



Career series: Playing to your strengths

Imagine if Peter Jackson wasn't a details-person? Or Helen Clark got stage fright? Part of being successful in a role (or indeed a career) is finding one that makes the most of your strengths, where you are much more likely to be able to do the tasks required to the standard required, and thus gain a sense of achievement and accomplishment: this increases your dopamine levels in your brain. Dopamine is a hormone which helps you to feel more positive and relaxed and helps prevent stress responses. Conversely, of course, working in a role that you find difficult and not a natural 'fit' for you is likely to make you feel stressed and downhearted by raising the cortisol (stress) hormone in your brain, which will flow through to your body.

Most people remember what they were 'good at' at school. This can be an indicator of your strengths, though you can of course find you have more strengths after you enter the world of work. It may have been some time since you were learning your ABCs, and the world of work that you were being prepared for may be behind you – and your dream job of being a fax machine repairer or owning a milk run is sadly no longer an option. It's probably time for a strengths assessment – this will help you to understand more about what you might be successful in doing and allow you to match up the words relating to your strengths (e.g. communicate, involve, engage, encourage) to the words in a job description or advertisement, capability framework, or qualification document. For example, if you know you're not a numbers person, try to avoid roles where expectations include words like *calculate*, *project* (as in projected balance), *reconcile*, *forecast*, or *depreciate*.

Being successful in a community housing role is likely to require strengths in communication and connection, problem-solving, persistence and patience. To learn more about your strengths, try the [Hi5 strengths test](#) or the [Redbull Wingfinder](#) test – despite its branded name, it's been scientifically developed and validated.