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# Strengths-Based Leadership Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 01-18-2019



DON CLIFTON

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## The Four Domains of Leadership Strength

As Gallup studied and worked with thousands of leadership teams, we began to see that while each member had his or her own unique strengths, the most cohesive and successful teams possessed broader groupings of strengths. So we initiated our most thorough review of this research to date. From this dataset, four distinct domains of leadership strength emerged: Executing, Influencing, Relationship Building, and Strategic Thinking.

### EXECUTING

Leaders with dominant strength in the Executing domain know how to make things happen. When you need someone to implement a solution, these are the people who will work tirelessly to get it done. Leaders with a strength to execute have the ability to “catch” an idea and make it a reality.

### INFLUENCING

Those who lead by Influencing help their team reach a much broader audience. People with strength in this domain are always selling the team’s ideas inside and outside the organization. When you need someone to take charge, speak up, and make sure your group is heard, look to someone with the strength to influence.

### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Those who lead through Relationship Building are the essential glue that holds a team together. Without these strengths on a team, in many cases, the group is simply a composite of individuals. In contrast, leaders with exceptional Relationship Building strength have the unique ability to create groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum of their parts.

### STRATEGIC THINKING

Leaders with great Strategic Thinking strengths are the ones who keep us all focused on what could be. They are constantly absorbing and analyzing information and helping the team make better decisions. People with strength in this domain continually stretch our thinking for the future.

Gallup found that it serves a team well to have a representation of strengths in each of these four domains. Instead of one dominant leader who tries to do everything or individuals who all have similar strengths, contributions from all four domains lead to a strong and cohesive team. This doesn't mean that each person on a team must have strengths exclusively in a single category. In most cases, each team member will possess some strength in multiple domains.

According to our latest research, the 34 CliftonStrengths themes naturally cluster into these four domains of leadership strength. See below for how your top five themes sort into the four domains. Then, use the chart at the end of this report to plot your team members' top five themes and see how their strengths sort into the four domains as well. As you think about how you can contribute to a team and who you need to surround yourself with, this may be a good starting point.

YOUR TOP FIVE CLIFTONSTRENGTHS THEMES

EXECUTING	INFLUENCING	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	STRATEGIC THINKING
Responsibility			Ideation
Achiever			Learner
			Intellection

FOLLOWERS' FOUR BASIC NEEDS

Followers have a very clear picture of what they want and need from the most influential leaders in their lives: trust, compassion, stability, and hope. On the next several pages, for each of your top five CliftonStrengths themes, you will find a brief definition of the theme, strategies for leveraging that theme to meet followers' four basic needs, tips for leading others who are strong in that theme, and illustrations of what that theme sounds like in action.

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# Ideation

## LEADING WITH IDEATION

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

## BUILD TRUST

The purpose behind your pursuit of what's new can help others trust you to make good choices. Explain the “why” behind what you do. Help people see that you are seeking to improve the status quo, to better explain the world, and to make discoveries that ultimately serve humanity.

Make things simple. All your ideas, possibilities, and tangents can be confusing to some people. You see the simplicity of the underlying principles; articulate that to others so that they can see it too. The clearer things seem to people, the more certain they can be that you are doing what is right and makes sense. Help people make connections between what is and what can be.

## SHOW COMPASSION

Others have great appreciation for your creative imagination and your continual quest for new ideas. Invite them along for the ride. Ask them to dream with you. Shared excitement about ideas and possibilities, even from vastly different fields and approaches, can be a foundation for a mutually satisfying relationship.

Partner with others who have a practical bent — people who can make your ideas realistic and bring them to fruition. You can be their inspiration; they can help you realize your dreams. Your differences are what bind you together and make each of you more successful than you would be on your own. Show consideration and appreciation for what others bring to the table.

## PROVIDE STABILITY

Stability and Ideation might seem at odds. You are always searching for ways to break from convention and look at things from a new angle. Verbalize the fact that you're not seeking to destroy what is — rather, you want to make things better. You understand that security doesn't come from maintaining the status quo and doing things the way they've always been done; security is about making sure you are prepared for the future.

