

Naming and Claiming Your Strengths

Identifying Good Experiences—Step One

(Recommended Time: 15 minutes)

The definition of a Good Experience is:

*Something you feel you did well,
enjoyed doing, and
are proud of.*

Elaborations:

- o Something you *did*...you actively made it happen.
- o *You* feel you did *well*...it is your feeling that is important.
- o All three criteria should apply to each Good Experience.
- o Good Experiences can come from anytime or any place in your life's journey. Review your whole life for possibilities.
- o A Good Experience should be a specific, concrete event that describes a particular short story of your life. It has a beginning and an ending
- o A Good Experience is often a small "triumph" in your life that gives you a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Good Experience #1:

Good Experience #2:

Good Experience #3:

Good Experience #4:

Considering Possible Strengths—Step Two

(Recommended Time: 10 minutes)

This list of Possible Strengths is offered to suggest some words or phrases that can be used to describe strengths. There are many different words and phrases to describe strengths. There are only 100 examples on this list and it is by no means an exhaustive list. These are offered to stimulate your thinking about different ways that your strengths might be described. Hopefully, before you identify four strengths to describe yourself in Step Four, you will think of even better words and phrases to describe your strengths.

To become more familiar with the words on this list, please read each word or phrase and circle the ones that might be appropriate for describing you. When you are finished circling those words, go back to those that were circled and underline four to six that might be the most appropriate for describing yourself.

100 examples of possible strengths—do you have more?

Athletic	Resourceful	Adaptable	Motivated to Achieve	Organized
Initiator	Analytical	Managing	Altruistic	Playful
Ethical	Leader	Communicator	Competitive	Caring
Considerate	Broad perspective	Brave	Observant	Hopeful
Careful	Imaginative	Practical	Sensitive	Mentoring
Strong faith	Spatial	Appreciative of beauty	Persistent	Disciplined
Authentic	Empathic	Evenhanded	Focused	Goal-oriented
Curiosity		Thinks ahead	Articulate	Cooperative

	Socially responsible			
Tolerant	Creative	Kind	Grateful	Trustworthy
Aware of feelings	Honest	Artistic	Sees patterns	Brings people together
Sympathetic	Hospitable	Inquisitive	Cheerful	Intellectual
Self-control	Introspective	Follows through	Intelligent	Zestful
Lifetime learner	Inventive	Thrifty	Researching	Charismatic
Efficient	Fair	Open minded	Optimistic	Responsible
Problem solver	Intuitive	Self-confident	Intense	Friendly
Wisdom	Enthusiastic	Balanced	Prudent	Energetic
Generous	Computing	Even tempered	Enjoys people	Witty
Courageous	Original	Diplomatic	Loyal	Skilled negotiator
Mechanical	Persuasive	Planner	Coordinating	Foresight
Critical thinker	Humility	Spiritual	Musical	Technical

Describing Good Experiences and Identifying Possible Strengths—Step Three

(Recommended Time: 45-50 minutes)

Gather together in a group of four (Quad).

1. In a quad, each participant will have around 10 minutes to describe 3 to 4 Good Experiences (identified and described as part of Step One).
2. The others in the quad will listen and identify qualities they consider to be strengths demonstrated as the speaker describes each Good Experience. The listeners will list these strengths on a feedback sheet, titled Possible Strengths List. Later each listener will give the page of Possible Strengths to the person who described the Good Experiences after reading the list to the speaker. Each page listing possible strengths should have the name of the speaker at the top of the page.
3. After the first speaker finishes talking about his or her 3 or 4 Good Experiences (subject to 10 minute time limit), each of the listeners in the quad will tell the speaker the strengths they noticed. After this oral feedback, each listener gives the written page of strengths (the feedback sheet) to the speaker.
4. After the first speaker has received her or his feedback, the attention shifts to the second member of the quad who will describe 3 or 4 Good Experiences and then receive feedback. After that a third member of the group becomes the focus. And then the fourth.

Consideration if the small group is composed of three or five participants.

