

BACK-HOME APPLICATION

Getting to Know Your Strengths

A. Learning About Your Talents

The following questions and processes will help you develop a clearer picture of your talents.

1. What kinds of tasks or skills seem intuitive to you? You may have been self-taught in these areas. Or if you did attend a class, you probably found it very easy or fun, and wondered why others were finding it so difficult. What do these experiences tell you about your talents? (Remember, a talent is not the same as a skill. You may have a natural talent for languages, but you still have to acquire the skills of grammar, vocabulary, and accent if you want to master German. Or you may have the natural talent to stand up and speak with confidence before a large audience, but if you want to be a public debater you have to learn the techniques of persuasive discourse. Or you may have an aptitude for drawing creative and aesthetically pleasing buildings, but to be an architect you have to learn the skills inherent in geometry and geometrical drawing.)

2. What do others tell you you're good at? What do you get complimented on? What does this tell you about your underlying talents?

3. Think about the jobs/tasks in which you have excelled. What led you to excel? What were the things you were able to do that could not be learned by reading a book or attending a lecture? What do these jobs/tasks tell you about your talents?

BACK-HOME APPLICATION

Getting to Know Your Strengths (Continued)

B. Learning About Your Purpose

The following questions and processes will help you develop a clearer picture of your purpose (i.e., the things that you value highly and care deeply about; the things that give your work meaning and confer a sense of fulfillment).

1. What has been the most satisfying job or project you've worked on in the last 5 years? What was it about the job that made it so satisfying? What personal needs or values were satisfied at the time?

2. What have been the worst jobs or projects you've ever worked on? What was similar about these jobs or projects? What career needs or values were being ignored or sacrificed at that time?

3. If you inherited a fortune and could choose your work without having to consider salary in making the decision, what work would you choose? Why—what would that give you? Why do you want that? Keep asking yourself, "Why would I want that," until you can respond, "I just want it for its own sake, no other reason." The final answer you get should offer some strong clues as to your dominant values and the things that give your life meaning.
