

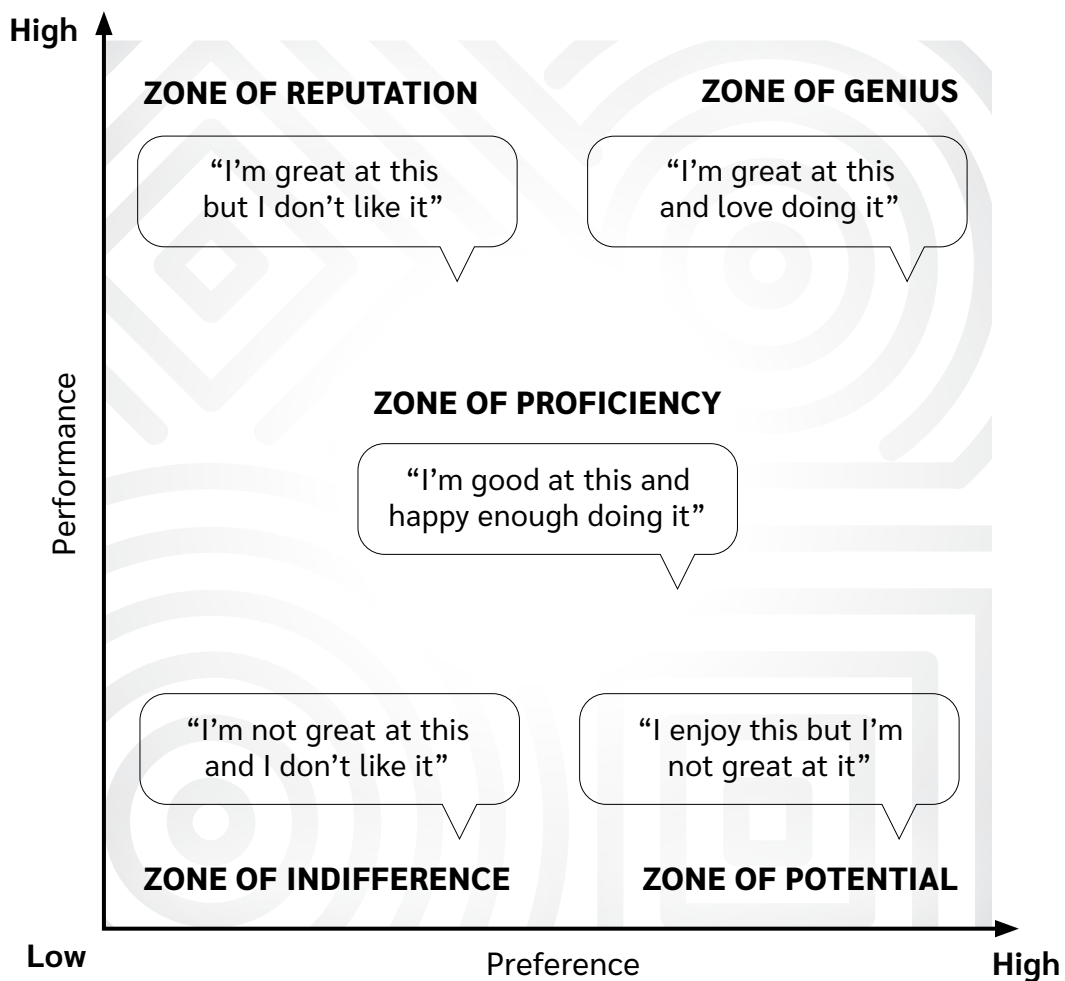


PDF SUPPLEMENT

Thanks for purchasing the audiobook of 'Unleash Your Awesome'. This PDF supplement contains illustrations, lists, endnotes, and other information that appear in the printed version of the book.

