DEBBIE:  Welcome, everybody, to our 12@12 wellbeing session, recharging our wellbeing and our energy and today's session is Using Strengths the Goldilocks Way. Before I start I'd like to begin the session by acknowledging that we are presenting today from lutruwita Aboriginal lands, sea and water ways. I acknowledge with deep respect the traditional custodians of the land where I’m meeting, the palawa people and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which you are all situated at the moment. In NAIDOC week, I want to acknowledge that this is Aboriginal land, it always was and it always will be, to recognise for 65,000 years Aboriginal people are custodians of this land and will continue to have their deep connections with this land. Thank you. I heard a beautiful NAIDOC acknowledgment today too, like the way they've been developed.

So Using Strengths the Goldilocks Way. If you were here last week, and hopefully you were but if you weren't that's okay, you would know that our strengths are things that we enjoy doing that we use often and that they really energise us and as Marcus Buckingham says, really, strengths make us feel stronger and our weaknesses make us feel weaker, so if we can tap into our strengths to feel stronger, not only, it's not stronger physical, but it’s stronger mentally, it’s stronger emotionally, and it’s stronger socially. It makes more sense that we get to use them as often as we can because we're going to tend to be at our best, do our best and be seen as our best. Just a really quick recap, the VIA character strengths that you can see in front of you were developed by a team of 55 scientists over three years to find out what's the best in people. They looked over cultures, they looked through history, they looked through religions and they came up with 24 character strengths that we all have. These character strengths are divided into six different virtues. Here they're named citizenship, courage, wisdom, transcendence, humanity and temperance. These help us do well and they also make a positive difference to people around us. They were first developed as an alternative to the DSM, so if you are aware of the DSM, the diagnostic statistic manual that psychologists used to assess and analyse where people are at when they're not at their best, when they're broken, when they're unwell. So this alternative team of psychologists who looked at this wanted to find out what it looks like when people are at their best and how do we assess that, so the VIA character strengths. If you had a chance to assess, to do the free assessment on the VIA character strengths, do you want to put into chat one of your top strengths that you noticed?  I'm going to put in kindness. I just shared this story a couple of days ago and it's a great example of how our strengths, not only help us feel good about ourselves and look after our wellbeing, but they make it good for everyone else. Today is World Kindness Day and I was texting someone to arrange to pick up a cupboard that she was selling. She said, I'll try and fit it in, I've got to pick up my mother from hospital. In my text I said, I hope it goes really well picking up your mum from hospital, all the best. One thing because I didn't want to stress her out anymore about me picking up this cupboard. And she emailed me back and said thank you for your kindness. I said it's World Kindness Day, nice coincidence. Then she again texted me back and said, my mother has just had a right breast mastectomy, she's had a mastectomy before, she also has had cancers removed in her mouth, her lymph nodes and her neck. Your words have put a smile on my face and made such a difference. Wow. Just the power of kindness is so - you know, half a sentence just wishing her mum well and wishing that the pickup from hospital goes well. So it just indicates how much difference these can make not only to ourselves but to others around us. I describe these character strengths as things that we carry around in a kip bag. So they're with us all the time. So each of us, again, have the 24 strengths in a kip bag. In the top of the kip bags are the ones that we go to all the time. The ones in the middle are the ones that we have to rummage down and kind of go past our go to ones and then the ones at the very bottom, we've got to reach right down and pull them up. So there's been times in my life that I go, okay, courage I need you now and I've got to reach down. Or bravery, I've got to reach down and up you go, you're about number 17 or 18 of mine. I need you a bit higher at the moment. So having that image helps me use those strengths in the right way, the Goldilocks way. Because it's not a matter of just finding a few strengths or our top ones that are at the top of the kip bag and using them more and more whatever situation we're in. It's about finding the right strengths in the right amount for the right situation. It's reflecting on, okay, what is the current situation and what is it asking of me?  What strength do I most need here?  And not only would I ask myself this question but when I am coaching my team individually I'll ask them that question as well and it's a really nice way of getting someone to reflect on their performance and how they might want to change it and enhance it and bring their skills to bear on it because remember our skills are where we are when we're at our best. So if we keep overplaying some of our strengths, when we put our hand in our kip bag to respond to a situation and keep grabbing some of those things that are on top, we will find out, we will sometimes be overplaying some of our strengths and when we over play our strengths, it feels that things keep going wrong but we're not quite sure why and we can't put our finger on it or we feel unappreciated, like that's just the way I am. Can't anyone appreciate me for who I am?  