- If the group has only three participants, each participant will be able to take a little more time to describe his or her experiences and receive feedback.

- If the group has five participants, additional time will be provided in order for each participant to benefit from the feedback of the other members of the group.

Organizing and Prioritizing Your Strengths—Step Four

(Recommended Time: 15 minutes)

In this step you will look over your lists of possible strengths and develop a prioritized list of strength-words or phrases that you think best reflect your strengths by doing the following:

- Study the sheets of possible strengths you received from other participants in your quad.
- Circle the ones that seem to be the best descriptions of your strengths and then add some of your own strengths-words that may not have been mentioned
- Re-read through the list of 101 possible strengths shown in Step 2 and double-underline those that you now claim as descriptors.
- From all of these lists of possible strengths, choose 7 to 9 strengths-words or phrases that best capture your own ideas of your strengths. List them below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

- After studying the list of 7 to 9 Strengths, choose four strengths that seem to be your most valued and your most dependable. When choosing the four valued strengths, use the following criteria to evaluate each strength:
 - ✓ Does this strength show up in many of my Good Experiences?
 - ✓ Is the strength one that I have used often in the past?
 - ✓ Is it a strength that I enjoy?
 - ✓ Is it a strength that I strongly want in my future life?
 - ✓ Am I inner-motivated to use my strength?

Then prioritize the four, listing the one you value the most first. List these four strengths in order on the worksheet titled Identifying Actual Events When You Demonstrated Each Strength (Step 5).

Identifying Actual Events When You Demonstrated Each Strength—Step Five

(Recommended Time: 15 minutes)

After you have identified four Strengths, write their titles on the spaces provided below, identify at least two past events or activities where you demonstrated each of the strengths. In a way, you are offering proof that you have these strengths. Some of these events may be Good Experiences that you identified in Step 1. Other events that meet most of the criteria of a Good Experience might be used as proof of the strengths listed on the worksheet. Use a couple of keywords or a phrase to identify each event, so that you could remember the event and describe it to someone if you were asked to do so.

Events or Activities Demonstrating Your Strengths

Strength #1: _____

o 1st Event:

o 2nd Event:

Strength #2: _____

o 1st Event:

- o 2nd Event:

Strength #3: _____

- o 1st Event:

- o 2nd Event:

Strength #4: _____

- o 1st Event:

- o 2nd Event:

Making a Poster of Your Strengths, with Events that Demonstrate Each Strength—Step Six

(Recommended Time: 15 minutes)

Using the information from the worksheet, Identifying Actual Events When You Demonstrated Each Strength (Step 5), make a poster that shows your four possible strengths with your best examples of events where you demonstrated each of the strengths.

Title the poster, Four Strengths of (your name). Make the words legible for readers at least four feet away.

It is recommended that you use a light colored file folder to make this poster. You might consider using two different colors, one for strengths and one for the events that demonstrate your strengths.

Presenting Your Strengths to Others—Step Seven

(Recommended Time: 5 minutes for each person)

During this last step, you will have some time to share the strengths you have identified. Hopefully, you might even be able to improve your wording or description of one or more of your strengths during this time of sharing. You might even ask for suggestions as to how you could communicate the meaning of one or more of the strengths you have identified.

It is useful to think of these particular strengths as draft descriptions that you are in the process of improving. Even after you complete these sessions, you will benefit from continuing your efforts to identify and communicate your strengths. Articulating your strengths, especially your Dependable Strengths, should probably be a life-long activity that will continue to lead to new insights and more elaborate ways of communicating your self-identity. Use your poster as a first draft that you continue to elaborate and improve. Show improved posters to other people who might help you develop new posters that are more clear and useful for communicating your significant strengths. Also, continue to document the evidence supporting the strengths that you have identified.

Naming and Claiming Your Strengths is adapted from *Articulating Strengths Together (AST): An Interactive Process to Enhance Positivity*, by Jerald R Foster, Ph.D., Center for Dependable Strengths, 2009.