

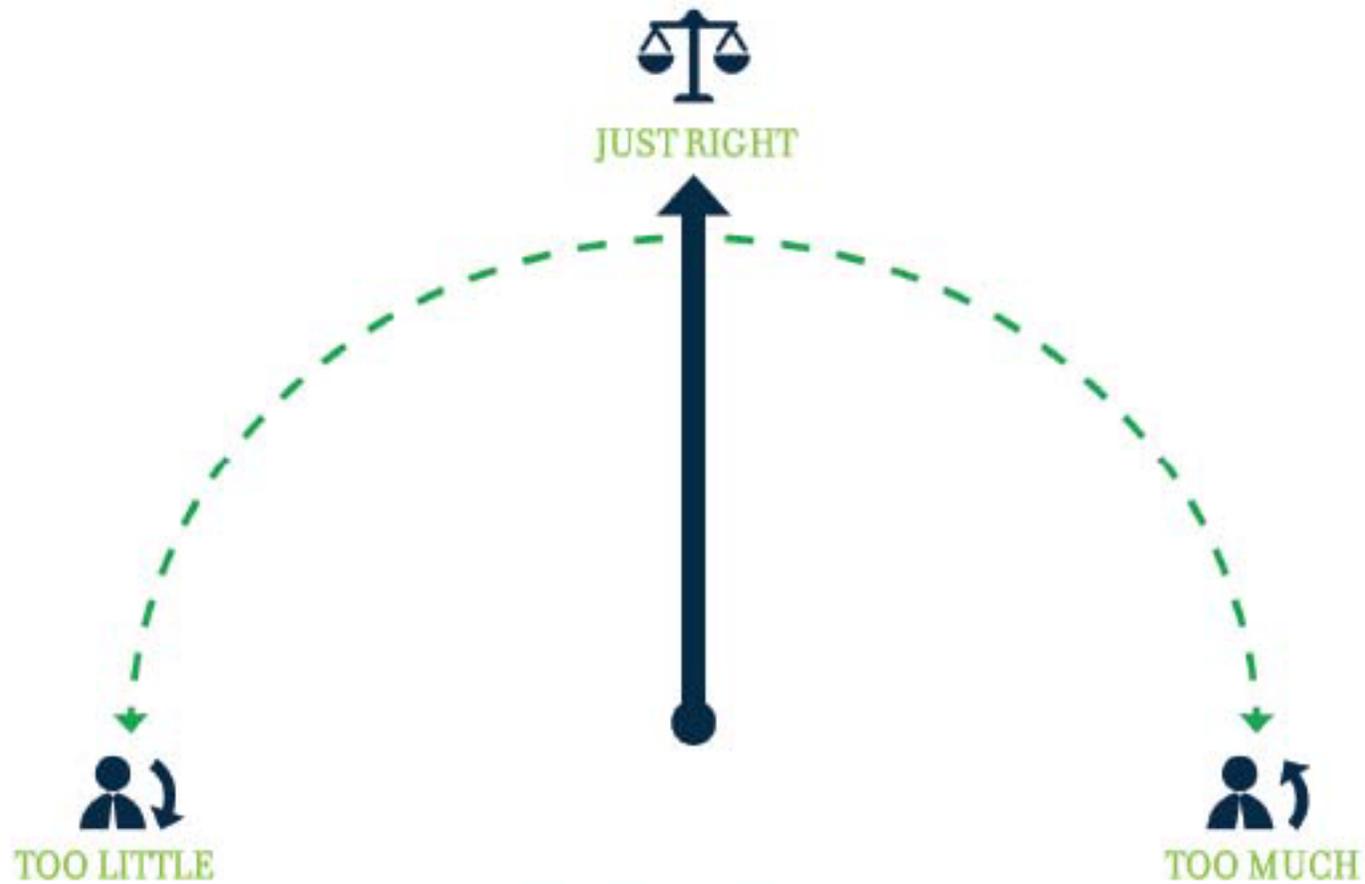
A woman with dark hair in braids, wearing a black tank top, is flexing her biceps in a gym setting. She is looking off to the side with a determined expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing gym equipment and bright lighting.

Can you use your
strengths
to thrive?