You must take risks. Still, you can calm others by educating them that those risks are calculated, not reckless. Give others confidence by helping them see the logic behind your pursuit of what's new, and keep them informed along the way.

## CREATE HOPE

You are a natural fit with people in research and development; you appreciate the mindset of the visionaries and dreamers in your organization. Spend time with imaginative staff members, and sit in on their brainstorming sessions. Invite people you know who have good ideas to join as well. As a leader with exceptional Ideation talents, you can contribute to inspirational ideas and make them happen.

Find people in other walks of life who like to talk about ideas, and build mutually supportive and satisfying relationships. Their knowledge and dreams about an area that is foreign to you can inspire you. Feed one another's need for big thinking.

## LEADING OTHERS WITH STRONG IDEATION

This person has creative ideas. Be sure to position her where her ideas will be valued.

Encourage this person to think of useful ideas or insights that can be shared with your best customers. From Gallup's research, it is clear that when a company deliberately teaches its customers something, their level of loyalty increases.

This person needs to know that everything fits together. When decisions are made, take time to show her how each one is rooted in the same theory or concept.

When a particular decision does not fit into an overarching concept, be sure to explain to this person that the decision is an exception or an experiment. Without this explanation, she may start to worry that the organization is becoming incoherent.

## 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.”

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## Learner

### LEADING WITH LEARNER

People strong 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.

### BUILD TRUST

Be honest enough to admit that you’re still learning. Being vulnerable and open about your own learning puts you on par with others and indicates a mutual, not a one-sided, expectation.

Respect knowledge that is superior to your own. Some leaders feel the need to be more “advanced” than their followers in every area. This is unrealistic and unproductive; it impedes progress. Show your respect through your interest and appreciation of what others know and are capable of knowing. Listen to them, and trust them to be experts in these topics.

### SHOW COMPASSION

Co-learning creates mutual vulnerability and discovery. When you “sign up” for learning, always consider whom you can invite to learn with you. When you care enough to ask someone else to join in your learning, you create a shared memory and a common opportunity that forges a bond.

Appreciate and celebrate others’ learning, be it a project completed, a certification, a good spelling test, or an improvement on a report card. Let others know that you understand the hard work and effort that goes into personal growth. Emphasize that the outcome is exciting, but you recognize the merit of their journey as well. Affirm that learning has value, as does the learner.

## PROVIDE STABILITY

When you invest in another person's growth, you're saying, "You matter. You are here for the long term. You are worth my investment." This helps others know that you expect an enduring — not fleeting — relationship with them. Confirm that sentiment by saying it out loud. Tell people that you're committed to them for the long haul.

Learning takes time. Your patience with others as they learn conveys to them that they're not disposable, but rather that you believe in their value and will stand beside them as they develop.

## CREATE HOPE

Recognize that your enthusiasm for learning may be shared by many in your organization. Ignite this passion by creating an ongoing, organization-wide learning program.

Research supports the link between learning and performance. When people have the opportunity to learn and grow, they are more engaged, more productive, and loyal. Look for ways to measure whether people feel their learning needs are being met, to create individualized learning milestones, and to reward achievements in learning. These rewards and seeing measurable progress can inspire others to even greater learning goals.

## LEADING OTHERS WITH STRONG LEARNER

Position this person in roles that require him to stay current in a fast-changing field. He will enjoy the challenge of maintaining his competency.

Regardless of this person's role, he will be eager to learn new facts, skills, or knowledge. Explore innovative ways for him to learn and remain motivated, or he may start hunting for a richer learning environment. For example, if he lacks opportunities to learn on the job, encourage him to take courses at the local college. Remember, he doesn't necessarily need to be promoted; he just needs to be learning. It is the process of learning, not necessarily the result, that energizes him.

