
Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 10-07-2015

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Your Top 5 Themes

Relator
Learner
Responsibility
Activator
Ideation

What's in This Guide?

[Section I: Awareness](#)

- A brief Shared Theme Description for each of your top five themes
- Your Personalized Strengths Insights, which describe what makes you stand out from others with the same theme in their top five
- Questions for you to answer to increase your awareness of your talents

[Section II: Application](#)

- 10 Ideas for Action for each of your top five themes
- Questions for you to answer to help you apply your talents

[Section III: Achievement](#)

- Examples of what each of your top five themes "sounds like" -- real quotes from people who also have the theme in their top five
- Steps for you to take to help you leverage your talents for achievement

Section I: Awareness

Relator

Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.

Your Personalized Strengths Insights

What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you notice that members of your group often ask you to share your convictions, conclusions, or values. Undoubtedly, they want to understand your position about a variety of topics, people, issues, or situations. Because you express your views, many individuals feel they know you quite well. Instinctively, you may be selective about the types of books or publications you read. They might contain information or tips that you can share with individuals you are training. Perhaps imparting knowledge, talking about your experiences, or passing along your skills gives you a certain degree of satisfaction. It's very likely that you sometimes consider ways you might enhance your ability to reduce difficult-to-understand ideas, processes, or plans to their most basic elements. Perhaps you seek opportunities to make things simpler and easier to comprehend. Chances are good that you might identify the most basic and important parts of elaborate ideas, processes, or technologies. Maybe you avoid confusing people because you do not want to overwhelm them with too many details. By nature, you probably feel much better about your life when people solicit — that is, ask for or request — your views about various topics, proposals, or plans.

Questions

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

Learner

Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

Your Personalized Strengths Insights

What makes you stand out?

By nature, you might register for high level courses or honors classes. Why? Perhaps you are attracted to subjects that are not easy to comprehend. Occasionally you trust yourself enough to test your mental endurance and agility. It's very likely that you are a history buff — that is, someone ardently devoted to studying the past. You are especially drawn to firsthand accounts of global conflicts. You link people to events and trace timelines. You are likely to examine major battles from the perspective of foes and allies as well as neutral parties. The sum of your findings probably allows you to determine what started and eventually ended each war. Chances are good that you might offer assistance to people when the predicament in which they find themselves fascinates you. Maybe you come to the aid of others when they ask you to study an intriguing problem, unanswered question, or unfamiliar subject. Occasionally you are delighted to report back to them your discoveries and conclusions. Driven by your talents, you may prefer to enroll in demanding classes. Perhaps you thrive in situations where you can test your talents or your endurance to discover how much you can accomplish. You may need to “prove yourself to yourself” every now and then. Instinctively, you regularly devote yourself to gaining knowledge and acquiring skills. You are happy with life when you have lots of time to make more discoveries. How? You probably read, solve problems, write, rehearse, or practice.

Questions

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

Responsibility

Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.

Your Personalized Strengths Insights

What makes you stand out?

It's very likely that you may be a person whose work ethic is as much a matter of conscience as it is a matter of completing tasks. Perhaps you need to do what you know is right, true, proper, or accurate. Because of your strengths, you sometimes work hard to do what you said you would do. Perhaps you take pleasure from hearing people say they can count on you. Being regarded as dependable or trustworthy might be your badge of honor. By nature, you are determined to be victorious. As much as you yearn to be "number one," you know cheating is unacceptable. You probably experience remorse when you unintentionally take unfair advantage of anyone. You likely think finishing first counts only when you have followed all the rules just like everyone else. Chances are good that you place a premium on doing everything correctly. Whatever you are involved in or associated with must typify — that is, symbolize — accuracy and precision. Your high standards demand exactness. Instinctively, you may gravitate to team tasks rather than work alone. Once you join a group, you might make a firm commitment to do your fair share of the mental and physical labor. To some degree, you understand that teams reach their goals when their individual members perform well.

Questions

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

Activator

Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.

Your Personalized Strengths Insights

What makes you stand out?

