



Strengths Guided Discovery Exercise

Once you've received feedback from those who know you well, you're ready to start the Strengths Guided Discovery Exercise. This is a culmination of some of the most powerful questions you can ask yourself to get in touch with your strengths, talents, and skills. There is no scoring key, or right or wrong answers. This should be considered a process exercise, in that taking the time to think deeply about these questions will give you ideas, insights, and new perspectives on yourself and what your strengths, talents, and skills really are.

Find a time and place where you can do this without interruption for at least 15 to 30 minutes. Turn off your phone, computer, TV, and put a Do Not Disturb sign on your door if you have to.

Take 10 slow and long breaths as described in the Strengths Guided Discovery Exercise in the book. To do this, breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds and then blow out through your mouth for another 5 seconds. Don't take the deepest breaths possible. Rather, take slow and long breaths. Do it slow enough so that you can stretch it over the entire 10 second breath cycle (in and out). You should focus on the act of breathing. This should result in a mental state of calm focus and help clear your mind before you begin.

Now write down your responses to the following questions:

1. Throughout your schooling, which classes/subjects did you do best in?

2. What was it about the classes/subjects that you enjoyed?

3. Throughout your schooling, which classes/subjects did you struggle with?

4. What was it about the classes/subjects that caused you to struggle?

5. What types of groups or work settings do you feel you fit into best?

6. What groups or work settings do you feel you fit into the least?

7. What activities make you feel like time is moving by slowly and painfully?

8. What kinds of activities give you the feeling of being in the zone (e.g., when you don't notice time and it seems to fly by)?

9. In what activities do you feel most like yourself, when it feels natural to be doing what you're doing?

10. What activities lead you to feel exhausted or tired relatively quickly? (Think more about stress and mental energy as opposed to physically draining activities like housework)

11. What activities can you do without noticing fatigue? When it feels effortless?

12. What do you do better than anything else?

13. Do you have any strengths, talents, or skills you haven't developed but wished you had?

14. Do you have any strengths, talents, or skills you were discouraged from developing?

15. Which strengths, talents, or skills do you think you could really develop if you tried?

16. What do you feel your natural strengths, talents, or skills are?

Once you've done this exercise, ask yourself:

- What did I learn about myself and my strengths, talents, and skills?
- Is there any way to tie in what I discovered in this process with what I am currently focusing on in my life?
- Is there any way to tie in what I discovered in this process with what I can focus on in the future?
- Is there some action I can take to look into the possibility of incorporating more of these strengths, talents, and skills into my current focus or future focus?

Now put it away for at least a full day. Then come back to what you wrote and follow the breathing instructions again. Review what you've written and see what kind of reactions you get when you read it for the second time. Note any new insights or ideas.