Encourage this person to become the master or resident expert in his field. Arrange for him to take the relevant classes to accomplish this. If necessary, help him secure financial support to continue his education. Be sure to recognize his learning.

Have this person work beside an expert who will continuously push him to learn more.

Ask this person to conduct internal discussion groups or presentations. There may be no better way to learn than to teach others.

## 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.”

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## Responsibility

### LEADING WITH RESPONSIBILITY

People strong 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.

### BUILD TRUST

You may be the moral conscience for others. When a person or an organization is involved in something that seems wrong, an alarm in your head will go off, and you will feel compelled to address that issue. Go to the source first; ask questions to ascertain the reality and the motive. State your concerns honestly. Whenever possible and ethical, allow the person to correct the situation on his or her own. If necessary, take the next step to right the wrong and assuage your conscience.

It’s important to appreciate and recognize people of moral strength and integrity. Make sure you acknowledge and affirm what’s right at least as often — and preferably more often — than you point out what’s wrong. Others will notice and respect you for this.



## SHOW COMPASSION

You can't help but feel responsible for others, especially for the people you care about most. Check in with them frequently: How are they doing? How can you help? Show your compassion every day, if you can, and know that you are adding warmth to their lives.

When you make a mistake that affects someone else, go to that person as quickly as you can and try to make it right. Apologize, certainly, but go beyond apology to restitution. Own your errors in relationships and you will find yourself more easily forgiven. Intimacy will be more quickly restored.

## PROVIDE STABILITY

Your sense of responsibility naturally creates a feeling of security in others. They know they can depend on you to make sure things get done properly and on time. Rather than shouldering all of the responsibility yourself, share some of it so that each team member is contributing to the stability of the group.

You're a leader who likes to serve. The service concept is often applied to customers, members, and patrons, but sometimes overlooked when applied to one's followers. Let your followers know about your desire to serve and support them — and that asking for your help is a form of recognition that you appreciate.

## CREATE HOPE

You naturally take ownership of every project you're involved in. Share responsibility by encouraging others to do the same. Be their champion, and proactively guide them through the opportunity to experience the challenges of ownership. In doing so, you will contribute to their growth and development.

Psychological ownership is a product of making choices. Rather than assigning responsibilities, invoke ownership by allowing people to choose what they will be responsible for contributing. Let them initiate true responsibility beyond merely accepting assignments.

## LEADING OTHERS WITH STRONG RESPONSIBILITY

As much as possible, avoid putting this person in team situations with lackadaisical colleagues.

Recognize that this person is a self-starter and requires little supervision to ensure that assignments are completed.

Put this person in positions that require unimpeachable ethics. He will not let you down.

Periodically ask this person what new responsibility he would like to assume. It's motivational for him

to volunteer, so give him the opportunity.

This person may well impress you with his ability to deliver time and again, leading you to consider promoting him to management. Be careful. He may much prefer to do a job himself than be responsible for someone else's work, in which case he will find managing others frustrating. It might be better to help him find other ways to grow within the organization.

### 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."

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## Achiever

### LEADING WITH ACHIEVER

People strong in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.

## BUILD TRUST

Others respect your work ethic and dedication. Hard work and productivity are visible signs that you are someone who can be trusted to do things right. Live up to that trust. Deliver when you say you will.

Establish relationships with others by working alongside them. Working hard together can be a bonding experience. When others see that you're willing to put your shoulder to the wheel and work beside them, you'll make a connection. Showing people that you see yourself as an equal, not a superior, can inspire feelings of trust and respect.

## SHOW COMPASSION

Because setting and achieving goals is of paramount importance to you, apply this way of living to more areas. Not spending enough time with the significant people in your life? Choose someone you care about, take on a project that both of you would like to accomplish, and set a timeline. You'll feel good about what you get done and about the time you spend together.

Every day, put at least one personal relationship goal on your list of things to do. You'll make people feel worthy of your time and investment — plus you'll have the satisfaction of checking the “done” box daily.

