

---

# ***GROWTH POINTS***

---

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

---

## **Know Your Strengths**

---

Do you hope to be a better leader this year? If so, you must first lead yourself. More and more ministry leaders must learn to lead themselves if they plan to lead their church, ministry, or organization well.

So, where do you start?

A common question is “Should I work on my weaknesses or work from my strengths?”

It’s a difficult question since most of us know our weaknesses more than our strengths. We realize what we’re not good at more than what we’re good at doing.

While it’s tempting to work on our weaknesses, the best results come from knowing and working from our strengths.

To discover your strengths, try the following.

## **Obtain Feedback**

Feed back comes from two sources: results and outside observers.

First, analyze past results.

Look back over the last year or two and ask yourself several questions: “Where have I found joy? What have I done that produced expected results? Where have I observed myself as competent? Incompetent?” An honest appraisal of your leadership will show where you have strengths and weaknesses.

Second, seek other opinions.

Ask those with whom you work to tell you what you do well and not so well. If they have safety to be honest with you, listen to what they say. Their feedback will affirm what you’ve already found. In all cases the views of others will help clarify strengths and weaknesses in your own mind.

## ***Take Action***

Home in on your strengths by doing the following.

### 1. Direct your work toward your strengths.

As far as possible, place yourself where your strengths can shine. In some cases this is as simple as redirecting your time or actions so your strengths are better utilized. In other situations it may mean changing jobs or roles.

### 2. Improve your strengths.

If you put time into improving your weaknesses, you'll only become good enough to "not be incompetent," but your weaknesses will never become your strengths.

In most situations it's best to staff against your weaknesses by obtaining help from others, while working to improve your already known strengths.

### 3. Learn how you work.

Your strengths and weaknesses can be modified, but they are not likely to change.

Each person utilizes their strengths in particular ways (i.e., how they work). For example, some work well in groups, while others perform best alone. Some are good with details, while others are better at seeing the big picture. Some prefer noisy rooms, while others appreciate quiet surroundings.

How you work is a strength that is often overlooked. Determining not only your skill strengths, but also your work strengths, will help you become a better leader.

What are you good at doing (skill strengths)?

How are you good at doing them (work strengths)?

If you know and utilize this knowledge, you'll be a better leader this year.

*Growth Points* is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

Copyrighted 2024 ISSN 1520-5096