

Aren't Your Weaknesses Just Overdone Strengths?

When someone asks you to list your strengths and weaknesses, which do you find easiest to do?

How often do you acknowledge and use your strengths?

Do you dwell on your weaknesses or do you plan ways to address them?

If you've ever done any psychometric/personality tests, you may have a clear idea of your strengths and learning styles.

One test I've done in the past is the SDI (Strengths Deployment Inventory) Test, and the outcomes were a revelation to me. You not only get a list of your strengths, but for each of these areas it lists what happens when you overdo these strengths. It's been really useful to me, both for my own development and when helping clients tackle some of their areas.

Using this idea, here are some examples (taken from my experience of working with staff in schools) ...

Strength	What can happen when you over this
Confidence	You come across as arrogant or cocky
Trusting	You can become gullible and may be taken advantage of
Organised	You can become too controlling of other people's tasks / roles
Sociable	You can be too friendly at the expense of maintaining professionalism
Honest	You can end up saying things you regret, or sharing something that's been said to you in confidence



It's all about knowing where your boundaries are ... those 'tipping points' beyond which your areas of strength start working against you!

3 Key Tips

- 1. Be clear about your strengths** and recognise when you're using them. What behaviours are you using? How do you sound? What feelings go with using each strength?
- 2. Know your boundaries.** When does your strength become a weakness? What changes about your behaviour? How do you think/feel differently?
- 3. Be honest with yourself!** Recognise when you're overdoing something, and learn from what you observe about yourself. *If you're not sure, or need more evidence, ask a trusted colleague for some feedback on what they notice about you for a given scenario.*

Remember - seeing weaknesses as overdone strengths is a really positive and productive way of maximising your personal effectiveness at work (and beyond!)