

Strengthen your Strengths

A Guide to Enhancing your Self-Management Skills

by Peter Honey

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ISBN-13: 978-1902899-33-6

ISBN-10: 1-902899-33-4

Published by Peter Honey Publications Limited

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Registered in England and Wales No. 3754757

VAT No. GB208066480

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Introducing Self-Management Skills

This booklet focuses exclusively on your self-management skills. These are the skills you use to organise, discipline and develop yourself. They are fundamental because they are about your personal effectiveness and they underpin everything you do.

Self-management skills include the way you:

- Motivate yourself and remain committed.
- Manage your time.
- Manage unwanted stress.
- Act with integrity.
- Embrace change.
- Keep yourself innovative/creative.
- Make quality a priority in all you do.
- Take responsibility for developing yourself.

Quite where self-management skills such as these end, and your other skills begin is, frankly, a bit fuzzy. There are clearly vast areas of overlap between different skills in different categories. Your integrity, for example, will have a significant bearing on your inter-personal skills; your creativity will spill over into your problem-solving skills; your motivation will impact on your people-management skills; and your self-development skills will enhance them all.

Because all these skills are inextricably interwoven, there is no one, correct starting point. However, an exploration of your

self-management skills is as useful a starting place as any – particularly because, as we have seen, they underpin everything you do.

How to use this booklet

At the heart of this booklet are eight checklists that are designed to help you identify your current strengths. Each checklist has a brief introduction and is followed by notes that expand on each of the items in the checklist.

To get the most out of this booklet:

- 1 Read the two introductory sections – ‘Why Strengths?’ and ‘Building on your Strengths’. These set the scene and give the rationale for the strengths approach.
- 2 Using one of the blank Score Keys found at the back of this book complete one of the checklists using the simple 3 rating system.
- 3 Consult the notes to see if they contain ideas you could use to strengthen your strengths.
- 4 Repeat steps 2 and 3 for as many of the checklists as you wish. The checklists can be used in any order. It is not recommended that you complete more than one checklist in one sitting (information overload!). It is more fruitful to tackle each checklist as a separate exercise and build up your skill base gradually.

Why Strengths?

The purpose of this booklet is to help you to:

- Identify your strengths.
- Build on your strengths.
- Take full advantage of your strengths.

Doing these three things, more conscientiously than you probably do at present, will make you more effective and greatly enhance your well-being.

The booklet is based on certain assumptions:

- That everyone has strengths.
- That you have some strengths you don't know you have.
- That building on strengths produces bigger gains than overcoming weaknesses.
- That you can find additional ways to use your strengths.

Why the emphasis on strengths rather than weaknesses?

Strengths are assets; weaknesses are deficits. If you were running a business and you wanted to improve its performance, would you seek new ways to exploit the things it is already good at? Or would you work hard to improve the things it isn't good at? If you were a professional tennis player, would you want your coach to show you how to build on your natural talents or to work at overcoming your weaknesses?

The honest answer is that you would probably want to do both. But, assuming that you wanted to maximise the likelihood of