## PROVIDE STABILITY

Others can count on your belief in the importance of hard work and diligent effort, and they come to expect this from you. They see your consistency and effort as an example of what it takes to create a steady, secure life, and this gives them a sense of stability. Talk to people about how it feels to always give everything you have. Strive to help them see that the one thing they can control in life is their own effort.

Your stamina causes others to see you as a “rock.” You are always working; you never seem to tire. People may even feel sorry for you because you put in such long hours. Gently explain to these people that while others may not work this way, it's what feels good to you. Ask them what makes them feel good about their approach to work. Strive to understand and support others by giving them confidence in their own approach to their work.

## CREATE HOPE

Your tremendous energy and desire to accomplish as much as possible serves as an inspiration to others. You can encourage people by knowing what they want to accomplish and asking about their progress. By helping others put together timelines and checklists, you can help them achieve their plans and dreams.

Setting goals and deadlines, so motivating for you, can also help others manage massive projects they undertake. You can make a large, complicated endeavor seem manageable by breaking it down and creating milestones along the way. When someone seeks you out for guidance about a colossal task, share your systems for managing the whole in a piece-by-piece manner.

## LEADING OTHERS WITH STRONG ACHIEVER

When you have projects that require extra work, call on this person. Remember that the saying “If you want to get a job done, ask a busy person” is generally true.

Recognize that this person likes to be busy. Sitting in meetings is likely to be very boring for him. So either let him get his work done or arrange to have him attend only those meetings where you really need him and he can be fully engaged.

Help this person measure what he gets done. He may enjoy keeping track of hours, but more importantly, he should have a way to measure cumulative production. Simple measures such as number of customers served, customers known by name, files reviewed, prospects contacted, or patients seen will help give him definition.

Establish a relationship with this person by working alongside him. Working hard together is often a bonding experience for people with strong Achiever talents. And keep low producers away from him. He’s annoyed by “slackers.”

When this person finishes a job, a rest or an easy assignment is rarely the reward he wants. He will be much more motivated if you give him recognition for past achievement and then a new goal that stretches him.

This person may well need less sleep and get up earlier than most. Look to him when these conditions are required on the job. Also, ask him questions such as “How late did you have to work to get this done?” or “When did you come in this morning?” He will appreciate this kind of attention.

You may be tempted to promote this person simply because he is a self-starter. This may be a mistake if it leads him away from what he does best. A better course would be to pinpoint his other themes and strengths and look for opportunities for him to do more of what he already does well.

## ACHIEVER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Melanie K., ER nurse: “I have to rack up points every day to feel successful. Today I’ve been here only half an hour, but I’ve probably racked up thirty points already. I ordered equipment for the ER, I

had equipment repaired, I had a meeting with my charge nurse, and I brainstormed with my secretary about improving our computerized logbook. So on my list of ninety things, I have thirty done already. I'm feeling pretty good about myself right now."

Ted S., salesperson: "Last year I was salesperson of the year out of my company's three hundred salespeople. It felt good for a day, but sure enough, later that week, it was as if it never happened. I was back at zero again. Sometimes I wish I wasn't an achiever because it can lead me away from a balanced life and toward obsession. I used to think I could change myself, but now I know I am just wired this way. This theme is truly a double-edged sword. It helps me achieve my goals, but on the other hand, I wish I could just turn it off and on at will. But, hey, I can't. I can manage it and avoid work obsession by focusing on achieving in all parts of my life, not just work."

Sara L., writer: "This theme is a weird one. First, it's good because you live in pursuit of the perpetual challenge. But in the second place, you never feel as though you've reached your goal. It can keep you running uphill at seventy miles an hour for your whole life. You never rest because there's always more to do. But, on balance, I think I would rather have it than not. I call it my 'divine restlessness,' and if it makes me feel as if I owe the present everything I have, then so be it. I can live with that."

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## Intellection

### LEADING WITH INTELLECTION

People strong in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.

