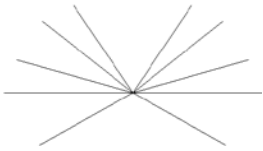


# Best Advisor Forward

Identifying, Affirming and Developing Your Professional Strengths

## Introduction

Advising is a rich and rewarding but also a complex and demanding profession. Effort and time are often needed to re-evaluate skills and abilities and to re-connect with professional values and goals. This workbook is designed to facilitate personal reflection and goal setting and to help advisors reaffirm their strengths and commitment to ongoing professional development. As an advising community, we are committed to putting our best selves forward for our students, programs, campus and ourselves.



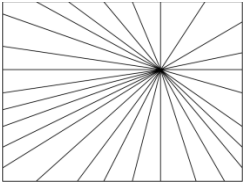
## Getting Started

What drew you to advising? What keeps you interested in advising? What aspects of advising do you find motivating?

Think about your advising role models and super heroes. Who are they? What about them do you admire?

What are their superpowers? How do you emulate them?

How is your current advising practice informed by these experiences and influences?



## First Step – Identify

(An Internal Focus – What are your primary values, interests, strengths and passions?)

What are your core advising values?  
(Choose five...)

*Sample values: Accountability, Balance, Calmness, Commitment, Community, Cooperation, Courtesy, Curiosity, Dependability, Diligence, Efficiency, Excellence, Fairness, Growth, Hard Work, Humility, Inquisitiveness, Intelligence, Intuition, Leadership, Loyalty, Making A Difference, Mastery, Merit, Openness, Order, Originality, Positivity, Practicality, Professionalism, Resourcefulness, Self-Control, Sensitivity, Simplicity, Strength, Support, Teamwork, Thoroughness, Timeliness, Trustworthiness, Understanding, Vision, Vitality.*

What Are Your Values: Deciding What's Most Important in Life

[http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED\\_85htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85htm)

Which of the following advising roles do you most identify with?

Adjudicator  
Advocate  
Assessor  
Coach  
Counselor  
Disciplinarian  
Enforcer  
Evaluator  
Facilitator  
Guide  
Leader  
Mediator  
Mentor,  
Planner,  
Problem Solver  
Resource  
Role Model  
Teacher

What aspects of advising would you continue to do even if you didn't get paid?

What are you passionate about?

What advising tasks are you so good at that you take them for granted?

Think about yourself when you are doing your best advising? What do you see when you are watching yourself advise at your best?

How do your values, interests, strengths, passions inform your philosophy of advising and your current practice?

## Second Step – Affirm

(An External Focus – Where are you having impact?)

When have you received praise from students, faculty, fellow staff and your supervisor?

Describe a career highlight. What made this a highlight? What did you know or do to make this happen? What did this highlight tell you about your value?

Is there a connection between the career highlight and your identified values, interests, strengths or passions?

How can you gain more information on the impact you have on others?

*Consider taking up the courage to ask others about your professional strengths. Ask your students, peers, mentors, supervisors and colleagues to comment on your work. Incorporate this feedback into your future direction, goals, plans and opportunities.*

## Third Step – Envision

(Looking Toward the Future)

How would you describe the professional you want to become? How would you like to employ your strengths?

What do you want your professional persona, identity or brand to look like?

If a future employer *Googled* you – what would you like them to discover?

What would you like others to say about your work? Write a Yelp review for yourself. What did you do to merit this review?

How will you employ your strengths to benefit students? Your program, department, school or college? The University?

## Fourth Step – Plan

“A Goal without a plan is just a wish.” – Antoine de Saint-Exupery

### What professional development goals are you considering?

- Improve your performance?
- Take on new responsibilities?
- Seek out leadership opportunities?
- Update or broaden your skills?
- Refresh and re-motivate yourself?
- Adapt to changing job responsibilities?
- Engage and connect with the advising community?
- Change jobs or transition successfully to a new job?
- Retool your skills for a new line of work?

### Describe

Think through your skills in these key competency areas...where would you like to focus future development? Are you building depth and breadth?

(Habley, 1995 and McClellan, 2002)

#### Conceptual

*Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Advising*

##### **Understanding the role of advising**

(Methods, theory, models, structures, history, philosophy, values, trends, ethics, etc.)

##### **Understanding students**

(Student development theory, populations, learning styles and strategies, barriers to success, etc.)

