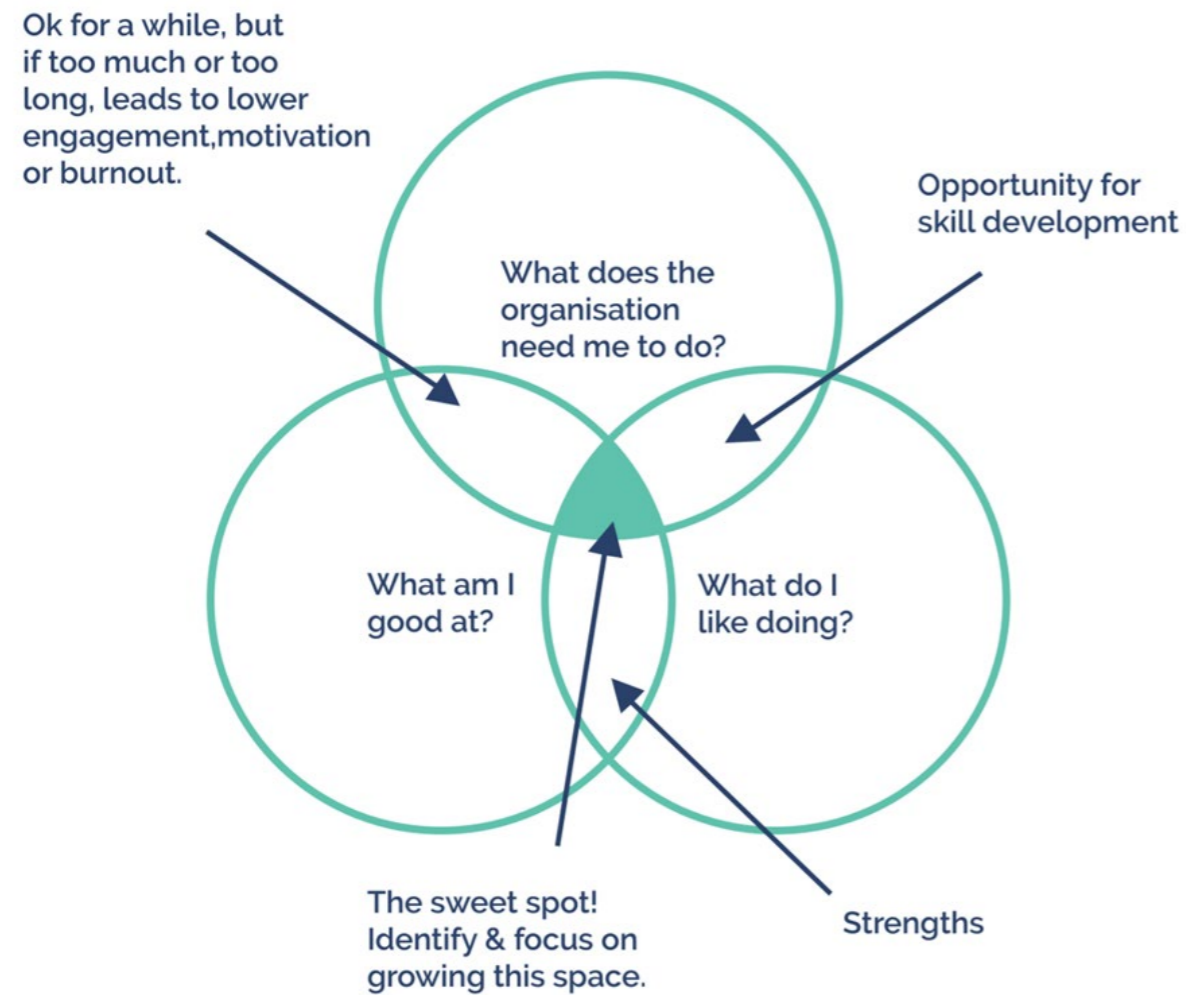


## Strengths Based Personal Development Tool.

Below is a simple tool you can use to help you have conversations around strengths and development with your team members. It's also a great one to use on yourself! I call it the Sweet Spot Development Model:



It's easy to plot yourself on the Sweet Spot Development Model. Populate each circle, as labelled, and look at where things coincide to give you your own sweet spot. It's a good thing to have some idea of this for yourself.

Then, in your next one-on-one meetings, go through the model with each of your direct reports. You may want to give them a heads up first – either with some prompts to get them thinking ahead of your meeting, or you might want to explain the model to them in your session and have them do the exercise following that time. Consider whether you'll show them yours; it might provide some direction for them to feel confident completing it for themselves. Then you can both discuss what they've written, as well as your input and observations, at your next meeting.

Use it as a coaching conversation to draw out of them their own sweet spot. It helps if they do most of the work/thinking. Contrary to popular belief, strengths aren't necessarily based on aptitude. [Marcus Buckingham describes strengths](#) as the activities that draw you in and that make you feel energised – which only an individual can determine for themselves. It shouldn't (and really can't) be something that you define for them.

To help with understanding and aid your coaching conversations, you can also borrow from this list.

### Signs of a strength

1. I'm drawn to the activity.
2. It feels good.
3. I learn quickly.
4. The time goes fast.
5. I feel an emotional fulfilment.
6. It gives me a buzz.
7. I want to talk about it.

### Signs of a non-strength

1. I've tried it and I'm not successful.
2. I look for ways to avoid it.
3. I cringe a little every time I think about it.
4. It took me a really long time to learn it.
5. I feel tired and drained afterwards
6. It makes me happy to think of a world where I don't have to do that activity

Suzi McAlpine – The Art of Leadership.

