

MY WEAKNESSES SEEM TO OUTWEIGH MY STRENGTHS WHAT CAN I DO TO FULFIL MY POTENTIAL?

By Dr Hennie Scheepers

One of the key motivating factors manifesting in the lives of people, is the need to fulfil our God-given potential. Through time, the fulfilment of human potential has been the topic of great debate and innumerate writings. Called different names by different authors, the core idea, however, remains the same: to grow and develop and be the best we can be, within the constraints of our physical reality.



You are Unique

Often, this drive to fulfil our potential takes on a negative and mostly unwanted dimension, which could be represented in a phrase such as *“I do not feel gifted in any particular area and feel that I am not fulfilling the potential within me”*. Although quite a broad statement to make, this kind of thinking is more commonplace than we would like to believe. Let us take a closer look at some issues, which are pertinent to the understanding of potential. For starters, we need to remind ourselves that people are all born with specific talents and gifts, and these take on various forms. Being human, we often make the mistake of comparing ourselves to others in terms of what they look like, what they do and achieve, and what earthly possessions they have. By so doing, we easily overlook the gifts God has given us. Although we are living in a hugely competitive society, one needs to take a very personal view of yourself and who you are. By not participating in the game of comparisons, we are already making a move in the right direction.

Knowing yourself

As far as our own potential is concerned, there are some important pointers to consider as we depart on this journey. We need to take stock of what we like and dislike, our natural talents, special skills, and our aptitude, which refers to those things we have a potential for learning and achieving. As you can see, gaining realistic **self-knowledge**, as it is referred to here, is often described as the starting point for any career-related decision making process. This process of self-discovery is a life-long journey, and therefore needs to be regarded as such. The world as we know it provides us with constant feedback about the extent to which we are fulfilling worldly wants and needs, and this is often where we come undone.

Knowing the Job

In addition to knowing ourselves, we also need to have a solid understanding of the world of work, and the elements, also called **factors**, which need to be done for successful completion of a job or task. The real trick, which may sound simple enough, is to determine which job factors we like or are able to do, and to pursue those careers where these factors are present. A well-known perspective on career choice indicates that the greater the correspondence between our individual **traits** and job factors, the better our chances to perform a task successfully and to find job satisfaction within that same job. The converse is unfortunately also true: try finding joy and purpose in a task that you have no interest in, and in which you are not able to meet the requirements – you will soon enough be unhappy and become totally despondent! Coming to the realisation that we need to find a working environment where we will be able to use our gifts and talents – and training – to find happiness, and ultimately achieve our full potential, is therefore essential, but not always achieved.

Inspiring Role Models

In addition to being informed about yourself and the requirements for specific occupations, it is also a good idea to find positive role models within your environment. Attaining a sufficiently developed level of self-knowledge takes time; it

could, however be supplemented by finding appropriate role models, i.e. people who you respect and can learn from. Taking time to identify such a role model, whether a peer or someone from either a younger or older generation, could make the world of difference in terms of getting to know ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses, a bit better.



Where do you start?

In conclusion, the following should be considered when next you feel as if you have more weaknesses than strengths:

- **Take control of your own life:** stop waiting for something to happen.
- **Learn from others;** watching others perform work-related tasks can be tremendously helpful in realising what you yourself like doing or not.
- **Get as much information as possible:** this not only includes getting to know yourself better, but also knowing how the world of work may be changing and how this could impact on you.
- **Do not be afraid to challenge your old beliefs about yourself** and take positive action; intentions need to lead to action for success!

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