
Cole Nelson

Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 09-21-2021



DON CLIFTON

Father of Strengths Psychology and
Inventor of CliftonStrengths

Cole Nelson

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 09-21-2021

YOUR TOP 5 THEMES

1. Ideation
2. Learner
3. Analytical
4. Futuristic
5. Positivity

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

Ideation

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People exceptionally 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?

By nature, you might channel some of your energy toward what you can accomplish in the coming months, years, or decades. Periodically your mind churns out new and inventive ways of reaching your desired goals. You may risk becoming bored or delivering a lackluster performance when you are forced to adhere to a predetermined process, a tried-and-tested procedure, or a traditional method. Once in a while, you hear yourself pleading, “But, if we only did it this way, it would be a bit better.” Chances are good that you frequently identify parts of your life you want to change for the better. You also seek ways to upgrade things. You feel renewed mentally, physically, and emotionally each time you turn around a situation with your innovative thinking. Because of your strengths, you often are the originator of fresh ideas for brand-new campaigns, business ventures, initiatives, or special events. Instinctively, you may derive some pleasure from making a discovery or designing an innovation. Perhaps you enjoy doing things few people have ever considered. Driven by your talents, you come to the assistance of individuals or groups that must invent new ways of doing everyday chores and tackling never-before-tried projects. Your imaginative mind creates all sorts of novel ideas. You probably enjoy brainstorming sessions. Why? No one is allowed to render a judgment until all the practical and outlandish ideas have been presented.

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?

Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.

Learner

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People exceptionally talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. The process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you habitually bring together all sorts of information so you can refer to it later. At the instant you collect a fact, example, story, or piece of data, typically you are eager to use it. You trust it is valuable. Your fascination with knowledge has probably been part of you even before you formed the words to ask your first question. Because of your strengths, you are comfortable offering suggestions to people who regularly seek your counsel — that is, recommendations about a decision or course of action they are considering. These individuals usually feel deep affection for you. You are likely to spend time together socializing as well as working or studying. It's very likely that you prefer to concentrate on activities, problems, opportunities, or subjects that really intrigue you. Each time you acquire new information, you feel you can help people who need the same information. Instinctively, you enjoy pondering what you can revise, correct, renovate, upgrade, or relocate. When you are curious about a person, event, topic, project, activity, or idea, you devote much energy and time to studying it. Chances are good that you yearn to acquire additional knowledge and skills. Often you use these to do something better, more perfectly, or more completely than you have in the past. You seek opportunities to enhance your capacity for fixing things, correcting mistakes, or overcoming weaknesses.

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?

Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.

Analytical

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People exceptionally talented in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all of the factors that might affect a situation.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Instinctively, you may be sought out for advice by individuals who appreciate your methodical thinking style. To some extent, your approach prevents people from being distracted by their own or someone else's emotions. Perhaps you help them concentrate on the facts more than on their feelings. It's very likely that you may be inclined to examine the basic elements of certain types of problems. You might attempt to understand how and why things work or fail to work. These insights might stimulate your thinking. Then you try to generate a few alternative plans. Considering prevailing circumstances, available resources, and time constraints, you might narrow down your options. Perhaps the plan that offers the best chance of solving the problem naturally reveals itself. By nature, you sometimes acquire knowledge in areas that are foreign to you. As long as your studies contain rational and reasonable information, perhaps you continue delving into them. Chances are good that you sometimes concentrate exceptional levels of your talent, energy, effort, and/or reasoning on certain tasks. Perhaps your good judgment allows you to establish long-term goals that are worthy of your attention. Driven by your talents, you might bring a rational and objective perspective to your discussions with possibility thinkers. Maybe you are the person who helps them transform their big dreams into workable action plans. Some of them rely on you to outline the basic steps, identify needed resources, and/or establish a sensible timeline.

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?

Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.

Futuristic

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People exceptionally talented in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They energize others with their visions of the future.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Chances are good that you may design forward-looking plans for a specific aspect of your life, such as investments, entrepreneurial ventures, education, vacations, or retirement. Because of your strengths, you are an individual contributor who thinks about the goals you want to reach in the coming months, years, or decades. Your imagination ordinarily pulls you into the future even as you work on current assignments. Driven by your talents, you may treasure the one-on-one conversations you have with visionary thinkers. Occasionally their ideas force you to expand on your plans for the future. By nature, you may center your attention on what you want to accomplish in the coming months, years, or decades. Being free of annoying distractions might contribute to your enthusiasm for life in general or the future in particular. Instinctively, you may channel some of your mental and physical energies toward what you might accomplish in the coming months, years, or decades. Sometimes you may ask yourself, “How far into the future can I think before some of my ideas start becoming vague or uninspiring?”

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?

Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.