Chapter 3

THE STRENGTHS DECK MATRIX



THE STRENGTHS DECK LIST – ALPHABETICAL

STRENGTH NAME	DEFINITION
Accountable	You act with honesty and loyalty, own your decisions, and keep your word.
Activation	You prefer to act rather than thinking or talking, learning as you go.
Amplifier	You focus on strengths to promote individual and team excellence, using them to shift from good to great.
Analytical	You easily spot patterns and causes and uncover all the factors that might influence a situation.
Author	You excel at putting your thoughts and ideas into words and find it easy to communicate through writing.
Benevolent	You act with generosity, kindness, and compassion, caring for others.
Centre-Stage	You engage people’s attention, speaking up easily in groups and naturally holding the floor.
Changemaker	You see (and help others see) the possibilities for change, then bring them into being.
Collector	You gather and store things, whether it is ideas, items, or relationships.
Competitive	You want to be the best in all you do. You assess yourself against others and seek ways to improve.
Composed	You remain calm and self-assured no matter what happens around you.
Connector	You instinctively notice when people have shared interests and make introductions.
Connoisseur	You notice and appreciate beauty and excellence in the world, whether in nature, art, work, or people.
Contextualiser	You seek to understand the present situation through researching and understanding the past.
Coordinator	You arrange resources and requirements for best fit, adjusting them to meet changing demands.
Courageous	You speak up and act based on your beliefs and values, despite fear or opposition; physical or emotional bravery.
Creative	You combine ideas, resources, and things in new and imaginative ways, creating a fresh approach.
Curious	You find new topics and experiences fascinating and constantly explore the world around you.
Decisive	You find it easy to interpret complicated situations and make the right decision quickly.
Deliberative	You choose carefully, weighing risks, anticipating obstacles and challenges and minimising regrets.
Determined	You identify your priorities then act, adjusting to stay on course and achieve your goals.

STRENGTH NAME	DEFINITION
Empathetic	You easily sense how others feel and think, putting yourself in their shoes and imagining their experience.
Endurance	You have high stamina and enjoy working hard, offering your best effort over long periods to achieve results.
Equitable	You treat everyone fairly, paying close attention to justice and equality.
Feedback	You offer insightful positive and negative observations to others to help them develop and improve.
Flexible	You prefer to go with the flow, letting the future unfold and taking things as they come.
Forgiving	You forgive others, offering a second chance while holding them accountable to improve.
Grateful	You recognise all the good things that happen to you and make time to be thankful.
Grit	You persist in the face of challenges and frustrations, overcoming obstacles to finish what you start.
Harmoniser	You build and maintain group consensus, seeking areas of agreement rather than conflict.
Hopeful	You expect and work for a positive future, setting goals, developing strategies, and inspiring others.
Humble	You allow your accomplishments to speak for themselves, recognising the contributions of others to your success.
Humorous	You use laughter and playfulness to help others relax and enjoy themselves.
Improver	You excel at making things better and have a keen eye for spotting opportunities to do so.
Integration	You believe that everything is connected, and there is an overarching sense of meaning in the universe.
Integrity	You stay true to your beliefs, holding to your principles even in the face of pressure from others.
Interpreter	You simplify complex ideas so a wide range of people can understand them.
Intervention	You notice subtle cues and changes and take action before they turn into problems.
Leadership	You take charge, make decisions, and help people work together for common goals.
Legacy	You care deeply about creating a positive difference for those who come after you.
Lifelong Learner	You undertake learning for its own sake, mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge.
Listener	You focus intently on what others have to say, noticing what is and isn't said, and picking up on subtle cues.
Meticulous	You pay attention to the little details that others miss and find accuracy satisfying.
Mobiliser	You have a knack for inspiring other people and motivating them to take action.
Open-Minded	You examine the evidence, see all the sides, and think things through before making up your mind.
Optimistic	You have an upbeat approach, inspiring others to believe in the best, even when things are difficult.

STRENGTH NAME	DEFINITION
Original	You think differently to others and generate unique and ingenious approaches.
Overcomer	You have a special capacity to conquer adversity, picking yourself back up and getting back on track.
People Developer	You easily spot people's potential and help them cultivate it, finding satisfaction in their progress.
Personal Growth	You seek personal development, learning new skills, knowledge and approaches and embracing feedback.
Personaliser	You notice and embrace people's unique qualities, helping different people work together well.
Perspective	You easily see multiple viewpoints and help others broaden their thinking to find new ways forward.
Persuader	You influence others and use words, emotions, and ideas to bring others around to your point of view.
Prepared	You think carefully about what is required, ensuring you are ready to respond to a range of alternatives.
Principled	You have clear values and beliefs that guide your decisions and create meaning and purpose for your life.
Problem-Solver	You excel at resolving problems, especially complex ones, fixing root causes so they don't return.
Purposeful	You feel fulfilled when doing meaningful work and having a positive influence on others.
Quality	You want to get things right the first time and deliver work that is of the highest standard.
Rapport Builder	You find it easy to make connections with new people and win them over.
Rebound	You use setbacks and barriers as energising motivation to move forward and achieve more.
Reflection	You engage in deep thinking and discussions, contemplating ideas, principles, and concepts.
Relationship Developer	You build deep, give-and-take relationships with others.
Self-Assurance	You are confident in your strengths and capabilities, using them to make decisions and achieve your goals.
Self-Aware	You reflect on and understand your behaviour, emotions, strengths, and weaknesses.
Self-Control	You manage your feelings, behaviours, appetites, and emotions, maintaining discipline and self-regulation.
Social Intelligence	You easily recognise emotions in yourself and others and know how to work with them effectively.
Storyteller	You weave engaging stories to share insights, lessons, values and humour.
Strategic	You see the big picture, spotting key issues, patterns, and obstacles, and easily identify effective ways to act.
Stretch	You expand your comfort zone by being adventurous and taking calculated risks.

STRENGTH NAME	DEFINITION
Support	You look for ways to help others by meeting their needs and exceeding their expectations.
Systematiser	You take a structured, orderly approach to life and work, creating and applying rules, guidelines, processes, and systems
Team Player	You work well as a member of a group, showing loyalty, helping others, and doing your fair share.
Time Maximiser	You use every minute of your time wisely and productively, squeezing everything in.
Vitality	You approach life with zest and excitement, undertaking tasks with enthusiasm and energy.
Welcoming	You accept others as they are and seek to include them in everything you do.

THE STRENGTHS GROUPS

GROUP	DEFINITION	NUMBER OF STRENGTHS
Action	How we get things done	13
Cognition	How we think and reflect	16
Communication	How we give, receive, and share information	9
Essence	How we show up in the world	17
Moderation	How we show restraint	5
Relationships	How we connect and interact with others	15

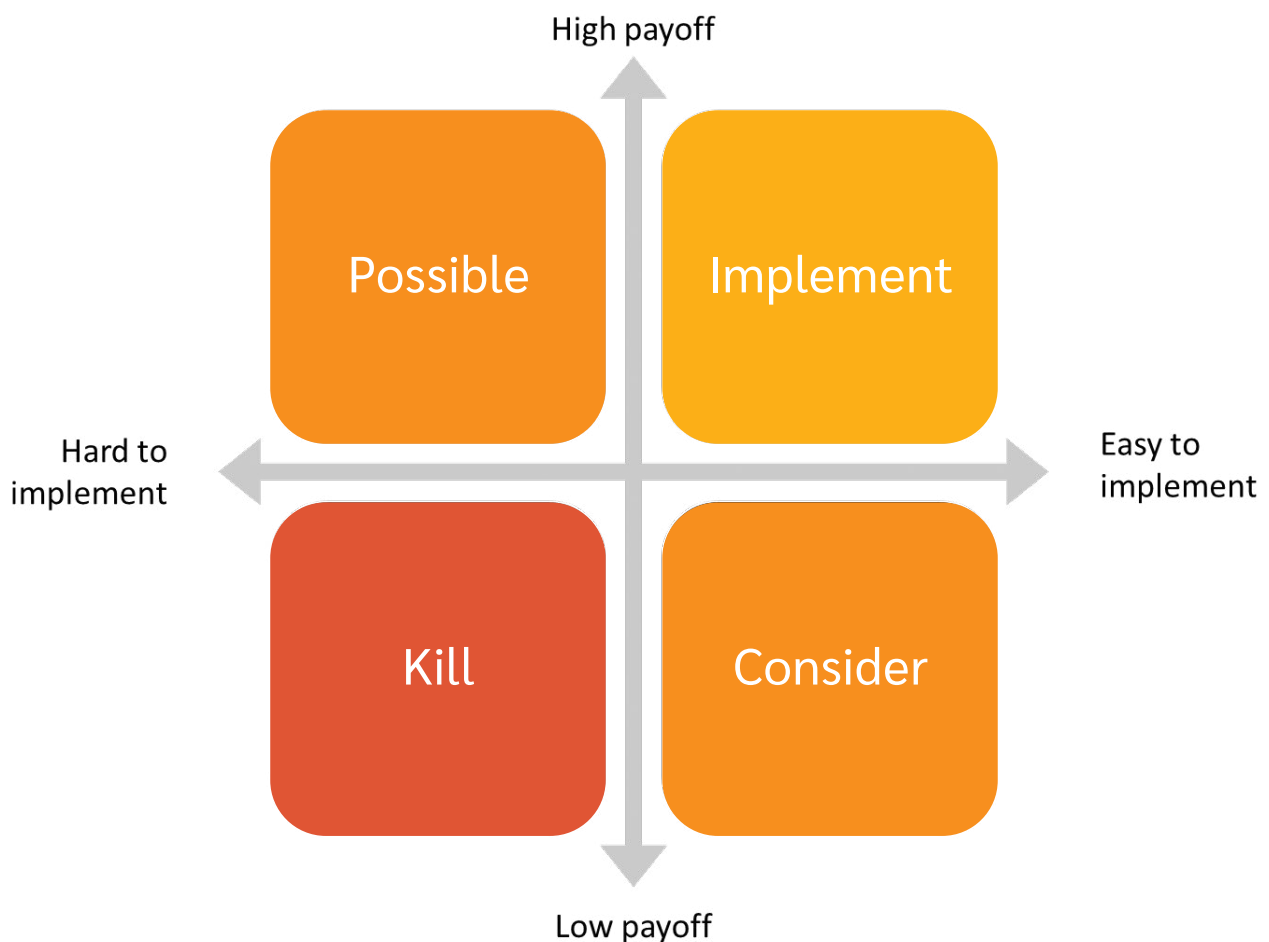
THE STRENGTHS DECK LIST – BY GROUP

GROUP	STRENGTHS
Action	Activation, Competitive, Coordinator, Determined, Endurance, Flexible, Grit, Improver, Overcomer, Rebound, Stretch, Systematiser, Time Maximiser
Cognition	Analytical, Changemaker, Collector, Contextualiser, Creative, Decisive, Hopeful, Integration, Intervention, Lifelong Learner, Meticulous, Open-Minded, Original, Problem-Solver, Reflection, Strategic
Communication	Author, Centre-Stage, Feedback, Humorous, Interpreter, Listener, Perspective, Persuader, Storyteller
Essence	Accountable, Composed, Connoisseur, Courageous, Curious, Grateful, Integrity, Legacy, Optimistic, Personal Growth, Principled, Purposeful, Quality, Self-Assurance, Self-Aware, Support, Vitality
Moderation	Deliberative, Forgiving, Humble, Prepared, Self-Control
Relationships	Amplifier, Benevolent, Connector, Empathetic, Equitable, Harmoniser, Leadership, Mobiliser, People Developer, Personaliser, Rapport Builder, Relationship Developer, Social Intelligence, Team Player, Welcoming

PRIORITISATION MATRIX

If you like sorting things visually, you can use a prioritisation matrix.

Draw the matrix on a big sheet of paper, and then place each strategy on the matrix according to how easy it is to implement, and how high or low you think the payoff will be.



Start with strategies in the **Implement** (high payoff, easy to implement) quadrant, followed by strategies in the **Possible** (high payoff, hard to implement), and **Consider** (low payoff, easy to implement) quadrants.

If you've got anything in the **Kill** quadrant (low payoff, hard to implement), don't include it in your prioritised strategy list – you're far better off spending time and energy on strategies that are easier to implement and have a higher payoff.

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ENDNOTES

All URLs current at the time of publication.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Langer, E. J. (2010). *Counterclockwise: A proven way to think yourself younger and healthier*. Hodder Paperbacks.
- 2 Aristotle, (350 BCE) *Nicomachean ethics*. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>.
- 3 The website Positive Judaism describes 24 personal strengths across six categories. <https://positive-judaism.org/strengths-and-values/>.
- 4 The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion blog discusses personal strengths. <https://www.faraday.cam.ac.uk/churches/church-resources/posts/guest-post-character-strengths-a-biblical-perspective-from-psychology/>.
- 5 According to Edward Conze, writing on The Way of Wisdom website, the five spiritual faculties or strengths in Buddhism are faith, vigour, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/conze/wheel065.html> Sarah Doering, on the Urban Dharma website, uses the term 'effort' in place of vigour. <http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma7/5powers.html>.
- 6 A blog on Muslims in Calgary presents the teachings of Hasan al-Banna on the Strengths of the Muslim Personality, which are: strong body, good character, cultured thought, the ability to earn a living, pure belief and correct worship, control over desires, time management, an organised life, and helping others. <https://muslimsincalgary.ca/ten-strengths-of-the-muslim-personality/>.
- 7 Fujimoto, Y., Hartel, C. E. J., & Pekerti, A. (2016). Strengths that individualism and collectivism bring to teams: 'strengths-oriented' HR practices. In *International human resource management: Trends, practices and future directions* (pp. 45-84). Nova Science Publishers.
- 8 For a brief history of the origin and treatment for shell shock, see this APA archived (i.e. no longer updated) article: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/06/shell-shocked>.
- 9 Drucker, P. F. (2009). *The essential Drucker: The best of sixty years of Peter Drucker's essential writings on management*. HarperCollins.
- 10 History of Strengths Perspective at The University of Kansas, <https://socwel.ku.edu/history-strengths-perspective>.
- 11 Available from Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania, <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/APA-President-Address-1998.docx>.
- 12 Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M.E.P., (2006) Character strengths in fifty-four nations and the fifty US states, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1:3, 118-129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760600619567>.
- 13 If you use the link <https://ecdeckstore.ridersandelephants.com/?ref=DariaWilliamson> to purchase the ECD, you'll get a discount, and I'll earn a small commission. You can learn more about the ECD, and purchase the ECD without the discount/commission here: <https://www.ridersandelephants.com/the-emotional-culture-deck>.

- 14 Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2002). *Flow: the classic work on how to achieve happiness*. Penguin RandomHouse. Csikszentmihalyi defined “flow” as ‘The state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter. The experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost’ p4.
- 15 You can also purchase your own pack of The Strengths Deck Cards and Matrix from strengthsdeck.com/shop.
- 16 I fully acknowledge how problematic Columbus’s (and all colonising “explorers”) actions were in relation to invading other lands and creating intergenerational harm.
- 17 The outcomes from strengths and weaknesses in this table are drawn from: Wood, A. M., Linley, P. A., Maltby, J., Kashdan, T. B., & Hurling, R. (2011). Using personal and psychological strengths leads to increases in well-being over time: A longitudinal study and the development of the strengths use questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 50(1), 15-19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.08.004>. Also see <https://strengthsprofile.com> and <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths>.
- 18 Ben Horowitz shares the origin story of the silver and lead bullet quote here: <https://techcrunch.com/2011/10/25/lead-bullets/>.
- 19 Apologies to poet John Donne for the paraphrase of the classic line, ‘No man is an island’.

CHAPTER 1

- 20 This insight is drawn from Marianne Williamson’s (no relation) beautiful piece of prose from *A return to love*: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” Williamson, M. (1992). *A return to love: Reflections on the principles of “A Course in Miracles”*. HarperOne.
- 21 The name “Genius strength” comes from the area of The Strengths Deck Matrix called ‘the Zone of Genius’.
- 22 The differences in DNA between identical twins comes from genetic mutations that occur in the womb, which are amplified as cells split and pick up additional mutations. See <https://www.livescience.com/identical-twins-dont-share-all-dna.html> for a more detailed explanation.
- 23 Buckingham, M. (2008). *Go put your strengths to work: Six powerful steps to achieve outstanding performance*. Simon & Schuster.
- 24 The saying about keeping your shadows in front of you is variously attributed to Carl Jung and Robert Hilliker.
- 25 Csikszentmihalyi, ‘Flow’, p3. According to Csikszentmihalyi, the eight elements of flow are: complete concentration on the task; a clarity of goals and rewards with immediate feedback; time seems transformed (sped up or slowed down); intrinsic reward from the task itself; a feeling of effortlessness and ease; a balance between challenge and skills; the loss of self-consciousness (such as not being aware of body cues like hunger or thirst, or worrying about others’ perceptions of you); and a feeling of control over the task.
- 26 Newport, C. (2016). *Deep work: Rules for focused success in a distracted world*. Hachette UK. Newport defines deep work as: ‘Professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate.’ p3.
- 26 The American Psychological Association’s definition of personality can be found at: <https://www.apa.org/topics/personality>.
- 27 If you’re interested in your ‘Big Five’ personality, you can complete an online assessment <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/IPIP-BFFM/>.
- 28 Cappfinity. (2018). *Strengths Profile technical manual and statistical properties*, p47., <https://www.strengthsprofile.com/en-GB/Resources/IntroPapers>.
- 30 The VIA Institute defines character strengths as positive aspects of your personality ‘that make you feel authentic and engaged’. Read more at: <https://www.viacharacter.org/>.

CHAPTER 2

- 31 Dweck, C. (2012). *Mindset: Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*. Hachette UK.
- 32 And apparently the brain’s energy demands don’t change much, no matter how hard you’re thinking! <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.172399499>.
- 33 Strengths Profile: <https://www.strengthsprofile.com/>.
- 34 CliftonStrengths: <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/>.
- 35 VIA Survey of Character Strengths: <https://viacharacter.org/>.
- 36 For an overview of the concept of neuroplasticity (how our brains change over time), check out <https://positivepsychology.com/neuroplasticity/>.
- 37 The Earl E. Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing at The University of Minnesota has a great explainer on how our environment shapes our mood, experiences, and actions: <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/what-impact-does-environment-have-us>.
- 38 ‘If we have our own ‘why’ of life we shall get along with almost any ‘how’” is a translation from Nietzsche’s essay ‘Maxims and Arrows’ in *Twilight of the Idols* (1889).
- 39 This Oxford English Dictionary definition of values is sourced from <https://languages.oup.com/dictionaries/#oed>.
- 40 The insight that performance comes only from strengths is a key tenet from Drucker’s classic book ‘Managing oneself’, first published in 1999.

CHAPTER 4

- 41 ‘There is nothing good nor bad, but thinking makes it so’, ‘Hamlet’, Act II, Scene 2.

