
Strengths and Overdone Strengths

This is a simple exercise that is a great way to begin exploring strengths and overdone strengths in a **group session**. It can of course be adapted to work 1-1, but the nice thing with exploring in a group, is that it allows an impartial/third party view which can make the possible downsides easier to consider.

Your Strengths... and Overdone Strengths (Using a competency model or role profile)

Refer to the relevant competency model or role profile and participants to rank them in terms from best to worst. Then, ask people to pair up with someone who has the same (or similar) strengths.

Ask them to spend 10-15 minutes talking about their strengths, and writing down all the positive things associated with it. Give them some **Angel/Devil** cards and ask them to populate the 'angel' side.

Ask them to feed back all the positive things about their strengths to the rest of the group. Facilitate a group discussion.

Then ask groups to 'swap' characteristics, and consider the 'flip side' of these strengths, i.e. what they are like if they are overdone. For example, someone who is high on 'quality' may be considered 'picky' if this strength is overdone.

Ask them to populate the other side of the angel/devil cards, and feed back to the rest of the group.

Then, move on to consider how these strengths (and overdone strengths) can make things heaven (or hell) for:

- Colleagues
- Customers
- Their Managers
- The people who work for them

Ask participants to work in the same groups, but take a different 'strength' to the one they have worked with before. Ask them to put themselves in the shoes of team members or colleagues: in what situations would this strength be well-received, i.e. make their life 'heaven', and in what circumstances would it be inappropriate and make their life 'hell'?

Allow 15 minutes for group work, and then lead a full group debrief.

Your Strengths... and Overdone Strengths (Using personal reflection)

Complete the same exercise, but ask everyone to identify 6 strengths that they feel they have. Place on 'angel' cards (one on each card) and then put all these cards in a pool. Mix them up and share out randomly.

Ask everyone to then write down the 'flip-side' of these strengths as described previously.

Then everyone can retrieve their original cards and identify situations when their strength has worked for them, and when it has been overdone and worked against them.

You can link into the **Johri window** here – we THINK we are being open and responsive but perhaps others see it as indecisive (for example).

Explore how we can stop it going into over-drive.

Working 1-1

Complete the exercise in a similar way – the individual identifies positive traits, including those they feel themselves AND those that others have identified. THEN select some of those to look at 'in the extreme' and consider when that may have happened and the impact it had.

What are the signs to look for that you may be going into over-drive?

Strengths and overdone strengths – See the good

Another variation is to start with the negative features. Perhaps characteristics of people they find difficult to work with.

Brainstorm a list (without naming names) and then either in full group or in smaller groups, look at what positive intentions might be driving these behaviours. For example, someone who is a micro-manager may have great personal responsibility.

Ask how some of their 'good intentions' may be viewed by other people?

You can also use this to lead into a discussion around conflict, collaboration and team work.

Working 1-1

Ask the individual to identify surprising negative feedback/comments they have received and (via coaching questions) explore why this may be to uncover the positive intention behind the behaviour. Y

You can then explore how to spot the signals that strengths may be going into over-drive and have the opposite effect than that desired?