Positivity

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People exceptionally talented in the Positivity theme have contagious enthusiasm. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Instinctively, you periodically inspire people by finding out what motivates them. You may give individuals lots of recognition. Once in a while, you celebrate each person's uniqueness. Perhaps your acknowledgments or compliments energize particular people. It's very likely that you might describe your life in favorable terms even when obligations force you to keep working until a particular goal is reached. Driven by your talents, you may enhance your own quality of life or sense of well-being. How? Perhaps you compliment certain people. Maybe you acknowledge the contributions of particular individuals. Occasionally you call attention to some of their talents, knowledge, and/or skills. By nature, you sense there is something good in each person you meet. Your open approach to people makes you a very likeable individual. Because of your strengths, you may be a bit more optimistic about life when you can devote yourself to individuals for whom you feel fondness and affection.

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?

Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.

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

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.

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

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.

Analytical

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Choose work in which you are paid to analyze data, find patterns, or organize ideas. For example, you might excel in marketing, financial, or medical research or in database management, editing, or risk management.

Whatever your role, identify credible sources on which you can rely. You are at your best when you have well-researched sources of information and numbers to support your logic. For example, determine the most helpful books, websites, or publications that can serve as references.

Your mind is constantly working and producing insightful analysis. Are others aware of that? Find the best way of expressing your thoughts: writing, one-on-one conversations, group discussions, perhaps lectures or presentations. Put value to your thoughts by communicating them.

Make sure that your accumulation and analysis of information always leads to its application and implementation. If you don't do this naturally, find a partner who pushes you from theory to practice, from thinking to doing. This person will help ensure that your analysis doesn't turn into paralysis.

Take an academic course that will expand your Analytical talents. Specifically, study people whose logic you admire.

Volunteer your Analytical talents. You can be particularly helpful to those who are struggling to organize large quantities of data or having a hard time bringing structure to their ideas.

Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. This person's impatience will move you more quickly through the analytical phase into the action phase.

You may remain skeptical until you see solid proof. Your skepticism ensures validity, but others may take it personally. Help others realize that your skepticism is primarily about data, not people.

Look for patterns in data. See if you can discern a motif, precedent, or relationship in scores or numbers. By connecting the dots in the data and inferring a causal link, you may be able to help others see these patterns.

Help others understand that your analytical approach will often require data and other information to logically back up new ideas that they might suggest.

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.

Futuristic

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Choose roles in which you can contribute your ideas about the future. For example, you might excel in entrepreneurial or start-up situations.

Take time to think about the future. The more time you spend considering your ideas about the future, the more vivid your ideas will become. The more vivid your ideas, the more persuasive you will be.

Seek audiences who appreciate your ideas for the future. They will expect you to make these ideas a reality, and these expectations will motivate you.

Find a friend or colleague who also has powerful Futuristic talents. Set aside an hour each month for “future” discussions. You can push each other to greater heights of creativity and vividness.

Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. This person can remind you that you do not discover the future, you create it with the actions you take today.

You inspire others with your images of the future, yet your thinking may be too expansive for them to comprehend. When you articulate your vision, be sure to describe the future in detail with vivid words and metaphors. Make your ideas and strategies more concrete via sketches, step-by-step action plans, or mock-up models so that others can readily grasp your intent.

Surround yourself with people who are eager to put your vision into motion. They will feel exhilarated by your Futuristic talents, and you can harness their energy to propel the vision toward reality.

Be prepared to provide logical support for your futuristic thinking. Your exciting visions of future success will be best received when rooted in real possibility.

Your Futuristic talents could equip you to be a guide or coach for others. Unlike you, they might not be

able to easily see over the horizon. If you catch a vision of what someone could be or do, don't assume that he or she is aware of that potential. Share what you see as vividly as you can. In doing so, you may inspire someone to move forward.

Musing about the future comes naturally to you. Read articles about technology, science, and research to gain knowledge that will fuel your imagination.

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.

Positivity

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

You probably will excel in any role in which you are paid to highlight the positive. A teaching role, a sales role, an entrepreneurial role, or a leadership role will make the most of your ability to make things dramatic.

You tend to be more enthusiastic and energetic than most people. When others become discouraged or are reluctant to take risks, your attitude will provide the impetus to keep them moving. Over time, others will start to look to you for this "lift."

Plan highlight activities for your friends and colleagues. For example, find ways to turn small achievements into events, plan regular celebrations that others can look forward to, or capitalize on the year's holidays and festivals.

Explain that your enthusiasm is not simple naivety. You know that bad things can happen; you simply prefer to focus on the good things.

You may get your greatest joy by encouraging people. Freely show your appreciation of others, and make sure that the praise is not vague. Consistently seek to translate your feelings into specific, tangible, and personal expressions of gratitude and recognition.

