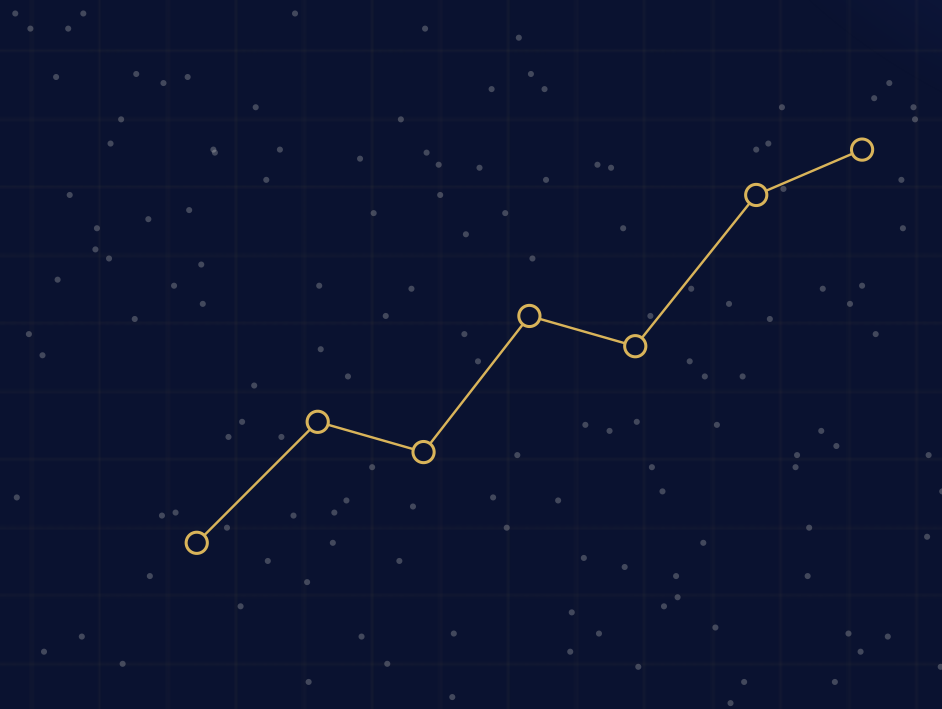




KNOW YOURSELF

Strengths Are Found in the Record

Most people misjudge what they are good at. The fix is evidence gathered over time, not a better guess.

Your strengths are not what you feel good about. They are where your results keep beating your own expectations.

KEY FINDINGS

- Most people misjudge their strengths; Drucker's fix is to compare expectations with results over time.
- Others can see your blind spot; collected best-self stories reveal what recurs.
- OCH now records confidence and explanations on every WhatsApp drill, the raw material for seeing your patterns.

Ask a cohort of cyber learners what they are best at and many will name the work that sounds most impressive, often offensive security. Their records frequently say something different. This essay argues that strengths are best discovered the way a defender discovers anything: by collecting evidence over time and looking for patterns, rather than by introspection or a single questionnaire.

01 Why we misjudge ourselves

Peter Drucker put the problem bluntly: most people think they know what they are good at, and they are usually wrong. His remedy was what he called feedback analysis. Before any important decision or piece of work, write down what you expect to happen. Nine to twelve months later, compare the result with the expectation. Over two or three years, the places where results keep beating expectations show where a person's strengths actually lie [1].

FIGURE 1 A prediction log, four weeks in

WORK	EXPECTED	ACTUAL
Phishing drill streak	Easy	Easy
Explain-back on access control	Hard	Best in squad
Firewall lab	Easy	Struggled
Walking a squad mate through an incident	Awkward	Asked to do it again
Mission write-up	Average	Mentor praised it

Illustrative. Gold rows: results beat expectations, in work that involves explaining. That is the pattern worth following [1].

