

Discovering Your Gift(s)



Why should you focus on your gifts?

“...people, by and large, are neither smart nor stupid. We are all both, at the same time: smart in some ways, stupid in others. We are the smartest when we discover, develop, and apply our unique strengths – whatever they may be – and dumbest when we don’t.”

Charles Koch, *Believe in People*, P. 32

When we discover and leverage our gifts, we make life better for ourselves and for others. Psychologist Abraham Maslow called it synergy – where work becomes a source of pleasure and fulfillment. While there are aspects of any job that aren’t much fun, when you are doing work that leverages your gift(s), generally...

- work is energizing rather than draining
- you are optimistic, rather than doubtful, about your ability to achieve superior results
- you learn from failures rather than being discouraged by them



Consider:

Learning from others can help you identify and better understand your gifts.

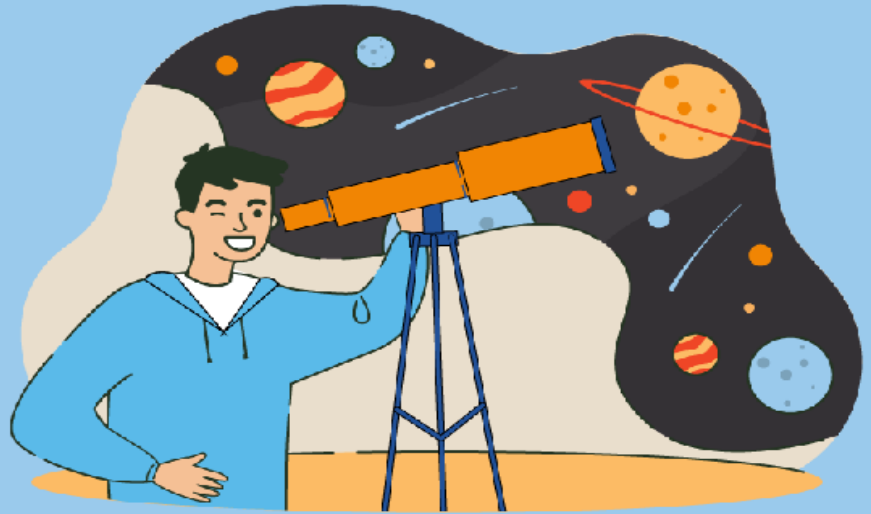
Talk with someone who is further along in their career about how they ended up doing the work they do. Ask them questions like:

- How has your career been different from what you imagined when you first started working?
- How did you learn about your gifts and aptitudes (or lack thereof)? How did you change your career path as you learned?

Resource:

- [Principle in Brief: Life of Meaning and Synergy](#)

Discovering Your Gift(s)

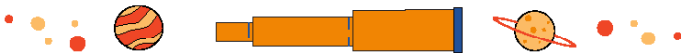


“The path for each of us is unique, but the elements are the same – discover and develop our unique gifts and use them to contribute to the betterment of others and ourselves.”

Believe in People, P. 39

Developing your gifts is win-win!

At Koch companies, we believe discovering, developing and using your gift(s) is essential and mutually beneficial! It's good for you because you can use your talents in a way that is meaningful and fulfilling, and it's good for the company because employees using their gifts allows us to create more value for customers and society.



Ideas for Action to Continue Discovering and Developing Your Gifts:

- Think broadly about gifts. They don't have to be “traditional” school subjects, like mathematical ability. Gifts can be things like the ability to ask good questions, develop relationships, anticipate problems or see how things fit together.

- This [Personal Reflection Worksheet](#) can spark insights about your natural abilities, strengths and limitations. Consider discussing this with your supervisor.
- CliftonStrengths (formerly StrengthsFinder) is an online, third-party assessment (purchase required) that can give you a sense of talents you might develop into strengths. (We do not recommend using this tool as the basis for workshops or mandated training.)

Actions and Questions for Consideration:

- Talk with friends, family, and coworkers about their perspectives on your gifts and aptitudes. Be open to their observations and feedback.
- Reflect: What internal barriers might be preventing you from exploring and discovering your gifts?
- What are some things you're interested in or drawn to, even though you may not have tried them yet? Talk to your supervisor about how you might explore these areas of interest.

