

Invest in Your Learning Strengths

You come to KPU as someone who brings a range of experiences, abilities, and gifts to your learning and to the KPU community. You will carry these strengths with you through all of your learning, and the new skills you gain as you move through your university education will build on that foundation. Identifying those strengths is a solid foundation that you can build on.

When you are thinking about your personal development, it is best to focus on building your strengths, rather than weaknesses. You want to spend most time on your strengths leveraging them and then managing around the weaker areas.

We know that you get exponential growth in your areas of strength, while you only get incremental growth in your areas of weakness. One big reason is just brain science. You grow the most synaptic connections in your head where you have the most preexisting synaptic connections. This means that you grow most in your areas of strength.

Another reason is that a strength isn't just what you're good at and a weakness isn't just what you're bad at. A strength is what strengthens and improves you and a weakness is what weakens you.

There are some things that you're really good at that weaken you. If there is something that you do well but think, "I'm great at this, but if I never had to do it again, it'd be too soon". That's a weakness.

A strength is something you have an appetite for more of rather than it is pure ability. You want to do it again, and practice it again, and refine it again. Therefore, it's the appetite that leads to the practice that leads to performance. Leverage your strengths because you get a greater uplift in terms of performance and contribution from them.

Another reason to focus on your strengths, is that it actually builds a more beautiful, more generative, and much more generous relationship with yourself.

Be aware that some people want you to focus on only the weaker areas. They might call them 'opportunities'. You generally don't experience strong growth in your weak areas but you can spend some time working on them by identifying what you would rather have. If you get distracted easily, focus on having less distractions around you rather than feeling bad for being distracted. Perhaps you can use a strength in another area, such as time management, to set yourself up to avoid the distractions when you want to be focusing on a project.

Focusing on your strengths and how you will use them to benefit others also leads to more and stronger growth and development. Every one of us has unique strengths, every one of us has unique activities we love, and every one of us will contribute more when we take those strengths and loves seriously, and then leverage them for the benefit of the world, intelligently.

Personal Activity

What strengths do you bring to your university education? Write down two or three strengths that you feel will be important to your success at KPU. Then, write a couple of sentences about how these strengths will support your learning. Use this exercise each time to start a new assignment or project to help you leverage your strengths for learning.

Reference

Adapted from: Buckingham, M., & Clifton, D. O. (2001). *Now, discover your strengths*. New York, Free Press.