BEACON 2.0 Chapter
3 ENGAGEMENT
Lesson 2

ThriveAbility

CAN YOU GET YOUR STRENGTHS JUST RIGHT?



(Biswas-Daier, Kuchadar & Minhas, 2011)

“THE KEY IS TO KNOW HOW MUCH OF ANY GIVEN STRENGTH TO USE AT ANY GIVEN TIME.”

- Alex Lively

Are you underplaying your strengths?

Underplaying our strengths generally appears as a lack of confidence or procrastination. This is often due to blindness about particular strengths we have to offer, or uncertainty about how to apply them in the situations we're facing. As a result you might have noticed at times you're holding yourself back, dimming yourself down or disengaging from certain situations and people for fear of change or failure.

Are you overplaying your strengths?

For example, people with the strength of honesty often have examples of being too blunt with others. People with the strength of humour will have a story about how they've made a joke at the And people with the strength of kindness or love tell us they tend to give and give and give to everybody else until there is nothing left for themselves and they're completely run down. You may find many of the “weaknesses” you identify in yourself or others are strengths being overplayed.

Can you find the “golden mean” of your strengths?

The good news is that when we get our strengths just right for the situation we're in and the results we want to achieve, we hit the “golden mean” of our strengths. It's **in these moments** we enter the state psychologists call “**flow**.” This is the feeling of being “in the zone” or at “one with the music” when we're completely absorbed in what we're doing, often losing all track of time but afterwards having a real sense of satisfaction about what we've accomplished (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).The art of developing your strengths lies in **finding** this golden mean more frequently, as we go about our lives.



DREAM - HOW MIGHT THIS HELP YOU TO THRIVE?

Discussion points;

- What difference might it make if you focused more on your strengths than your weaknesses, if you spent more time each day doing what you're good at and love doing?
- In what ways do you over/under play your strengths? What impact might this have on you and others?
- If there was one strength that you would like to build, or use more often, what would it be and why? what difference might this make for you?

DESIGN - WHAT WILL YOU DO TO IDENTIFY AND CULTIVATE YOUR STRENGTHS?



Discovering and understanding your strengths

The best way to identify your strengths is taking the free VIA Survey at viacharacter.org. Get to know the 24 strengths better by reading about them on the VIA website or further resources provided. Put up a strengths poster where you can see it so that you become familiar with them, recognise them in yourself and over time, can spot them in others.



Cultivating Strengths Awareness

Magic happens when you observe the impact of strengths on how you feel, **your energy and what you can achieve**. To improve this awareness, keep a strengths journal. Spend a few minutes each night recording how you used your strengths. At the end of the week, review and reflect. What do you notice about your best and worst days? For ideas <http://www.viacharacter.org/resources/ways-to-use-via-character-strengths/>



Getting the balance right

- You can have too little and too much of a good thing. Try to notice when things are not going well and ask yourself – could it be a strength used too much, or too little? E.g. too much humour used at the wrong time, too much kindness to others and not to self? Try to find the “golden mean” of your strengths.



Create a habit to build a strength you want

All the strengths are buildable. You can decide at any time that you want to build, or rebuild a strength that matters to you. You might want to focus on those that are most related to thriving eg gratitude, hope, love, curiosity. You can decide to focus on these, building in a habit each day that builds that specific strength.



“Job Crafting”

Is it possible to “job craft” at work or home, so you and others tasks are more aligned to their strengths? This might involve changing the type and number of tasks you undertake, who you spend time with, or how you think about your work. More at jobcrafting.org



Catching Collisions

When struggling with others, take a step back, see if you can spot strengths they’re using. Could their strengths be colliding with yours? Could your prudence is clashing with their creativity? Can you have a conversation about bringing out the best in each of you.

Give strengths based feedback - if you spot a strength being over/underplayed, providing feedback that a strength could be “turned up or down” may nurture relationships and offer explicit ideas for replacement behavior.



Use strengths in new ways

Choose one of your top strengths, then plan how to use it in different ways this week. Act on your strength as frequently as possible throughout the day, every day for a week. Use the same strength across multiple days, or try using a new one. At the end of the week, write about the strengths you focused on and how you used them. Write in detail about what you did, how you felt, and what you learned from the experience.