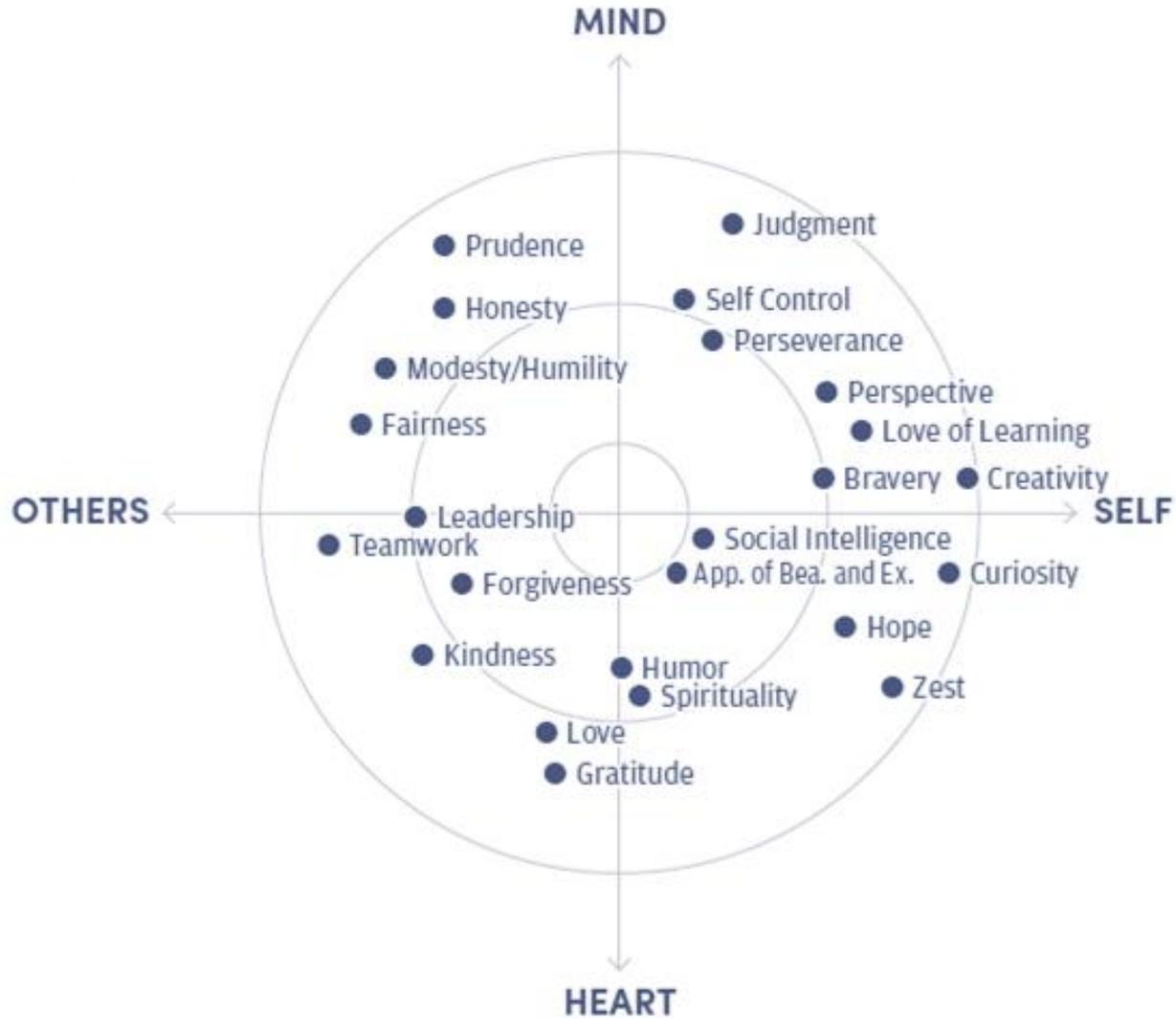
Whenever we choose to fill others' buckets, we in turn fill our own.



Avoid Collisions



Other Perspectives



ACTIVITY: Spotting Strengths in Others

1

Think of a **family member or friend** that you admire for their use of a particular strength and an example of when/how they use it

2

Think of a **colleague** that you admire for their use of a particular strength and an example of when/how they use it

3

Think of **someone you are challenged/'stuck' with**. What could be one of their strengths?
How have you seen them use it?

***If we focus on strengths
does this mean we ignore
weaknesses?***

No

Changing the Focus

Cooper & Goodwin (2011)

80/20

Changing the Focus

20/80

How to 'Change your Focus' every day...

- Begin meetings with strengths-based story sharing
- Talk with people about their strengths – identify high performance patterns
- Ask a positive question and turn 'problem' talk to 'possibility' talk and to create a compelling and shared pathway for the future e.g. when have we been at our best? When have we successfully met challenges before? What are you most proud of that you have worked on recently?
- Use story-sharing (of successes and failures) to tap into latent knowledge and create a learning culture
- Use a strengths-based lens to conduct reviews – of projects, of processes, of people

Your choices for Strengths-based leadership



Overlook the good in others

OR

Choose to spot Strengths and compliment



Be a bucket dipper

OR

Choose to fill buckets



Focus on weakness

OR

Change your focus everyday : flip the 80-20 rule

A dirt road splits into two paths leading towards a bright sun in a hazy, grassy landscape under a dramatic, cloudy sky.

If you chose to spot strengths or took an appreciative lens with someone in your life, how might you have a new and different perspective?

NO MATTER WHAT
THE SITUATION,
REMINDE YOURSELF
"I HAVE A
CHOICE"

DEEPAK CHOPRA

***Choice is the only tool we have
that enables us to go from who we
are today to who we want to be
tomorrow.***

Sheena Iyengar



Choices

Where are yours taking you?

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