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Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

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YOUR TOP 5 THEMES

1. Restorative
2. Ideation
3. Responsibility
4. Significance
5. Individualization

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

Restorative

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you relish complimenting individuals or praising groups. You automatically consider ways you can better acknowledge the contributions, talents, expertise, skills, or successes of others. Because of your strengths, you characteristically notice how people are distinct from one another. These insights automatically prompt you to find ways to work better with them. You are apt to discover how you can partner with others in the group. Chances are good that you are highly sensitive to what others think of you. This sensitivity continually motivates you to do things better than you have in the past. Instinctively, you naturally think about what you can fix or do better. Your mind is usually occupied by what you can accomplish in the coming months, years, or decades. This explains why you find today's events ordinary and less fascinating than the future. By nature, you routinely select activities that demand precision and accuracy. Figuring out the steps you need to take to reach the highest level of perfection probably gives you a feeling of satisfaction.

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?

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?

Instinctively, you intentionally seek out what is new and different. Unexplored territory appeals to your adventurous spirit. You like to test your limits as a human being in travel, work, sports, or thinking. Even when others worry about your well-being, you trust you can take care of yourself. Driven by your talents, you are a creative individual. People rely on your original thinking when they plan events, make presentations, solve problems, compose music, or write letters. Many individuals admire your innovative thinking from afar. Those with whom you associate on a regular basis tend to be quite fond of you. Chances are good that 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. It's very likely that you immediately know without resorting to reason what people think about you. The impressions they have of you can contribute to your complete success or utter failure. Understandably, the views of individuals often influence your words and deeds. By nature, you automatically search for new or fresh ways to make upgrades or enhancements. When you suspect there is a better way to do something, you implement your revisions and test your innovations.

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?

Driven by your talents, you probably are the team member who wants to be held accountable for the results you produce and the obligations you assume. You can readily admit when you are wrong. You usually accept without complaining the consequences of your words and deeds. By nature, you refuse to shirk your obligations. You are eager to fulfill your commitments. Often you are described as earnest. Your dependability is a hallmark of your personality. Chances are good that you likely are described by your teammates as someone who keeps promises. People trust you so much they do not keep checking on your progress. They probably have discovered over time that you honor your commitments. It's very likely that you do much more than just try to live up to your commitments. You persist working until you can deliver on your promises. This certainly enhances your reputation for being trustworthy, reliable, and dependable. Instinctively, you conduct yourself in a proper, ethical, legal, and upright manner to avoid feeling you have done something wrong. You truly regret making a mistake, violating a rule, breaking a trust, or producing poor results. You set high standards for yourself in various areas of your life.

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?

Significance

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Significance theme want to be very important in the eyes of others. They are independent and want to be recognized.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

By nature, you may inspire certain people to accomplish more than they thought they could. Why? You might make an effort to know each person as an individual. Perhaps you appreciate the talents and aspirations that make every person unique. Instinctively, you yearn to get ahead. You strive to acquire many of the status symbols and special privileges that come with rank, title, or position. Driven by your talents, you usually set out to be the very best, whether the contest is official or merely an invention of your mind. Your desire to get ahead in life impels you to regularly compare your results to those of others. You probably have questioned whether your yearnings for greatness are entirely healthy and wise. Because of your strengths, you customarily win the devotion of people by simply acknowledging their outstanding accomplishments. You probably sense that most people take quite seriously whatever you tell them. Chances are good that you Yearn to spend time with individuals whose loyalty, admiration, and fondness for you are apparent.

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?

Individualization

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Instinctively, you frequently work without much rest. You typically want to pinpoint useful and intriguing facts. You likely have a need to explain why various events unfolded as they did. This information undoubtedly permits you to produce more and better results. By nature, you occasionally pinpoint the unique qualities, motivations, strengths, limitations, preferences, or attitudes of certain people. Perhaps you look for one or two good things in each person. Maybe this information permits you to set up opportunities for particular individuals to cooperate. You might compliment those who freely share bits of their knowledge, skills, or talents with their teammates, classmates, colleagues, coworkers, friends, or family members. Because of your strengths, you frequently examine the factors leading up to an event. Therein you discover the reasons why things happened the way they did. A number of individuals and/or groups probably appreciate your logical thinking style. Chances are good that you distinguish the fine points of each person's contribution to a conversation. You guide the exchange of information by drawing out the singular perspectives of everyone involved. You help individuals bring forth their varied, peculiar, eccentric, quaint, or unusual viewpoints. By honoring the uniqueness of each human being, you enliven many dialogues. It's very likely that you spend considerable time examining exactly why something has gone wrong. Whenever you experience a personal or professional loss, make a mistake, or experience failure, you tend to investigate. You are likely to be restless until you have answers to all your basic questions: What? How? When? Where? Who? Why?