Because of your strengths, you commonly inspire your teammates to be as enthused as you are about various jobs, opportunities, events, causes, or ideas. Driven by your talents, you might enjoy discovering complicated words and committing their meanings to memory. Maybe you are pleased to add a few uncommon terms to your vocabulary. Possibly few things please you more than showcasing bits and pieces of your newfound vocabulary in conversations, discussions, or presentations. Perhaps you are taken aback — that is, surprised and confused — if some people feel threatened by your command of language. By nature, you may pay close attention to intelligent conversations. Perhaps you give credit to certain individuals who make key points that advance everyone's understanding of a particular theory, concept, or idea. Sometimes you file away or make a mental note about specific information, knowing it might be useful one day. Chances are good that you generate enthusiasm so people become as eager as you are to transform an idea into something tangible. You are energized, not paralyzed, by opportunities and possibilities. Instinctively, you might be drawn to helping people understand they are people of consequence — that is, important. Perhaps by acknowledging the merit in something they said, you cause individuals to feel a little more confident about your opinion of them.

Questions

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2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

Ideation

Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

Your Personalized Strengths Insights

What makes you stand out?

Because of your strengths, you want people to see you as a winner, as “number one,” or as the very best in various activities. Being quite sensitive to what others think of you probably is a powerful motivating force that usually works to your advantage. It’s very likely that you derive great pleasure from making discoveries designing innovations. You really enjoy doing things no one has ever considered. By nature, you usually are the group member who creates fresh approaches for dealing with various activities. Often you are inspired to invent new methods for performing tasks, reaching goals, operating processes, distributing goods, or increasing production. You probably have proposed original thoughts for collecting materials, handling complaints, organizing events, raising funds, or completing assignments. Instinctively, you tend to be the member of the team who suggests creative ways to do things. You are apt to propose many more innovative ideas than others in your group. Driven by your talents, you probably consider yourself an idea person. Your job, studies, or life in general are more exciting when people ask you to generate novel assignments, activities, or campaigns.

Questions

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

Questions

1. How does this information help you better understand your unique talents?
2. How can you use this understanding to add value to your role?
3. How can you apply this knowledge to add value to your team, workgroup, department, or division?
4. How will this understanding help you add value to your organization?
5. What will you do differently tomorrow as a result of this report?

Section II: Application

Relator

Ideas for Action:

- Find a workplace in which friendships are encouraged. You will not do well in an overly formal organization. In job interviews, ask about work styles and company culture.
- Deliberately learn as much as you can about the people you meet. You like knowing about people, and other people like being known. By doing this, you will act as a catalyst for trusting relationships.
- Let it be known that you are more interested in the character and personality of others than in their status or job title. This is one of your greatest talents and can serve as a model for others.
- Let your caring show. For example, find people in your company to mentor, help your colleagues get to know each other better, or extend your relationships beyond the office.
- No matter how busy you are, stay in contact with your friends. They are your fuel.
- Be honest with your friends. True caring means helping the other person be successful and fulfilled. Giving honest feedback or encouraging your friend to move out of a role in which he or she is struggling is a compassionate act.
- You probably prefer to be seen as a person, an equal, or a friend, rather than as a function, a superior, or a title. Let people know that they can address you by your first name, rather than formally.
- You might tend to withhold the most engaging aspects of your personality until you have sensed openness from another person. Remember, building relationships is not a one-way street. Proactively “put yourself out there.” Others will quickly see you for the genuine individual you are, and you will create many more opportunities to cultivate strong, long-lasting connections.
- Make time for family and close friends. You need to spend quality moments with those you love in order to “feed” your Relator talents. Schedule activities that allow you to get even closer to the people who keep you grounded and happy.
- Make an effort to socialize with your colleagues and team members outside of work. It can be as simple as lunch or coffee together. This will help you forge more connected relationships at work, which in turn can facilitate more effective teamwork and cooperation.

Questions

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

Learner

Ideas for Action:

- Refine how you learn. For example, you might learn best by teaching; if so, seek out opportunities to present to others. You might learn best through quiet reflection; if so, find this quiet time.
- Develop ways to track the progress of your learning. If there are distinct levels or stages of learning within a discipline or skill, take a moment to celebrate your progression from one level to the next. If no such levels exist, create them for yourself (e.g., reading five books on the subject or making three presentations on the subject).
- Be a catalyst for change. Others might be intimidated by new rules, new skills, or new circumstances. Your willingness to soak up this newness can calm their fears and spur them to action. Take this responsibility seriously.
- Seek roles that require some form of technical competence. You will enjoy the process of acquiring and maintaining this expertise.
- As far as possible, shift your career toward a field with constantly changing technologies or regulations. You will be energized by the challenge of keeping up.
- Because you are not threatened by unfamiliar information, you might excel in a consulting role (either internal or external) in which you are paid to go into new situations and pick up new competencies or languages quickly.
- Research supports the link between learning and performance. When people have the opportunity to learn and grow, they are more productive and loyal. Look for ways to measure the degree to which you and others feel that your learning needs are being met, to create individualized learning milestones, and to reward achievements in learning.
- At work, take advantage of programs that subsidize your learning. Your organization may be willing to pay for part or all of your instructional coursework or for certifications. Ask your manager for information about scholarships and other educational opportunities.
- Honor your desire to learn. Take advantage of adult educational opportunities in your community. Discipline yourself to sign up for at least one new academic or adult learning course each year.
- Time disappears and your attention intensifies when you are immersed in studying or learning. Allow yourself to “follow the trail” by scheduling learning sessions during periods of time that will not be interrupted by pressing engagements.