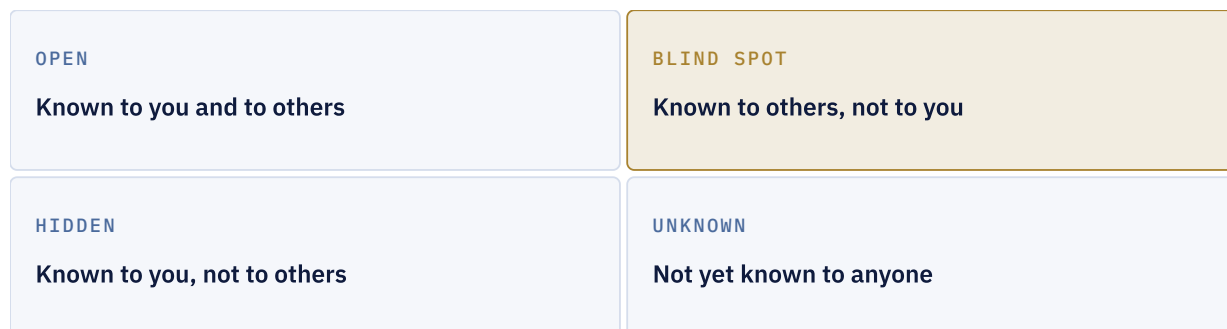
Introspection fails partly because memory is a poor recorder. We remember the work that felt significant and forget the ordinary days when something went unusually well. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Reed Larson worked around this with the experience-sampling method: asking people, several times a day, what they are doing and how it feels at that moment, instead of asking them to recall it later [2]. Patterns that are invisible in memory become visible in the record.

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02 What others can see

Some of the evidence is held by other people. The Johari window, devised by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham, divides self-knowledge into four parts and names one of them the blind spot: what others see in us that we do not [3]. Laura Morgan Roberts and colleagues turned this into a practical exercise. Collect short stories from people who know you about times they saw you at your best, look for the themes across those stories, and write a portrait of your best self from them [4]. People are often surprised by what recurs.

FIGURE 2 The Johari window



After Luft and Ingham, 1955 [3]. Feedback is the only way into the blind spot.

03 Using a strength, carefully

In 2005 Martin Seligman and colleagues ran a randomised, placebo-controlled trial of several brief exercises. One asked people to use one of their top strengths in a new way each day for a week. That group reported more happiness and fewer depressive symptoms for six months [5]. A careful replication in 2012 found a more modest picture: the exercises raised happiness, but so did a positive placebo, and they did not outperform the control on depression [6]. The honest reading is that using strengths deliberately is worth trying, and that the original effect sizes should not be oversold.

04 You find out by doing

Herminia Ibarra studied professionals who changed careers and found that few discovered their direction by reflection alone. They ran small experiments, built connections with people already doing the work, and gradually made sense of who they were becoming by telling a new story about it [7]. Strengths, in other words, are not found first and then used. They are found by being used.

05 A learner who thought she was a hacker

ILLUSTRATIVE SCENE

A learner enrolls certain that offensive security is her calling. Over a term her record shows something more specific. Her drill accuracy is steady but unremarkable. Her explain-back answers are consistently the clearest in her squad, mentors single out her mission write-ups, and squad mates keep asking her to talk them through incidents. None of that cancels her interest in offence. It suggests that her rarest asset may be explaining security to people, which points as strongly towards incident communication, governance or leadership as towards penetration testing.

06 What OCH records, and what it does not yet do

Every WhatsApp drill now records how sure a learner said they were, whether they were right, and, after a correct answer, the explanation they gave. That is a prediction log in miniature, the raw material Drucker's method needs. OCH began collecting it on 16 October 2026. It has not yet built the view that shows a learner their own patterns. Until it does, the patterns have to be found the old-fashioned way, by the learner and their mentor reading the record together.

07 What would change our mind

If the patterns visible in drills, explanations and missions turn out not to predict where learners thrive once they are in work, then this record is a poor mirror and OCH should not build one on it. That can be tested as cohorts move into roles, by comparing what the record suggested with what employers and learners later report.

08 What to do on Monday

For learners. For the next four weeks, before every drill, mission or assessment, write one line on how you expect it to go. Afterwards, write what happened. Ask five people for a story of a time they saw you at your best. Read both at the end of the month and note what recurs.

For mentors. When you review work, name the strength you saw, specifically. A learner cannot build on a strength nobody has pointed out.

For employers. In a probation review, compare what a new hire expected to find hard with what they actually found hard. The gap is where the useful conversation is.

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Drafted with AI assistance and reviewed before publication. External figures were checked against the sources cited; scenes marked illustrative are composites, not reports of real events; OCH figures are dated.