



Post SWOT: Leveraging Your Strengths

BACKGROUND:

Culturally we tend to focus on fixing weaknesses. Research has shown that people who focused on their strengths and apply these to maximise their opportunities reported higher levels of self-belief. This includes being capable of taking on new challenges and achieving the things they want to achieve (*Govindji and Linley, 2011*).

They also experienced higher levels of psychological vitality, that is, having feelings of positive energy. In turn, this reinforces higher levels of self-esteem (*Proctor, Maltby and Linley, 2011*).

The use of strengths correlates with mindfulness which is the ability to focus and be present in the moment. This has been shown to help control stress and build resilience, including the ability to bounceback by using setbacks as a motivation to achieve more (*Jarden, Jose, Kashdan, Simpson, McLachlan and Mackenzie, 2012*).

This does not mean ignoring our weaknesses, simply that more energy goes into maximising our strengths. Weaknesses may be mitigated through acknowledging others may be better at certain things and partnering with or delegating to these individuals. We may also act to improve a weakness – if it is business critical. Otherwise a healthier and more productive approach is to act on opportunities that leverage strengths.

EXERCISE:

Review your personal SWOT. Think about how you might mitigate any business-critical Weaknesses or deal with the Threats and set out how you might do this. Then consider your Opportunities. Which are the top 3 that you could act upon? The set out your top 3 Strengths below, then for each Strength ask yourself:

- Which strengths might I leverage to make the most of my opportunities?
- How could I use this strength more in life and/or work?
- What is underneath this strength? And how could I turn this strength into a further opportunity?
- What ideas have I had that I've been putting off? What could I really enjoy?
- Where could I use this strength to make a difference in my life? My career? My relationships?
- Where could I really excel if I just let myself?

My top Strengths are: What qualities do you most like about yourself? What are you best at? What do you most enjoy?	Considering my Opportunities, this Strength can be Leveraged by: Review the questions above, then brainstorm and write below a quick 3-5 bullet point action plan of what you could do to leverage your strengths.
<u>Strength 1:</u>	<u>I can leverage by:</u>



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<u>Strength 2:</u>	<u>I can leverage by:</u>
<u>Strength 3:</u>	<u>I can leverage by:</u>

Circle ONE action from each Strength that you will take forwards, and act upon it within the next week.

POST-EXERCISE REFLECTION:

How does it feel to focus on your strengths?

What do you notice about yourself after completing this exercise?

How could you bring more of that into your everyday life?

Notes: