Title: Why Strengths?
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“Tell me your strengths?”
This is the question job interviewers ask as you sit nervously, hoping you don’t come across sounding too arrogant or accidently underselling yourself because you are stumped by the question. Why do we freeze when someone asks us to explain our strengths?

Describing soft skills can be difficult. How do you elaborate on “I am good with people” or “I am reliable”? And yet, potential employers want to know more. They want to be able to imagine you in the job. But what if you had language to describe not just what your strengths are but how your strengths work?

Thankfully, there is an assessment available to USM students as part of a Title III grant that allows you to get feedback with real world language about the top five talents you possess and have the potential to develop into strengths. Strengthsfinder © was developed by Donald Clifton as a way to capture your unique profile and USM provides ways to help you profit from your natural, positive talents related to Getting things done, Relationship Building, Strategic Thinking, influencing.

In addition to careers, Strengths is also useful in your personal life, figuring out your major, building confidence, and problem-solving. Over the past two years, students have already used Strengths in classes, in Residential Life, on sports teams, and in individual advising sessions.

One student, who took Strengths in her LAC188 (College & Career Success) last spring said, “I am now beginning to view myself in a way where I see that I am capable of forming healthy and productive personal as well as professional relationships. It is a new idea to form about myself because in the past I have been the first to tell myself that I do not have any strengths at all.”

Want to learn more? USM students can participate by asking their academic advisor online or in one of our offices or visit https://usm.maine.edu/strengths for more information.

If you have suggestions for future Advising topics, please contact us c/o Janis Albright: janisa@maine.edu