

GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance

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The Web site for this book is at www.simplystrengths.com.

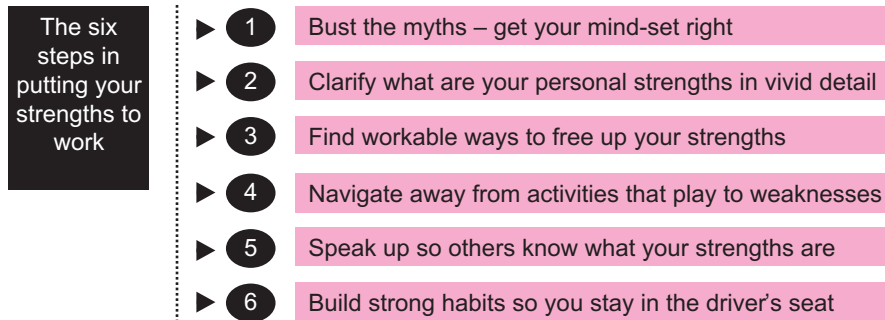
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MAIN IDEA

What percentage of your average work day do you spend doing those things which play to your personal strengths?

When more than two million people answered this question, it was found only about 17-percent of people were able to answer that they spend the majority of their work days playing to their strengths. Everyone else seem to get sidetracked into activities which are unavoidably nonproductive. And this is despite the fact numerous studies of effective organizations have shown great achievers focus on capitalizing on their strengths rather than worrying about fixing their weaknesses.

The challenge is to find more ways to put your strengths to work every day. It might sound impossible given your work constraints, but almost two people out of ten are already managing to do that. To join their ranks, there are six steps you need to take every day:



Step #1 – Bust the myths – get your mind-set right Page 2

You will be successful in putting your strengths to work only if you believe that capitalizing on your strengths is more productive than trying to fix your weaknesses. Move away from this remedial mind-set by confronting head-on the three myths that keep people locked into worrying about their weaknesses first.

Step #2 – Clarify what are your personal strengths in vivid detail Page 3

Your personal strengths are those specific activities which you do consistently well to world-class or near-perfect standard. If you are to have any hope of pushing more of your time towards your strengths, you need to clarify what specific real-world activities constitute your strengths. This isn't as hard as it sounds because normally your strengths will be those activities you know you're already good at and which you passionately love to do.

Step #3 – Find workable ways to free up your strengths Pages 4 - 5

Armed with knowledge of your personal strengths, it's now up to you to make them relevant to your job. In practice, this usually means volunteering for teams where your strengths can find full expression. Nobody else is going to have as much interest in doing those things which harness your strengths as passionately as you do so take charge and become very proactive in positioning yourself advantageously.

Step #4 – Navigate away from activities that play to weaknesses Page 6

At the same time as you seek opportunities to harness your strengths, navigate away from activities you know you're weak at. Work hard and bring resolve to your efforts to stay away from all those activities which weaken and dilute your effectiveness. Don't even think about taking dead aim and trying to improve your weaknesses – that's a complete waste of time and effort. On the contrary, figure out how to spend the least amount of time possible working in areas of weakness.

Step #5 – Speak up so others know what your strengths are Page 7

Don't be shy about telling others your strengths and your weaknesses. It's vital that you have a my-strengths-and-my-weaknesses conversation with your manager. You should also have the same conversation with your peers so when project responsibilities are divvied up, they have a feel for where you can contribute the most. If you are to have any real hope of maximizing the amount of time you spend in areas of personal strength, you need to excel at having these conversations with bosses and coworkers. Learn how to talk about your strengths without bragging and to talk about your weaknesses without whining.

Step #6 – Build strong habits so you stay in the driver's seat Page 8

To stay in the zone where your strengths can come to the fore, you need to be clear-headed. You need to build good habits which will allow you to stay in control week-in and week-out. This is the only way you will have any chance of continuing to push towards activities which strengthen you and avoid those other activities which will only weaken you.