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

Restorative

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Seek roles in which you are paid to solve problems or in which your success depends on your ability to restore and resolve. You might particularly enjoy roles in medicine, consulting, computer programming, or customer service.

Don't be afraid to let others know that you enjoy fixing problems. It comes naturally to you, but many people shy away from problems. You can help.

Give yourself a break. Your Restorative talents might lead you to be overly self-critical. Try to redirect this either toward things about yourself that can be fixed, such as knowledge or skill deficits, or toward external, tangible problems.

Let other people solve their own problems. You might want to rush in and solve things for them, but by doing that, you might hinder their learning. Watch out for this, particularly if you are in a manager, coach, teacher, or parent role.

Turnaround situations activate your natural forté. Use your Restorative talents to devise a plan of attack to revitalize a flagging project, organization, business, or team.

Leverage your Restorative talents not only to tackle existing problems, but also to anticipate and prevent problems before they occur. Share your foresight and your solutions with others, and you will prove yourself a valuable partner.

Study your chosen subject closely to become adept at identifying what causes certain problems to recur. This sort of expertise will lead you to the solution that much faster.

Think about ways you can improve your skills and knowledge. Identify any gaps you have and the courses you can take to fill them.

Constant improvement is one of your hallmarks. Seek opportunities to enhance your abilities through a demanding field, activity, or endeavor that requires exceptional skill and/or knowledge.

Use your Restorative talents to think of ways to “problem proof” your work. Identify existing and potential issues, and design systems or processes to prevent errors in the future.

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.

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.

Significance

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Choose jobs or positions in which you can determine your own tasks and actions. You will enjoy the exposure that comes with independence.

Your reputation is important to you, so decide what it should be and tend to it in the smallest detail. For example, identify and earn a designation that will add to your credibility, write an article that will give you visibility, or volunteer to speak in front of a group who will admire your achievements.

Share your dreams and goals with your family or closest friends and colleagues. Their expectations will keep you reaching.

Stay focused on performance. Your Significance talents will drive you to claim outstanding goals. Your performance had better match those goals, or others might label you as a big talker.

You will perform best when your performance is visible. Look for opportunities that put you on center stage. Stay away from roles that hide you behind the scenes.

Leading crucial teams or significant projects brings out your best. Your greatest motivation may come when the stakes are at their highest. Let others know that when the game is on the line, you want the ball.

Make a list of the goals, achievements, and qualifications you crave, and post them where you will see them every day. Use this list to inspire yourself.

Identify your best moment of recognition or praise. What was it for? Who gave it to you? Who was

the audience? What do you have to do to recreate that moment?

Unless you also possess dominant Self-Assurance talents, accept that you might fear failure. Don't let this fear prevent you from staking claims to excellence. Instead, use it to focus on ensuring that your performance matches your claims.

You might have a natural awareness of what other people think of you. You may have a specific audience that you want to like you, and you will do whatever it takes to win their approval and applause. Be aware that while reliance on the approval of others could be problematic, there is nothing wrong with wanting to be liked or admired by the key people in your life.

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.

Individualization

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Select a vocation in which your Individualization talents can be both used and appreciated, such as counseling, supervising, teaching, writing human interest articles, or selling. Your ability to see people as unique individuals is a special talent.

Become an expert in describing your own strengths and style. For example, answer questions such as: What is the best praise you ever received? How often do you like to check in with your manager? What is your best method for building relationships? How do you learn best? Then ask your colleagues and friends these same questions. Help them plan their future by starting with their strengths, then designing a future based on what they do best.

Help others understand that true diversity can be found in the subtle differences between each individual — regardless of race, sex, or nationality.

Explain that it is appropriate, just, and effective to treat each person differently. Those without strong Individualization talents might not see the differences among individuals and might insist that individualization is unequal and therefore unfair. You will need to describe your perspective in detail to be persuasive.