Questions

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Responsibility

Ideas for Action:

- Emphasize your sense of responsibility when job hunting. During interviews, describe your desire to be held fully accountable for the success or failure of projects, your intense dislike of unfinished work, and your need to “make it right” if a commitment is not met.
- Keep volunteering for more responsibility than your experience seems to warrant. You thrive on responsibility, and you can deal with it very effectively.
- Align yourself with others who share your sense of responsibility. You will flourish when working with people who share your determination to get things done.
- Tell your manager that you work best when given the freedom to follow through on your commitments — that you don’t need to check in during a project, just at the end. You can be trusted to get it done.
- Push yourself to say no. Because you are instinctively responsible, it might sometimes be difficult to refuse opportunities. For this reason, you must be selective. Ask for more responsibility in only the areas that matter most to you.
- You naturally take ownership of every project you are involved in. Make sure that your capacity to own does not keep you from sharing responsibility. Allow others the opportunity to experience the challenges of ownership. In doing so, you will contribute to their growth and development.
- Learn to manage your Responsibility talents by considering whether you really are the person who should be handling a particular issue. Defer to your existing responsibilities and goals before undertaking additional burdens, as you may end up skimping on quality if you have too many tasks or competing demands.
- Partner with someone especially talented in Discipline or Focus. This person can help you stay on track and prevent you from becoming overloaded.
- Working with a like-minded, responsible colleague is satisfying for you. Be sure to clarify expectations and boundaries so that each person can feel ownership for his or her particular tasks — without stepping on each other’s toes.
- Responsible individuals like to know they have “delivered” on their commitments, so create metrics and goals to gauge how effectively you meet your obligations. Also, make sure you have explicit and concrete expectations so that there is no question regarding quality outcomes and so that you can hit the mark as promised.

Questions

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

Activator

Ideas for Action:

- Seek work in which you can make your own decisions and act on them. In particular, look for start-up or turnaround situations.
- At work, make sure that your manager judges you on measurable outcomes rather than your process. Your process is not always pretty.
- You can transform innovative ideas into immediate action. Look for creative and original thinkers, and help them move their ideas from conceptual theory to concrete practice.
- Look for areas that are bogged down by discussion or blocked by barriers. End the stalemate by creating a plan to get things moving and spur others into action.
- You learn more from real experience than from theoretical discussions. To grow, consciously expose yourself to challenging experiences that will test your talents, skills, and knowledge.
- Remember that although your tenacity is powerful, it may intimidate some. Your Activator talents will be most effective when you have first earned others' trust and loyalty.
- Identify the most influential decision makers in your organization. Make it a point to have lunch with each of them at least once a quarter to share your ideas. They can support you in your activation and provide critical resources to make your ideas happen.
- You can easily energize the plans and ideas of others. Consider partnering with focused, futuristic, strategic, or analytical people who will lend their direction and planning to your activation, thereby creating an opportunity to build consensus and get others behind the plan. By doing this, you complement each other.
- Give the reasons why your requests for action must be granted. Otherwise, others might dismiss you as impatient and label you a 'ready, fire, aim' person.
- You possess an ability to create motion and momentum in others. Be strategic and wise in the use of your Activator talents. When is the best time, where is the best place, and who are the best people with whom to leverage your valuable influence?