### BUILD TRUST

When you carefully analyze others' thinking and then respectfully give your honest opinion, you can help them avoid pitfalls and mistakes. They will appreciate your forthright willingness to help them succeed, and they will come to depend on you for this.

Your sheer intellectual capacity will cause some to respect and revere you. Prove yourself worthy by remembering that thought without action is not always particularly helpful. Use your gift of Intellection to make a difference, and your respect will be well-deserved.

### SHOW COMPASSION

Engaging others in intellectual and philosophical debate is one way you make sense of things. It is also one way you build relationships. Channel your provocative questions to people who similarly

enjoy the give and take of debate. They will seek you out as a friend and colleague who sharpens their thinking — and one they want to spend time with again and again.

Some people will want you to think with them, while others will want you to think for them. You may be able to build relationships with some people because you look at things from an entirely different angle than they do. For people who are single-minded and action-oriented, you may be the kind of thinking partner who improves their odds for success. Show that you truly care about them by sharing your thoughts with them.

## PROVIDE STABILITY

Remember to occasionally back up so others can follow the trail of your thinking. They may not be ready for the pronouncement until they have followed the path. Share the mental steps you executed to arrive at your current conclusions so people don't worry that your thinking lacks foundation.

Help others understand your need for solitude and space to think. Let them know that this is simply a reflection of your intellectual style and that it results from a desire to bring the most you can to relationships and opportunities. Sharing the fact that you think deeply about what's best for them and for the organization can be a great comfort.

## CREATE HOPE

Encourage others to use their full intellectual capital by reframing questions for them and by engaging them in dialogue. At the same time, recognize that there will be some who find this intimidating and who need time to reflect before being put on the spot. Help them engage their intellect in the way that is best for them. Then inspire them to use that way of thinking to dream and meditate about the future.

Others will seek out your opinion because they appreciate the wise scrutiny you give to ideas and efforts. Bear in mind that you are at your best when you have the time to follow an intellectual trail and see where it leads. Get involved on the front end of projects and initiatives so that your thinking can have a greater impact on long-term outcomes.

## LEADING OTHERS WITH STRONG INTELLECTION

Encourage this person to find long stretches of time when she can simply muse. For some people, pure thinking time is not productive, but for her, it most certainly is. She will emerge from quiet periods of reflection with more clarity and self-confidence.

Have a detailed discussion with this person regarding her strengths. She will probably enjoy the introspection and self-discovery.

Give this person the opportunity to present her views to other people in the department. The pressure

of communicating her ideas to others will force her to refine and clarify her thoughts.

Be prepared to team up this person with someone who has strong Activator talents. This partner will push her to act on her thoughts and ideas.

### INTELLECTION SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Lauren H., project manager: “I suppose that most people who meet me in passing presume that I am a flaming extrovert. I do not deny the fact that I love people, but they would be amazed to know how much time alone, how much solitude, I need in order to function in public. I really love my own company. I love solitude because it gives me a chance to allow my diffused focus to simmer with something else. That’s where my best ideas come from. My ideas need to simmer and ‘perk.’ I used this phrase even when I was younger: ‘I have put my ideas in, and now I have to wait for them to perk.’”

Michael P., marketing executive: “It’s strange, but I find that I need to have noise around me or I can’t concentrate. I need to have parts of my brain occupied; otherwise, it goes so fast in so many directions that I don’t get anything done. If I can occupy my brain with the TV or my kids running around, then I find I concentrate even better.”

Jorge H., factory manager and former political prisoner: “We used to get put into solitary confinement as a punishment, but I never hated it as much as the others did. You might think that you would get lonely, but I never did. I used the time to reflect on my life and sort out the kind of man I was and what was really important to me: my family, my values. In a weird way, solitary actually calmed me down and made me stronger.”

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Custom Team Distribution Chart

TEAM MEMBERS	EXECUTING	INFLUENCING	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	STRATEGIC THINKING