

The Art of Self-Reflection

Creating effective teams starts with a candid assessment

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Your career success will largely depend on your ability to work effectively with others. And if you've ever been part of a project team, you've probably experienced the challenge of working alongside people who have different perspectives, attitudes and backgrounds. So one of the most important skills you will ever learn is how to identify and leverage the strengths of your team members—as well as your own.

The basis of good teamwork starts with an honest self-reflection of your core strengths and an understanding of the kinds of contributions you can make within the team framework. This effort will empower your interpersonal growth and boost confidence. Consider the following self-assessment questions:

Would You Hire You?

While it's easy to identify the strengths and weaknesses of others, it's much harder to evaluate our own. Now might be a good time to do a self-assessment. Grab some paper and divide it in half. Then list your strengths on one side and weaknesses on the other. Think about some of your past performance evaluations. From your supervisor's perspective, what are your strengths? What are some areas you need to work on? How are you viewed by your coworkers? Be honest. This will help you to make an objective assessment of what you have to offer.

What Do You Bring to the Team?

Now take the strengths that you identified about yourself and consider adding other important characteristics you may have

overlooked. Have you included positive attributes like being accountable? What about your strong work ethic and your willingness to go the extra mile? Each person on your team can benefit from what you have to offer. Your strengths have the potential to offset the weaker areas of your team.

Can You Identify the Strengths in Others?

Have you ever considered the strengths of each person on your team? Yes, it's sometimes challenging to assess coworkers who seemingly have many weaknesses and few strengths. But they got hired for a reason, so make it your goal to discover what they bring to the table. Try and put aside any personal feelings you may have. Even difficult people have at least one strength, but we must be willing to dig deep to identify it. When we uncover the strengths embedded in our team, we can maximize our overall effectiveness.

How Well Do You Perform Your Job?

Do you consistently give your best, or do you just do enough to get by? The big question is, "Do your coworkers consider you to be a professional?" A professional is someone who performs to the best of their ability, regardless of how they feel. They don't complain about the workload, gossip or back-stab. If you consistently act in a professional manner, you have the power to become a role model for your team.

Do You Practice the Golden Rule?

"Treat others as you would want to be treated." As important as this golden rule is, it has always been counter-intuitive for me. Applying it literally forces me to stop and do the direct opposite of what I was planning. In other words, I have to rethink my behavior. Treating people as I want to be treated has challenged me to choose the high road. And this has saved me from myself in countless situations!

The bottom line is that thorough and reflective assessments that reveal both strengths and weaknesses can become your guideposts to career success. By taking an honest look at yourself and the other members of your team, you will not only build stronger teams, you will also enhance the lives of others. ☘



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