**Got a ‘buzz’ from that? Use your strengths to pick a future job**

Do you recall any tasks or situation in your research or outside academia that give you a ‘buzz’? If so, there is a good chance it’s because you are using one of your strengths.

According to author Alex Linley\* a ‘strength’ can be defined as a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energising to you. It enables optimal functioning, development, and performance. In general, strengths are tasks that you:

* Learn easily
* Gain energy from doing
* Get enthusiastic about
* Find motivating

You will find some typical strengths listed below, grouped into common themes, with an explanation and a catchphrase to help you decide how they relate to your experience. No one has strengths in all listed. Some tasks in your research role might feel the opposite of that: like you are wading through treacle, finding something draining, finding a task hard to start and finish.

List your strengths and use them as a blueprint that these are of great use in a future role that you get.

# People

## Empathic Connection

Connecting to others through the ability to sense and understand what others are feeling.

Catchphrase “I’ve felt that too”

## Esteem Builder

Helping others to believe in themselves and see what they are capable of achieving

“I knew you could do it”

## Personalisation

Recognising everyone as an individual and the differences that make them unique

“I knew you would love this as soon as I saw it”

## Rapport Builder

Establishing rapport and relationships with others quickly and easily

“I really enjoyed meeting you”

## Persuasion

Bringing others round to your way of thinking and winning agreement for what you want to achieve

“This is going to be great and it will work”

## Relationship Deepener

Having a natural ability to form deep, long lasting relationships with people

“A friend is a friend for life”

# Communication

## Listener

Focusing on and listening intently to what people say

“Mm-hmm…”

## Counterpoint

Always bringing a different viewpoint

“We could also look at things this way…”

## Explainer

Simplify things so that others can understand

“In other words…”

## Scribe

Conveying thoughts and ideas through the written word

“I love writing”

## Spotlight

Being the focus of everyone’s attention

“Look at me!”

# Problem-solving, attention to detail and vision

## Detail

Focusing on the small things that others easily miss, ensuring that everything is accurate and error-free

“It’s important to get things just right…”

## Resolver

Solving problems, the more difficult the better

“Every problem has a solution – and I’ll find it”

## Incubator

Thinking deeply about things over time, pondering and reflecting to arrive at the best conclusion

“I’ll mull that over”

## Planful

Making plans for everything you do

“What’s the plan?”

## Judgement

Making the right decisions quickly and easily

“On balance, it seems to me that…”

## Adherence

Following processes and operating firmly within rules and regulations

“Rules are there to be followed”

## Strategic Awareness

Paying attention to the big picture to inform your decisions

“Look at what’s happening there…what does it mean for us?”

## Order

Exceptionally well-organised in everything you do

“Everything has its place”

## Creativity

Striving to produce work that is new and original, creating and combining things in novel and imaginative ways

“I wonder what would happen if…”

# Dynamic, change-related

## Curiosity

Interested in everything, constantly seeking out new information and learning more “Tell me more…What?...Why?...When did that happen?”

## Improver

Constantly looking for better ways of doing things, for how things can be improved

“It can be done better if we do it this way”

## Drive

Self-motivating and pushing yourself hard to achieve what you want out of life

“Tick. What’s next?”

## Efficacy

Very confident in your own abilities, having a sure belief that you can achieve your goals

“Yes I can”

## Resilience

Taking hardships and setbacks in your stride, recovering quickly and getting on with things again

“What doesn’t kill you only makes you stronger”

## Competitive

Constantly competing to win

“I play to win”

## Catalyst

Motivating and inspiring others to make it happen

“Together we can do it!”

## Adventure

Taking risks and stretching yourself outside your comfort zone

“I’ll try it!”

## Change Agent

Constantly involved with change, advocating for change and making it happen

“Change is the only constant”

## Service

Constantly looking for ways to serve and help others

“At your service”

*Linley, P.A. (2008). Average to A+: Realising Strengths in Yourself and Others. Coventry, UK: CAPP Press.*