#### Informational

*Institutional specific knowledge of Programs, Policy, Procedure, Resources*

**Knowledge of disciplines and Berkeley's schools, colleges and academic programs**

**Knowledge of laws (FERPA), unit or campus specific policies, procedures**

**Knowledge of resources**

#### Relational

*Interpersonal and Communication Skills – Building Rapport Needed to Facilitate the Advising Process*

**Essential Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Skills**

**Essential Counseling and Referral Strategies**

**Creating an equitable, inclusive, responsive environment able to meet the needs of a diverse population and work across differences**

#### Technical

*Effective Use of Student Systems and Technological Resources*

**Proficient use of primary student information systems**

**Knowledge of and proficient use of Campus databases**

**Assessment of student learning and program effectiveness**

#### Personal

*Developing an intentional and thoughtful advising practice*

**Understanding and Developing Your Individual Advising Strengths, Values and Goals**

What new projects appeal to you? What roles appeal to you?

What new skills, expertise, or training are required in your advising work? How will you acquire these?

What resources, organizations, people, and strategies will help you reach your goals?

### Resources

*Options: Courses, workshops, in-house training, professional journals and articles, seminars, webinars, continuing education, project based learning, degree programs, leadership development, conferences, committees, etc.*

### Organizations

*Communities of Practice: Advising Network Community (ANC), Berkeley Peer Advisors Network (bPAN), Cal Assessment Network (CAN), Berkeley Facilitators Network (BFN), Business Process Analysis Working Group (BPAWG), etc.*

*Staff Organizations: Berkeley Staff Assembly, etc.*

*Professional Associations: NACADA, NASPA, etc.*

### People

*Co-worker or peer with special knowledge, training and experience to motivate? Supervisor? Team leader? Mentor? Committee Chair? Director or other leader or manager? Other?*

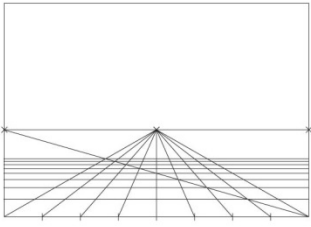
### Strategies

*Develop specialized advising knowledge, expertise (strategies for working with special student populations, methods etc.)*

*Build a specific skill (e.g., presentation skills, assessment, technical ability, etc.*

*Take on new roles (team member, individual contributor, project manager, leader)*

*Take on a new project, get involved with an organization, etc.*

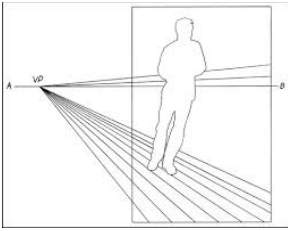


## Fifth Step – Apply

(What conditions are needed for success?)

What kind of environment tends to bring out the best in you?

What will be needed for you to create and sustain that environment for yourself?



## Putting it all together – The Professional Development Action Plan

- What would you like to know or be able to do?
- What skills or competencies would you like to develop?
- What will be needed to achieve this goal?
- What will success look like?
- What resources, organizations, people or strategies will you use?
- Is this a short, mid-range or long-range goal?

### My yearly 80 hours of professional development time! My Professional Development Action Plan

Remember the 70/20/10 rule – 70% of professional development comes from on-the-job experiences and working on tasks and problems, 20% comes from feedback from supervisors and mentors and 10% comes from courses and reading (Lombardo and Eichinger, 1996).

<b>Objective</b> (What would you like to know or be able to do? What skills or competencies would you like to develop? How will your attitude or disposition change?)	<b>Tasks</b> (What will be needed to achieve this goal?)	<b>Success Criteria</b> (How will you know you have succeeded?)	<b>Resources</b> (What resources, organizations, people or strategies will you use?)	<b>Time Frame</b> (Is this a short, mid-range or long-range goal?)



## Remaining Motivated!



What strengths and resources will you use to remain motivated and on track? Who will provide support if your plan needs adjustment over time?

What self-care strategies (physical, mental, spiritual) will you employ to sustain yourself?

Take Thomas M. Skovholt's *Practioner Professional Resiliency and Self-Care Inventory* [www.leadership.umn.edu/news/documents/Gold\\_ResiliencyInventory.pdf](http://www.leadership.umn.edu/news/documents/Gold_ResiliencyInventory.pdf)

What rewards will continue to motivate you?



Wow Yourself!

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Inspiration: Laurie Schreiner, Ph.D., Strengths Based Advising Handout (PDF)

[https://www.apu.edu/strengthsacademy/downloads/strengths\\_based\\_advising\\_handout.pdf](https://www.apu.edu/strengthsacademy/downloads/strengths_based_advising_handout.pdf)