Questions

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

Ideation

Ideas for Action:

- Seek a career in which you will be given credit for and paid for your ideas, such as marketing, advertising, journalism, design, or new product development.
- You are likely to get bored quickly, so make some small changes in your work or home life. Experiment. Play mental games with yourself. All of these will help keep you stimulated.
- Finish your thoughts and ideas before communicating them. Lacking your Ideation talents, others might not be able to “join the dots” of an interesting but incomplete idea and thus might dismiss it.
- Not all your ideas will be equally practical or serviceable. Learn to edit your ideas, or find a trusted friend or colleague who can “proof” your ideas and identify potential pitfalls.
- Understand the fuel for your Ideation talents: When do you get your best ideas? When you’re talking with people? When you’re reading? When you’re simply listening or observing? Take note of the circumstances that seem to produce your best ideas, and recreate them.
- Schedule time to read, because the ideas and experiences of others can become your raw material for new ideas. Schedule time to think, because thinking energizes you.
- You are a natural fit with research and development; you appreciate the mindset of visionaries and dreamers. Spend time with imaginative peers, and sit in on their brainstorming sessions.
- Partner with someone with strong Analytical talents. This person will question you and challenge you, therefore strengthening your ideas.
- Sometimes you lose others’ interest because they cannot follow your abstract and conceptual thinking style. Make your ideas more concrete by drawing pictures, using analogies or metaphors, or simply explaining your concepts step by step.
- Feed your Ideation talents by gathering knowledge. Study fields and industries different from your own. Apply ideas from outside, and link disparate ideas to generate new ones.

Questions

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

Section III: Achievement

Look for signs of achievement as you read these real quotes from people who share your top five themes.

Relator sounds like this:

Gavin T., flight attendant: “I have many wonderful acquaintances, but as for true friends that I hold dear, not very many. And I’m real okay with that. My best times are spent with the people I’m tightest with, like my family. We are a very tight-knit Irish Catholic family, and we get together every chance we can. It’s a large family — I have five brothers and sisters and ten nieces and nephews — but we all get together about once a month and yuk it up. I’m the catalyst. When I’m back in Chicago, even if there is no birthday or anniversary or whatever, I become the excuse for getting together and hanging out for three or four days. We really enjoy one another’s company.”

Tony D., pilot: “I used to fly in the Marines, and, boy, you had better be comfortable with the word ‘friend’ in the Marines. You had better feel good about trusting someone else. I can’t tell you how many times I put my life in someone else’s hands. I was flying off my friend’s wing, and I’d be dead if he couldn’t get me back safely.”

Jamie T., entrepreneur: “I’m definitely selective about my relationships. When I first meet people, I don’t want to give them very much of my time. I don’t know them; they don’t know me — so let’s just be pleasant and leave it at that. But if circumstances make it so that we get to know each other better, it seems like a threshold is reached where I suddenly start wanting to invest more. I’ll share more of myself, put myself out for them, do things for them that will bring us a little closer, and show that I care. It’s funny because I am not looking for any more friends in my life. I have enough. And yet with each new person I meet, as soon as that threshold is reached, I feel compelled to go deeper and deeper. Now I have ten people working for me, and I would call each of them my very good friend.”

Learner sounds like this:

Annie M., managing editor: “I get antsy when I am not learning something. Last year, although I was enjoying my work, I didn’t feel as though I was learning enough. So I took up tap dancing. It sounds strange, doesn’t it? I know I am never going to perform or anything, but I enjoy focusing on the technical skill of tapping, getting a little better each week, and moving up from the beginners’ class to the intermediate class. That was a kick.”

Miles A., operations manager: “When I was seven years old, my teachers would tell my parents, ‘Miles isn’t the most intelligent boy in the school, but he’s a sponge for learning, and he’ll probably go really far because he will push himself and continually be grasping new things.’ Right now, I am just starting a course in business-travel Spanish. I know it is probably too ambitious to think I could learn conversational Spanish and become totally proficient in that language, but I at least want to be able to travel there and know the language.”

Tim S., coach for executives: “One of my clients is so inquisitive that it drives him crazy because he can’t do everything he wants to. I’m different. I am not curious in that broad sense. I prefer to go into greater depth with things so that I can become competent in them and then use them at work. For example, recently one of my clients wanted me to travel with him to Nice, France, for a business engagement. So I started reading up on the region, buying books, and checking the Internet. It was all interesting and I enjoyed the study, but I wouldn’t have done any of it if I wasn’t going to be traveling there for work.”

Responsibility sounds like this:

Nigel T., sales executive: “I used to think that there was a piece of metal in my hand and a magnet on the ceiling. I would just volunteer for everything. I have had to learn how to manage that because not only would I end up with too much on my plate, but I would also wind up thinking that everything was my fault. I realize now that I can’t be responsible for everything in the world — that’s God’s job.”

