

SWORD workbook:

KFP 3 Learning Organisation Quick Wins



Quick Win 3.1: Creating your own Personal Board of Directors (PBOD)

A successful organisation will have an effective Board of Directors, usually comprising people from different walks of life with diverse backgrounds and a range of skills and talents. They offer committed and ongoing support for the organisation, but also a critique and different perspectives on problems.

Being a leader in a social work organisation can be lonely. Leaders may have few people around who can provide support. So, creating your own *Personal* Board of Directors (PBOD) can help – a group of individuals (from in and outside the workplace) who can act as a sounding board and help you when you face a dilemma, work issue, when you need affirmation, or to challenge you if you are stuck.

Your PBOD will probably need to include people with one or more of the following qualities:

Someone who is a major support for you personally and professionally	Someone who can help you be creative	Someone who's good at coming up with practical solutions	Someone who has years of experience and accumulated wisdom
Someone you find it easy to accept criticism from	Someone who knows you better than you know yourself	Someone with directly relevant skills and expertise – i.e. they've done a job very similar to yours	Someone who is a role model for you.

Remember this is an honorary, unpaid role! So, you may need to find ways of reciprocating or showing thanks to the members of your PBOD.

Quick Win 3.2: Strengths-spotting

Spotting your personal strengths

Ask yourself the following questions:

Deep roots: What do you still do now that you did as a child?

Motivation: What activities do you do just because you love doing them?

Voice: When does the tone of your voice indicate enjoyment and energy?

Energy: What activities do you do that give you energy?

Rapid learning: What things do you pick up effortlessly and quickly?

Authenticity: When do you feel like 'the real me'?

Attention: Where do you naturally pay attention?

Ease: What activities come easily to you?

Spotting the strengths of others

Build a language of character strengths:

Develop an understanding of the different personal strengths to improve your ability to spot them in others; see the list of character strengths here.

Develop your observation and listening skills:

Enhance your awareness of what strengths look like in action, based on: a) verbal cues (listen for a more assertive voice, improved vocabulary and clarity of speech, and use of specific strengths words); and b) nonverbal cues (look for improved posture and eye contact, smiling and laughing, greater use of gestures signifying excitement and passion).

Label and explain character-strength behaviours:

Show people that you notice when they show their strengths by: a) identifying the specific strength demonstrated; b) explaining how you spotted it; c) showing that this strength is appreciated.

Make strengths-spotting a habit: Build your skills by practicing observing character strengths in people in different situations.

Quick win 3.3: Spotting character strengths in meetings

Go into meetings wearing your 'strengths goggles': i.e. a mindset that identifies strengths as they happen. After you spot strengths in people, point out the strength that you observed, tell them the reason for your observation and express your appreciation.

Quick win 3.4: Using character strengths to improve relationships

Spotting character strengths can help us improve relationships with people who we find challenging. Focusing on things that irritate us about others can often blind us to noticing their strong points. Looking for the strengths in other people enhances feelings of empathy where we can respect diversity and value and appreciate their talents.