­­Develop your strengths

This five-day exercise about identifying and using your strengths has significant immediate and lasting benefits. You’ll be happier and more productive. You’ll find you’ll have taken less sick leave after six months.

## Identify your strengths

Think about your experience at home, at work and in your other activities. For example, if you keep a diary, you could reflect on the questions when you fill in your diary.

* What do you do well? When are you most productive? What skills and traits do you use when you do those things?
* What have you done that you’re proud of? What skills and traits did you use?
* What good feedback have you received?

Perhaps you organised a large family reunion that went really smoothly. That could mean you’re good at organising things, or at finding ways to keep everyone happy.

Or perhaps you’re often told that you’re helpful. You might be observant and notice things that need to be done, or be good at noticing when someone is stressed.

Don’t be afraid to ask others what they think you do well. Your friends, family, colleagues and people in your network will have an idea.

Here’s a list of things you can appreciate to give you some ideas:

* Beauty
* Excellence
* Bravery
* Creativity
* Curiosity
* Fairness
* Forgiveness
* Gratitude
* Honesty
* Hope
* Humility
* Humour
* Judgment
* Kindness
* Leadership
* Love
* Love of learning
* Perseverance
* Perspective
* Prudence
* Self-regulation
* Social intelligence
* Spirituality
* Teamwork
* Zest

## Write down your top strengths

Write down your top five strengths in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| 4. |  |
| 5. |  |

## Use your strengths every day for five days

Make an effort to use one strength a day in a new way, every day for a week, either at work or at home. Think about how to use your strengths when you face a tough situation. For example, try using a strength to tackle a problem. Reflect on what happens when you do.

Fill in the table below at the end of each day.

Day 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What made you use your strength? |  |
| How did you use it? |  |
| What happened next? |  |

Day 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What made you use your strength? |  |
| How did you use it? |  |
| What happened next? |  |

Day 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What made you use your strength? |  |
| How did you use it? |  |
| What happened next? |  |

Day 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What made you use your strength? |  |
| How did you use it? |  |
| What happened next? |  |

Day 5

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What made you use your strength? |  |
| How did you use it? |  |
| What happened next? |  |

Then use your strengths in difficult situations

After a week, you’ll start to be more aware of your strengths. After that, when things get tough, consciously think about which strength or strengths you can use to deal with difficult situations.