We can sometimes feel that we're on the verge of burning out. So I was talking to someone last night, one of their top strengths is honesty and she said, ‘That’s just the way I am. Sometimes I know that I've often spoken my mind too much and too bluntly and other people think that it's too blunt and I realise I need to back off’. So we talked about her overplaying her strengths. She goes ‘yep, that's a nice way of looking at it’. So sometimes we can overplay our strengths of love or kindness and we're too giving and we just give ourselves to everyone and we do everything, we're the yes person and always do what's asked of us. It's like sometimes we need to dial back that strength of kindness and love and say no to look after ourselves. So there are times that we can just overplay some of our strengths. Then we can also underplay our strengths and when we underplay our strengths it can appear as a lack of confidence. It means that we're uncertain of which strengths or how to apply them or we're not used to applying them. So if we're underplaying our courage, sometimes we're not speaking up when we might need to speak up. Or if we're underplaying our honesty, we can be nodding and going along with things, rather than, kind of, being really up front with how we're feeling and naming it up and that might give relief to others or for underplaying our love and kindness we probably haven't been up front enough in letting people know that we're thinking of them. Those things can make a big difference. So even though our strengths are just a really powerful way of looking after our well-being and helping us be our best, in fact they have been found to be one of the most powerful ways of feeling good about life, feeling satisfied and looking after our well-being if we use them more each day, but when you're using them each day, just make sure you're not overplaying or underplaying, or if you are just reflect on that. So one thing you can do is at the end of each week or the end of each day think, which character strengths have I seen come to the fore today, which ones might I have overplayed or underplayed. If you are working with others, or working in a team, strength-based conversations can really motivate and strengthen and elevate others and help them feel more confident and more empowered and take responsibility for things. You think about the opposite is a negative base or a deficit base conversation that can usually demotivate, someone can feel put down, they can feel defensive and when you're defensive you may not take responsibility for making changes. So strengths-based conversation can make a big difference to your relationships with others. In fact, if you're a team leader or if you manage a team, giving feedback that focuses on strengths has been found to lift employees' performance by 36% and conversely giving a deficit-based feedback based on weaknesses, people's performances goes down 27%, so it does make a big difference. And you'll know - another good thing is to spot people's strengths, and you’ll know that people are using their strengths or talking about their strengths, their eyes will light up, their voices will become really animated, often their body language is kind of suggesting enthusiasm. So a sure sign someone is talking about one of their strengths. Just let them know and give them feedback about that. Hey, it seems like you really had a great perspective there or you showed some good curiosity. That's a good way of giving feedback. So developing character strengths. If you’re like Kirsty and haven’t had the chance to do it yet I really do encourage you to take 15, 20 minutes out of your day or on the weekend and take that free VIA character strength survey. You are joining 6 million people from around the world who have taken it. It is a really reputable site, so you'll be safe using that site. And then maybe get into a little habit of when you turn off your computer each evening, spend 5, or even a couple of, minutes reflecting on which character strengths you noticed yourself using today. Perhaps the ones you might have overplayed or underplayed or which ones do you think that you nailed it and that you got right. Then you might want to choose one strength that you want to focus on getting to the Goldilocks amount for the next day and set an intention to do that. As always, here's some great resources. That VIA institute on character where you can take the free strength survey. They’ve got an abundance of resources, zillions of them, so feel free to play around on that site and download all they’ve got to offer. Michelle McQuaid has a great free eBook, how to put your strengths to work, and it goes through each strength and gives some examples of how you can use it more and gives you tips and pointers if you might be underusing it or overusing it. Thanks for putting those up, Jane. That's the end of our 12 minutes again - probably 13 and a quarter minutes. Next week's session is Are We There Yet and it's all about growth mindsets, how do we, kind of, foster more of a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset and why does it matter and what does it mean and how can it make a difference to our wellbeing. So hopefully we'll see you there. Have a great weekend. See if you can get that strengths survey and then spot strengths in yourself and others. Spotting strengths in others is fun. Thank you all. Bye.