As you share your Positivity talents, be sure to protect and nurture them. As necessary, insulate yourself from chronic whiners and complainers, and intentionally spend time in highly positive environments that will invigorate and feed your optimism.

Don't pretend that difficulties don't concern you. Other people need to know that while you find the good in virtually every situation, you are not naïve. Recognize challenges, and communicate the reasons for your optimism. Your positive approach will be most powerful when others realize it is grounded in reality.

Because people will rely on you to help them rise above their daily frustrations, arm yourself with good stories, jokes, and sayings. Never underestimate the effect that you can have on people.

Avoid negative people. They will bring you down. Instead, seek people who find the same kind of drama and humor in the world that you do. You will energize each other.

Deliberately help others see the things that are going well for them. You can keep their eyes on the positive.

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.

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.”

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.”

ANALYTICAL SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Jose G., school system administrator: “I have an innate ability to see structures, formats, and patterns before they exist. For instance, when people are talking about writing a grant proposal, while I’m listening to them, my brain instinctively processes the type of grants that are available and how the discussion fits into the eligibility, right down to the format of how the information can fit on the grant form in a clear and convincing way.”

Jack T., human resources executive: “If I make a claim, I need to know that I can back it up with facts and logical thinking. For example, if someone says that our company is not paying as much as other companies, I always ask, ‘Why do you say that?’ If they say, ‘Well, I saw an ad in the paper that offers graduates in mechanical engineering five grand more than we are paying,’ I’ll reply by asking, ‘But where are these graduates going to work? Is their salary based on geography? What types of companies are they going for? Are they manufacturing companies like ours? And how many people are in their sample? Is it three people, and one of them got a really good deal, thus driving the overall average up?’ There are many questions I need to ask to ensure that their claim is indeed a fact and not based on one misleading data point.”

Leslie J., school principal: “Many times, there are inconsistencies in the performance of the same group of students from one year to the next. It’s the same group of kids, but their scores are different year to year. How can this be? Which building are the kids in? How many of the kids have been enrolled for a full academic year? Which teachers were they assigned to, and what teaching styles were used by those teachers? I just love asking questions like these to understand what is truly happening.”

FUTURISTIC SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Dan F., school administrator: “In any situation, I am the guy who says, ‘Did you ever think about . . . ? I wonder if we could . . . I don’t believe it can’t be done. It’s just that nobody has done it yet. Let’s figure out how we can.’ I am always looking for options, for ways not to be mired by the status quo. In fact, there is no such thing as the status quo. You are either moving forward, or you are moving

backward. That's the reality of life, at least from my perspective. And right now, I believe that my profession is moving backward. State schools are being out-serviced by private schools, charter schools, home schools, Internet schools. We need to free ourselves from our traditions and create a new future."

Jan K., internist: "Here at the Mayo Clinic, we are launching a group called the Hospitalists. Rather than having patients handed off from one doctor to another during their stay in the hospital, I envision a family of providers. I envision fifteen to twenty MDs, of various genders and races, with twenty to twenty-five nurse practitioners. There will be four to five new hospital services, most of which will work with surgeons and will provide para-operative care as well as care for the hospitalized elderly. We are redefining the model of care here. We don't just take care of the patients when they are in the hospital. If a patient comes in for a knee replacement, a member of the Hospitalist team would see him before the surgery, follow him from the day of surgery through the days of hospitalization, and then see him when he comes in six weeks later for his postoperative check. We will provide patients with a complete episode of care so that they don't get lost in the handoffs. And to get the funding, I just saw the detailed picture in my head and kept describing this picture to the department chair. I guess I made it seem so real that they had no choice but to grant me the funds."

POSITIVITY SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Gerry L., flight attendant: "There are so many people on an airplane that I have made it a point over the years to single out one or two on a flight and make it something special for them. Certainly, I will be courteous to everybody and extend to them the kind of professionalism that I would like given to me, but over and above that, I try to make one person or family or small group of people feel particularly special, with jokes and conversation and little games that I play."

Andy B., Internet marketing executive: "I am one of those people who loves creating buzz. I read magazines all the time, and if I find something fun — some new store, new lip gloss, whatever — I will charge around telling everyone about it. 'Oh, you just have to try this store. It is so-o-o cool. Look at these pictures. Check them out.' I am so passionate when I talk about something that people just have to do what I say. It's not that I am a great salesperson. I'm not. In fact, I hate asking for the close; I hate bothering people. It's just that my passion about what I say makes people think, 'Gosh, it must be true.'"

Sunny G., communications manager: "I think the world is plagued with enough negative people. We need more positive people — people who like to zero in on what is right with the world. Negative people just make me feel heavy. In my last job, there was a guy who came into my office every morning just to unload on me. I would purposely dodge him. I'd see him coming, and I'd run to the bathroom or go some other place. He made me feel as if the world was a miserable place, and I hated that."

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?