

Extracting Strengths from Problems ¹ – Self-Discovery Exercise

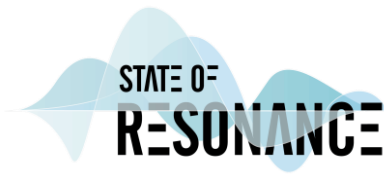
Strengths are things at which we are naturally good. Using our strengths energizes us and helps us feel and perform at our best. Examples of strengths include curiosity, kindness, fairness, perseverance, humility, and hope.

Strengths, however, can be used too much or too little, causing problems. For example, imagine that a friend is upset with you for being overly curious about a sensitive family matter. In this problem, you may have overplayed your strength “curiosity.” An example of underusing a strength would be to fail to laugh along when a friend shares a funny anecdote about you. Here, you would be underusing the strength “humor.”

In this exercise, we will look closely at a current problem in your life, something you are struggling with at the moment, and rather than focus on this problem by determining what you are doing ‘wrong,’ we will focus on what strength you are using too much or too little.



¹ Credits: This tool was created by Hugo Alberts (Ph.D.) and Lucinda Poole (PsyD).: Positive Psychology Program Copyright.



Step 1: Describe a current problem

What are you struggling with now? **Describe this problem** in detail below:

E.g., I am feeling stressed about an upcoming presentation because I am underprepared.

Write here....

Step 2: Identify problematic context or life domain

In what area of your life does this problem have the greatest influence? Friends, family, work, health, other?
Please write down the context below:

E.g., At work.

Write here....

Step 3: Identify problematic behavior in yourself

Is there something that you are doing **too much or too little** of that may be contributing to this problem?

E.g., I am spending too much time perfecting my slides, and not enough time working on my actual speech.

Write here....

Step 4: Extract your strength

How can you **reframe** the behavior identified in the previous step as a strength that is being overplayed or underplayed?

Remember that strength is something at which you are naturally good, and in the context of this personal problem, you may have overplayed or underplayed one of your strengths.

E.g., Underlying strengths of mine in this situation are “attention to detail” and “conscientiousness.”



Step 5: Action(s) to remedy the problem

What can you **do** to help remedy the problem? Describe at least **one actionable step** that you could you take.

E.g., Accept that my slides are 'good enough' and save and upload to my USB; turn my full attention to speech writing and stay on this task for the next 30 minutes (set a timer if necessary).

Write here....

Write here....

End of Exercise – Thank you completing it