

English Transcript for *Personal Strengths*

Now that you understand the importance of self-assessment, it's time to start the process. Before we begin though, there's something to keep in mind. It's hard. We don't always take the time to step back and look at ourselves. Because it's difficult to do. But again, it's something necessary. In a time where most people voluntarily have no privacy, everything becomes a Facebook post or a tweet. We feel like the answer to the question, who am I, is obvious. We think we know who we are. But do we really? In my last position as an admission officer, I was in charge of conducting full tuition scholarship interviews. We would identify the best and brightest applicants in the class. And we would invite them to interview with myself and the director of the honors program, for a scholarship that was worth about \$150,000 when it was all added up. When we brought the students in, I would open the interview with a very common request. Tell me about yourself. Seems easy right, but how would you respond? The common responses that we got to, tell me about yourself, were my name is this. I am from there. I attend this high school. I'm going to major in that. Think about that response. What have I learned about you that I didn't already know. What kind of impression does that response give? Worst of all, did you even answer the question? When someone asks you to tell me about yourself, they wanna know about who you are, internally. Now, there's no right way to answer. But the best answers are often related to passions, goals, interests, or personality. Think about answers that start like this. Making music is my life. Or I am the oldest of 10 sisters. How about I'll be the first from my village to attend college in the United States. Or everything that I've done in my life has been building towards my goal of. Think about the amazing conversations that could grow from those beginnings. So, tell me about yourself. Still not that easy, is it? It's okay. To begin the process, we have given you some tools. These tools are going to ask you questions that you might not have considered before. It's a way to get you thinking. Now, answering the questions is the first step, but the important step is figuring out what these answers actually mean. To start, we're going to explore you. To understand and identify your strengths, your weaknesses and your passions. This is usually the point in class where students groan and say why? Why do I have to look at my passions and think about these things? Well there two very practical effects. First, you're going to see many questions related to these ideas on your university applications, particularly, in the essays that you're going to have to write. Second, it's also going to help you with your university research. Exploring who you are will reveal trends or themes. Those themes should make it into your application. For example, you got a good grade in physics class, congratulations. Let's explore that, and ask, why? When you explore that, your good grade in physics class, you realize that in your physics class you asked more questions than any other student. The answers that you received to those questions inspired you to read more about physics outside of class. Your reading led you your award winning science fair project in physics. You love physics because why? Physics has inspired you to become what? Now, physics is more than just a high grade on your transcript. It's a passion and a theme that should now be included in your application. If you think back to our cactus. Going through this process is like identifying what kind of a plant you are. You might be a cactus. Or you might be a rose, or an oak tree. But knowing what you are makes it easier to describe yourself to an admission officer. What's easier to describe? A plant? Or a palm tree? More importantly, it will help you learn what you need to thrive.