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STRENGTHS&WEAKNESSES

One of the hardest questions that we are asked during an interview is “what are your strengths?”

Many of us baulk at this - we feel strange and immodest saying that we are good at something. And what if we are not? What if we just think that we are, and there is someone better than us?

We recommend using the VIA Character Strengths survey to get an objective insight into your strengths. The survey takes you through a series of questions (developed by some highly regarded psychologists) and ranks your strengths from 1 through to 24. Now you can answer that question easily.

Your answer is, “I expected you to ask this question, so I completed the VIA Character strengths survey to get an objective perspective, and my five key strengths are...”

Then you can offer your thoughts, insights and anecdotes to illustrate how these strengths impact your life. Then comes that other dreaded question...

What are your weaknesses?

I have asked that of people in past interviews and had answers such as “my biggest weakness is that I work too hard” or “I never give up” - truly!

So, to avoid the clichés, we have created a framework mapped around those 24 strengths. Just as there is no light without dark, your strengths can also be a weakness. Being able to explain these can really help you in an interview sense.

VIA Character Strength	The downside of this strength	How to think about this
Creativity	Unrealistic	When you are perpetually creative, you tend to prefer form over function. Things can become unrealistic as you seek the new and the different.
Curiosity	Restless	Curiosity killed the cat! Curious people can get themselves into strife through perpetually seeking to understand why things are the way that they are. It can be hard to pin them down to completion.
Judgement	Slow to decide	People with judgement as a strength take time to know all opinions and perspectives. Often this can slow things down. They can lack a sense of urgency.
Love of Learning	Don't stick to one thing	People who love learning have 5 books going at the same time! They can feel like they put their hands up for every project and don't finish the things that they start.
Perspective	Not good with the details	Being great at seeing the big picture can mean that you miss the small things. Sometimes people with perspective aren't great with the details and can be happy with 80% correct. This can be a problem if something needs to be perfect.
Bravery	Quick to fight	Being brave is an incredible strength that can sometimes lead to taking big risks. Big risks can mean big consequences that are not always positive.
Perseverance	Don't know when to stop	There are times when giving up is the right thing to do. Perseverance as a strength can mean that sometimes you end up flogging the metaphorical dead horse!
Honesty	Insensitive	Sometimes being honest can come across as insensitive to other people. Do you need to tell the whole truth? Can you temper it?

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VIA Character Strength	The downside of this strength	How to think about this
Zest	Annoying	People with zest can exhaust others. Their energy and enthusiasm can be infectious and sometimes just too much or out of place.
Love	Vulnerable	People who love others easily can be vulnerable to manipulation. They can sometimes be too trusting, believing that people's intentions are always good.
Kindness	Naïve	Kind people give freely. They are open and generous. This can sometimes be naïve, as they seek to do good and see good in others.
Social Intelligence	Manipulative	People who are really good at reading others can sometimes come across as untrustworthy. It can feel like they are bending the will of others.
Teamwork	Not a Leader	People who are fantastic at teamwork are sometimes not the best at leading people. They can get 'stuck in the weeds' and care too much about the little issues.
Fairness	Not opportunistic	People who are really fair take a lot of time to make sure that everyone is equal. This can make them sometimes too slow to grasp opportunity and take it for themselves.
Leadership	Leadership	Interestingly, the downside of the leadership strength, is leadership itself. Sometimes even leaders need to be led and feel part of the team.
Forgiveness	Get Burned	People who forgive easily, sometimes get burned by others. Sometimes, others take advantage of them and the fact that whatever they do, they will be forgiven.
Humility	Don't get credit	Humble people don't seek the limelight. Sometimes they lose the credit to less worthy people.
Prudence	Not a risk taker	Prudent people are less likely to take risks. They can miss the high return opportunities.
Self-Regulation	Rigid, set in their ways	People who are highly self-regulated are not always great with dealing with unexpected changes and events. They like routine and discipline, spontaneity can be hard for them.
Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Impractical	People who prize form over function can seem impractical. If a person is compelled to create beauty, it can be costly financially and in time.
Gratitude	Don't push for more	Thankful people can often leave opportunity on the table. A propensity to feel content can result in a stunted self-drive.
Hope	Unrealistic	Hopeful people can sometimes seem naïve and unrealistic. Whilst an admirable sentiment, sometimes more than hope is needed to ensure success, and both the positive and the negative has to be weighed against each other.
Humour	Insensitive	Funny people who seek to laugh at all can be insensitive. What they see as humorous can be hurtful to others.
Spirituality	Constrained Perspective	Spiritual people are often bound within the context of a philosophy or theology. Sometimes they are unable to understand alternative points of view or perspectives.