

10 Habits to Develop Your Strengths at Work

BY MICHELLE MCQUAID



Eleven minutes a day. That's it. If you have 11 minutes, you have time to use your strengths more intentionally at work.

Why 11 minutes? Well after teaching thousands of people around the world how to discover and develop their strengths, there was one hurdle I found most people faced when putting their strengths into practice. They were always too busy to start.

Keen to shrink down the time and effort it would take people to put their strengths to work, I started playing with 10-minute habits. After all, most of us can find 10 minutes in our day somewhere. But after looking into more of the neuroscience on how our habits actually work, I started recommending people spend 11 minutes a day developing their strengths, because our habits run on a neurological loop. That includes a cue that triggers off the desired behavior, a routine that we practice, and a reward that creates a craving to repeat the habit next time the cue goes off. How you spend your 11 minutes depends on your individual character strengths and what you're hoping to accomplish. To get started, here are 10 habits that can help you use your strengths more intentionally at work.

10 WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR STRENGTHS AT WORK

- 1. Curiosity:** When you turn on your computer (cue), use your strength of curiosity to spend 11 minutes reading and learning something new (routine), then share this idea with a colleague (reward).
- 2. Creativity:** When you arrive at work (cue), spend 11 minutes using your strength of creativity to mind-map new ways you can serve your clients (routine), then get your morning coffee (reward).
- 3. Kindness:** When you go to get your lunch (cue), spend 11 minutes using your strength of kindness to check in with a colleague on what's working well for them (routine), then get something to eat (reward).
- 4. Gratitude:** On your way home from work (cue), spend 11 minutes using your strength of gratitude to find one way you had a positive impact on someone that day (routine), then head in your front door (reward).
- 5. Honesty:** When you pack to go home (cue), use your strength of honesty to spend 11 minutes acknowledging failures, fair criticisms, and areas for ongoing learning and improvement, and make a note of these for tomorrow (routine), then go home (reward).
- 6. Bravery:** When it's time for your morning break (cue), spend 11 minutes speaking up about an issue or an idea that is important to you with a colleague (routine), then head outside for short walk (reward).
- 7. Love:** When you open your laptop (cue), spend 11 minutes thinking about how your work today can help someone (routine), then read a thank you note from one of your clients (reward).
- 8. Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence:** When you get ready to have lunch (cue), spend 11 minutes walking outside and post a picture of something that inspires you (routine), then have your lunch (reward).
- 9. Leadership:** When you travel into work (cue), spend 11 minutes thinking about a leader you've admired (routine), then note ways to channel their approach in your work (reward).
- 10. Perspective:** When you get to work (cue), spend 11 minutes looking for a quote on perspective that inspires you (routine), then spend 30 seconds meditating on it (reward).