Discovering Your Gift(s)



Your feedback can help others discover their gifts

Gifts are innate abilities or aptitudes that can be developed into valuable skills. Because people sometimes overlook or undervalue their own gifts, it's helpful to tell your coworkers about the abilities you see in them. This is especially true when their gifts don't fall into traditionally recognized categories (like subjects taught in school).

For example: if you notice that a coworker naturally networks and connects with people, sharing that observation could lead her to developing and using that gift in various ways.

Your feedback can help others understand what they are good at...and what they're not good at. And both are essential for a person to discover their gifts.

Feedback can help others discover their strengths and limitations, develop skills, and apply them in ways that increase their contribution. You must be willing to provide good quality feedback to your co-workers (including your supervisor) on an on-going basis, not just "at the end of the year."

Ideas for action:

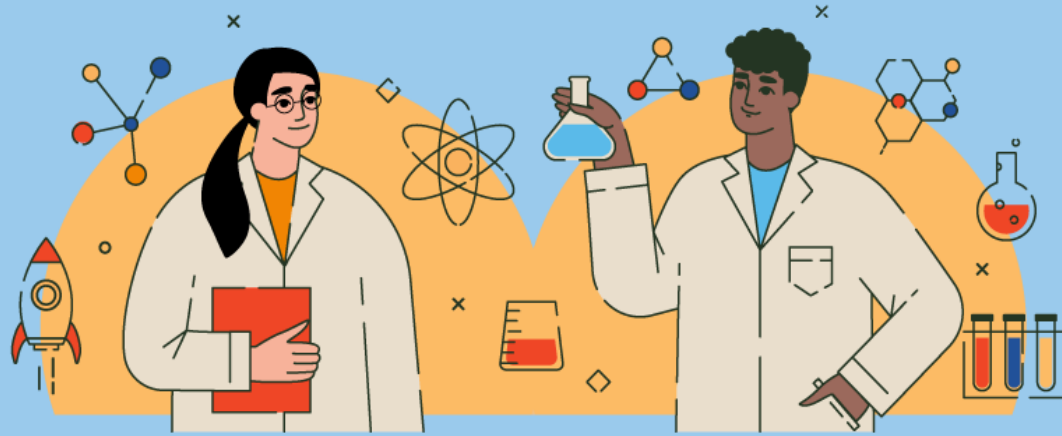
- Think about someone you work with closely. What strengths have you observed in that person? Share your observations – provide specific examples and explain why you think this gift is valuable.

Resources:

- [Contribution Motivated Video](#): Leaders discuss what it means to be contribution motivated and the importance of feedback.
- [Coaching and Feedback](#)



Discovering Your Gift(s)



Matching Your RREs and Your Gift(s)

At Koch, we strive to apply the division of labor by comparative advantage instead of forcing employees into one-size-fits-all roles they aren't good at or don't care about. Good supervisors work with their employees to help each develop a role with the responsibilities that will enable them to self-actualize by contributing. An employee's role, responsibilities and expectations (RREs) describe how they need to utilize their talents to maximize overall results.

Talents Principle in Brief

During the RR&E process, supervisors strive to arrange responsibilities among team members to maximize value creation and help each employee increasingly self-actualize. This means each team member's gifts must be part of the consideration. One way you can help your supervisor is by sharing what you think your gifts are and how you can best use them in your work.



Questions for You and Your Supervisor to Discuss:

- Which of your gifts do you feel you can use even more in the coming year?
- Are there gifts you don't feel you're using? How might they fit into the work the team needs to accomplish?
- Is there something you're responsible for that doesn't match up with your gift(s)? Why?
- Are there any expectations that could be "stretch goals" to help you further discover or develop a gift?

"Constantly explore to discover your aptitudes — what you naturally do well — then pursue whatever you enjoy that will enable you to contribute."

Charles Koch

Resource:

- [Role, Responsibilities & Expectations](#)