Kelly G., operations manager: “The country manager in Sweden called me in November and said, ‘Kelly, could you please not ship my inventory until January 1.’ I said, ‘Sure. Sounds like a good plan.’ I told my people about the plan and thought I had all the bases covered. On December 31, however, when I was checking my messages while on a ski slope, making sure everything was hunky-dory, I saw that his order had already been shipped and invoiced. I had to call immediately and tell him what happened. He’s a nice man, so he didn’t use any four-letter words, but he was very angry and very disappointed. I felt terrible. An apology wasn’t enough. I needed to fix it. I called our controller from the chalet, and that afternoon we figured out a way to put the value of his inventory back on our books and clean it off his. It took most of the weekend, but it was the right thing to do.”

Harry B., outplacement consultant: “I was just a young bank manager in one of the branches when the president of the company decided that he wanted to foreclose on a property. I said, ‘That’s fine, but we have a responsibility to give the people full value for their property.’ He didn’t see it that way. He wanted to sell the property to a friend of his for what was owed, and he said my problem was that I couldn’t separate my business ethics from my personal ethics. I told him that was correct. I couldn’t because I didn’t believe — and still don’t believe — that you can have two standards. So I quit the firm and went back to earning five dollars an hour working for the forestry service picking up trash. Since my wife and I were trying to support our two kids and make ends meet, it was a hard decision for me to make. But looking back, on one level, it really wasn’t hard at all. I simply couldn’t function in an organization with those kinds of ethics.”

Activator sounds like this:

Jane C., Benedictine nun: “When I was prioress in the 1970s, we were hit by the energy shortage, and costs skyrocketed. We had a hundred and forty acres, and I walked the acreage every day pondering what we should do about this energy shortage. Suddenly I decided that if we had that much land, we should be drilling our own gas well, and so we did. We spent one hundred thousand dollars to drill a gas well. If you have never drilled a gas well, you probably don’t realize what I didn’t realize: namely, that you have to spend seventy thousand dollars just to drill to see if you have any gas on your property at all. So they dug down with some kind of vibratory camera thing, and they told me that I had a gas pool. But they didn’t know how large the pool was, and they didn’t know if there was enough pressure to bring it up. ‘If you pay another thirty thousand dollars, we will try to release the well,’ they said. ‘If you don’t want us to, we’ll just cap the well, take your seventy thousand, and go home.’ So I gave them the final thirty thousand and, fortunately, up it came. That was twenty years ago, and it is still pumping.”

Jim L., entrepreneur: “Some people see my impatience as not wanting to listen to the traps, the potential roadblocks. What I keep repeating is, ‘I want to know when I am going to hit the wall, and I need you to tell me how much it is going to hurt. But if I choose to bump into the wall anyway, then don’t worry — you’ve done your job. I just had to experience it for myself.’”

Ideation sounds like this:

Mark B., writer: “My mind works by finding connections between things. When I was hunting down the Mona Lisa in the Louvre museum, I turned a corner and was blinded by the flashing of a thousand cameras snapping the tiny picture. For some reason, I stored that visual image away. Then I noticed a ‘No Flash Photography’ sign, and I stored that away too. I thought it was odd because I remembered reading that flash photography can harm paintings. Then about six months later, I read that the Mona Lisa has been stolen at least twice in this century. And suddenly I put it all together. The only explanation for all these facts is that the real Mona Lisa is not on display in the Louvre. The real Mona Lisa has been stolen, and the museum, afraid to admit their carelessness, has installed a fake. I don’t know if it’s true, of course, but what a great story.”

Andrea H., interior designer: “I have the kind of mind where everything has to fit together or I start to feel very odd. For me, every piece of furniture represents an idea. It serves a discrete function both independently and in concert with every other piece. The ‘idea’ of each piece is so powerful in my mind, it must be obeyed. If I am sitting in a room where the chairs are somehow not fulfilling their discrete function — they’re the wrong kind of chairs or they’re facing the wrong way or they’re pushed up too close to the coffee table — I find myself getting physically uncomfortable and mentally distracted. Later, I won’t be able to get it out of my mind. I’ll find myself awake at 3:00 a.m., and I walk through the person’s house in my mind’s eye, rearranging the furniture and repainting the walls. This started happening when I was very young, say seven years old.”

Questions

1. Talk to friends or coworkers to hear how they have used their talents to achieve.
2. How will you use your talents to achieve?