Figure out what every person on your team does best. Then help them capitalize on their talents, skills, and knowledge. You may need to explain your rationale and your philosophy so people understand that you have their best interests in mind.

You have an awareness and appreciation of others' likes and dislikes and an ability to personalize. This puts you in a unique position. Use your Individualization talents to help identify areas where one size does not fit all.

Make your colleagues and friends aware of each person's unique needs. Soon people will look to you to explain other people's motivations and actions.

Your presentations and speaking opportunities will be most engaging when you relate your topic to the experiences of individuals in the audience. Use your Individualization talents to gather and share real-life stories that will make your points much better than would generic information or theories.

You move comfortably among a broad range of styles and cultures, and you intuitively personalize your interactions. Consciously and proactively make full use of these talents by leading diversity and community efforts.

Your Individualization talents can help you take a different approach to interpreting data. While others are looking for similarities, make a point of identifying distinctiveness. Your interpretations will add a valuable perspective.

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.

RESTORATIVE SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Nigel L., software designer: “I have these vivid memories of my childhood woodworking bench with hammers and nails and wood. I used to love fixing things and putting things together and making everything just so. And now with computer programs, it’s the same thing. You write the program, and if it doesn’t work, you have to go back and redo it and fix it until it works.”

Jan K., internist: “This theme plays in my life in so many ways. For example, my first love was surgery. I love trauma, love being in the OR, love sewing. I just love fixing things in the OR. Then again, some of my best moments have been sitting at the bedside of a dying patient, just talking together. It is incredibly rewarding to watch someone make the transition from anger to acceptance about grief, to tie up loose ends with family members, and to pass with dignity. And then with my kids, this theme fires every day. When I see my three-year-old buttoning her sweater for the first time and she buttons it crooked, I feel this powerful urge to walk up and rebutton the sweater. I have to resist, of course, because she has to learn, but, boy, it’s really hard.”

Marie T., television producer: “Producing a morning TV program is a fundamentally clumsy process. If I didn’t like solving problems, this job would drive me up the wall. Every day, something serious goes wrong, and I have to find the problem, fix it, and move on to the next one. If I can do that well, I feel rejuvenated. On the other hand, if I go home and a problem remains unsolved, then I feel the opposite. I feel defeated.”

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.”

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.”

SIGNIFICANCE SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Mary P., healthcare executive: “Women are told almost from day one, ‘Don’t be too proud. Don’t stand tall.’ That kind of thing. But I’ve learned that it’s okay to have power, it’s okay to have pride, and it’s

okay to have a big ego — and also that I need to manage it and drive it in the right directions.”

Kathie J., partner in a law firm: “Ever since I can remember, I have had the feeling that I was special, that I could take charge and make things happen. Back in the ‘60s, I was the first woman partner in my firm, and I can still recall walking into boardroom after boardroom and being the only woman. It’s strange, thinking back. It was tough, but I actually think I enjoyed the pressure of standing out. I enjoyed being the ‘woman’ partner. Why? Because I knew that I would be very hard to forget. I knew everyone would notice me and pay attention to me.”

John L., physician: “All through my life, I felt that I was onstage. I am always aware of an audience. If I am sitting with a patient, I want the patient to see me as the best doctor he or she has ever had. If I am teaching medical students, I want to stand out as the best medical educator they have ever had. I want to win the Educator of the Year award. My boss is a big audience for me. Disappointing her would kill me. It’s scary to think that part of my self-esteem is in other people’s hands, but then again, it keeps me on my toes.”

INDIVIDUALIZATION SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Les T., hospitality manager: “Carl is one of our best performers, but he still has to see me every week. He just wants a little encouragement and to check in, and he gets fired up a little bit after that meeting. Greg doesn’t like to meet very often, so there’s no need for me to bother him. And when we do meet, it’s really for me, not for him.”

Marsha D., publishing executive: “Sometimes I would walk out of my office and — you know how cartoon characters have those balloons over their head? I would see these little balloons over everyone’s head telling me what was in their minds. It sounds weird, doesn’t it? But it happens all the time.”

Andrea H., interior designer: “When you ask people what their style is, they find it hard to describe, so I just ask them, ‘What is your favorite spot in the house?’ And when I ask that, their faces light up, and they know just where to take me. From that one spot, I can begin to piece together the kind of people they are and what their style is.”

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?