If you want to reach your personal and leadership potential then it requires maximizing your strengths. This only happens if you develop and focus on the areas you are most skilled, talented, and strong in while avoiding your weaknesses. It takes being disciplined and being intentional if you want to become the best in your strengths. Many people have failed at maximizing their strengths because,

They have never discovered their strengths.

They spend more time sharpening their weaknesses than their strengths.

They try to be well rounded or a master of all trades.

They lose sight of their passions and dreams.

They resist change and forward movement.

They are not disciplined, focused, or intentional.

They fear risk and stay in their comfort zone.

They never move past their success or failure.

These things will only hold you back from your leadership and strength potential. If you desire maximizing your strengths then apply these three suggestions into your life:

**Practice**– Practice is an essential action a leader does to maximize their strengths. It requires both practice and time to become better in your strengths. It takes an average of 10,000 hours or 10 years to become the best in a given area. In “[Talent is Overrated](http://www.google.com/products/catalog?q=talent+is+overrated&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbm=shop&cid=4685504179420926266&sa=X&ei=Z0s7T6XnE8W22gX-honTBQ&ved=0CD4Q8wIwAQ)”, Geoff Colvin share 5 elements to practice:

1. It is designed specifically to improve performance.

2. It has to be repeated a lot.

3. Feedback on results must be continuously available.

4. It is highly demanding mentally.

5. It isn’t all that much fun.

If we want to be the best in our strengths then it’s going to take time and intentional practice.

**Maximizing**– The words maximizing means to “Make the best use of” and this is what we must do with our strengths. Great leaders know the importance of focusing on and using their strengths on a daily basis. To see the benefits of using your strengths then read [What Happens When Using Your Strengths](http://wp.me/p1waA2-bx).

**Develop-** Being intentional in developing your strengths is a must for a leader. If a leader is not developing in their strengths and leadership ability then they won’t be leading for long. A leader should take time to focus on developing their strengths through a [personal development plan](http://wp.me/p1waA2-fO). The plan might include reading, listening to lessons, mentorship, and attending workshops. The goal should be to do thing things which will allow you to become a strength based leader.

**Question:** How do you maximize your strengths?

Source: <http://danblackonleadership.info/archives/1145>

1. **Summarizing** involves giving the "gist" of a chosen passage, using your own words and not the author's. Summaries are generally informative and descriptive. While an effective summary emphasizes all of the main points in a selection, it is significantly shorter than the original.   
**Purpose**

Summarization is a valuable tool for academic, personal, and professional writing, and can be used for many purposes. For example, summaries can:

* convey a general idea
* give only necessary information
* shorten material
* reference material
* set up quoted material
* provide support
* add credibility
* establish background
* offer an overview of a topic
* describe common knowledge

**What a Summary Should Contain**

Effective summaries are made up of concise, coherent sentences that communicate the key information of a passage. Summaries may involve simply deleting extraneous material, highlighting key points, synthesizing the overall meaning, or miniaturizing primary ideas.

It is important to remember that a summary must remain faithful to the author's interpretation and emphasis. Summaries should focus on what the author is saying, not on how he or she is proving it. Also, you should not give your own opinions about the author's message; instead, maintain a neutral tone. The only time your summary should be biased is if the original passage is biased.

How to Summarize

1. Read the passage you are going to summarize at least twice so that you fully comprehend what the author is saying.
2. Isolate the thesis, or main idea of the passage to be summarized.
3. Work through the text to identify the portions that support the author's main idea; highlight or underline these sections
4. Rephrase the main points into your own sentences, but remember to keep the author's intended purpose and message. It is generally not necessary to include examples and details.
5. Make up a new thesis that explains the essential idea of the passage. You should not simply restate the author's thesis; you want to prove that you understand the information in the passage by forming your own sentence. Writing in this way helps you to re-create the meaning of the original in a way that makes sense for you.
6. While you are summarizing, you must remember to change sentence structure, vocabulary, and the thesis in order to avoid plagiarism. Also, your summary does not have to be in the same order as the original passage unless arrangement is necessary for comprehension.

**Checklist**

1. Is the main idea clear and accurate?
2. Is your summary concise?
3. Are there few (if any) details and examples?
4. Does your summary include only information found in the original?
5. Does your summary read like a unified paragraph?

**Remember**

* Always write a summary with the author's purpose in mind.
* The length of a summary depends on what is being summarized.
* Summarizing can always be improved with practice!

**2. Paraphrasing** *involves taking a set of facts or opinions and rewording them.*

www.csus.edu/englishta/ta/inclassactivities/summarizing.doc