SECTION 4

- 42 The concept of psychological safety has become well-known thanks to the work of Amy C. Edmonson of Harvard Business School. She says, ‘In psychologically safe workplaces, people know they might fail, they might receive performance feedback that says they’re not meeting expectations, and they might lose their jobs due to changes in the industry environment or even to a lack of competence in their role... But in a psychologically safe workplace, people are not hindered by *interpersonal* fear. They feel willing and able to take the inherent personal risks of candor. They fear holding back their full participation *more* than they fear sharing a potentially sensitive, threatening, or wrong idea. The fearless organization is one in which interpersonal fear is minimized so that the team and organizational performance can be maximized in a knowledge intensive world.’ p.xv, Edmonson, A. C. (2019). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation and growth*. Wiley.
- 43 Remember Bill Turpin’s idea of needing lots of lead bullets that I quoted in Chapter 1? A strengths-based approach is one of the lead bullets you can use to achieve your goals in business, life, and work – and it can be a great enabler of many other lead bullets, because it helps you see how you can use your strengths to get the most out of your other lead bullets!

CHAPTER 5

- 44 You could make your own set of cards based on lists of strengths and weaknesses from your strengths observations or other strengths reports such as Strengths Profile, VIA, or CliftonStrengths. Bear in mind that if you use different strengths, you’ll need to translate the names from The Strengths Deck to match your list, and you may need to adjust or skip some of the exercises in this book.

45 I talked about fixed and growth mindsets in Chapter 2. I highly recommend the book 'Mindset' by Carol Dweck, if you want to learn more about how these mindsets operate, and how you can build your growth mindset.

SECTION 5

46 If physically writing with pen and paper, or stylus and tablet isn't available to you, then using voice notes is a great option to capture your thinking. You'll get additional benefits if you re-listen to your answers several times. The goal is to slow the mind's tendency to rush and help engrave your insights more deeply into your memory.

CHAPTER 7

47 There is a cognitive bias called the 'peak-end rule': our memory of experiences is heavily influenced by the most intense part of the experience, and the final moments. I craft my coaching sessions so that we focus strongly on Genius strengths (which are the most fun and energising to talk about) and finish on a positive note, so that the overall experience is weighted towards enjoyable, energising, and engaging moments.

CHAPTER 8

48 Mark Manson's musings on shit sandwiches is a longish read, but well worth your time: <https://markmanson.net/life-purpose>.

CHAPTER 9

49 While the rule of thumb is that you'll have cards from each strength group spread across different zones, the possible exception is Moderation strengths, as there are only five cards in this group.

CHAPTER 10

50 "Everyone has a plan" was Mike Tyson's response when he was asked by a reporter if he was worried about his upcoming fight with Evander Holyfield.

51 Wajeha al-Huwaider has been a staunch advocate for Saudi women, advocating for their right to drive, to be protected from family and intimate partner abuse, and to be free of the male guardianship system that severely limits women's freedom of choice and movement. <https://pen.org/rapid-action/leading-writer-journalist-and-activist-wajeha-al-huwaider-faces-imprisonment/>; https://www.huffpost.com/entry/saudi-women-drivers-threa_b_4037153.

52 Todd Kashdan discusses the concept of the principled rebel extensively in his excellent book: *The art of insubordination: How to dissent & defy effectively*. Avery.

53 In September 2011, Shaima Jastaniah was sentenced to ten lashes for driving, although this sentence was later overturned in a rather convoluted manner <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/04/saudi-woman-sentenced-to-lashing-for-driving-will-not-be-whipped/256562/>.

SECTION 7

54 The lyrics from Closing Time by Semisonic are © 1999 Geffen Records.

55 Full credit to Kate Billing from Blacksmith NZ for the concept of personal development as a team sport.

APPENDIX 1

56 Please use this insight ethically – if you try to use it to manipulate others, most will smell a rat a mile off, and you will undermine the very feelings you are trying to nurture. The goal is to build genuine, two-way trust and connection that benefits everyone.

57 Open questions are phrased in a way that require a more than a yes/no answer. For example: 'How do you feel when you use that strength?' is an open question. Compare the answer you're likely to get from that question, versus a closed question like 'Do you feel happy when you use that strength?'

APPENDIX 2

58 While it's important to cultivate a determination to keep going even when things are hard, it's vital to know when to grit (persist) and when to quit (move on to something else that's a better use of our time, strengths, and energy). As with everything in life, there's a sweet spot to be found.