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# Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 09-12-2011



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## YOUR TOP 5 THEMES

1. Communication
2. Futuristic
3. Belief
4. Connectedness
5. Includer

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## 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

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### Communication

#### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.

#### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

##### **What makes you stand out?**

Instinctively, you gravitate to situations where you will be in the company of others. You are much less inclined to be solitary or a loner. Because of your strengths, you normally find just the right words at the right moment to express whatever you are thinking and feeling. Many people are likely to appreciate your fine speaking abilities. You can present your ideas in a reasonable, sequential, and methodical way. Moreover, you generate lots of options for others to consider. By nature, you love to talk with others, especially when you are in a group exchanging information, ideas, opinions, stories, or jokes. You can spontaneously share your thoughts and feelings with people. It's very likely that you rely on the diverse viewpoints of your teammates to spark conversations that produce exciting ideas. You agree that "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." When everyone asks questions, offers solutions, describes situations, and raises issues, the group's collective intelligence far exceeds that of any single person. Chances are good that you are seldom clueless about what to say. You genuinely enjoy everyone's company. Without hesitation, you dive into conversations with old friends, new acquaintances, or even total strangers.

#### 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?

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## Futuristic

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

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

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you sometimes envision mental pictures of what you want your world or yourself to look like weeks, months, years, or decades from now. Because of your strengths, you generate ideas quickly. You draw clever linkages between facts, events, people, problems, or solutions. You present others with numerous options at a pace some find dizzying. Your innovative thinking tends to foster ongoing dialogue between and among the group's participants. By nature, you are very reasonable about what you plan to accomplish in the future. You are likely to identify the steps and the order in which you must perform them. This probably improves the chances of reaching your intended goal. Chances are good that you intentionally take steps to be the mastermind of your own future. You refuse to leave your destiny to chance. You probably resist placing it in someone else's hands. You trust your own intelligence and imagination when setting a direction for your life. It's very likely that you sometimes yearn to know more about the thoughts of certain visionaries. Perhaps in their presence you begin to see how some of the inventions and ideas they propose might affect 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?

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## Belief

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Chances are good that you yearn to provide your loved ones with the finest things in life. This desire forces you to think of better ways to meet the needs of family members. When time and money must be reallocated, you often are the person who figures out how to do it. Because of your strengths, you definitely want to benefit humankind and the environment. You seek to bring about major and minor changes that are needed. You identify what you can do as a person to make life better for others. Your values are expressed through your words and deeds. Your sense of mission — whatever it happens to be — fills your life with meaning and purpose. Driven by your talents, you want only the very best for your family. This is a top priority for you. Your desire to provide for loved ones is evident in what you say and do every day. Instinctively, you may be zealous — that is, fervent and enthusiastic — about solving problems that affect the quality of your life. Once in a while, you devote all your time and energy to a specific cause. Perhaps your core values explain why you participate in certain social, political, educational, religious, legal, or environmental activities. By nature, you want your life to really matter. You are determined to contribute to the well-being of individuals and the human family. You sense you can be an influence for good in the world.

### 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?

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## Connectedness

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Connectedness theme have faith in the links between all things. They believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has a reason.

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### **What makes you stand out?**

Chances are good that you assert — that is, declare and affirm — that every person comes into your life for a definite purpose. This explains why you launch into discussions or engage in small talk with people you are meeting for the first time. You really want to figure out why your paths in life have crossed. Because of your strengths, you sometimes sense a special bond with certain individuals regardless of whether you have met them. Perhaps time or distance does not prevent you from feeling closely linked to specific people or the lives they lead. By nature, you routinely isolate facts that link ideas, events, or people. You are especially sensitive to how one person's optimistic or negative thoughts can affect the entire human family. This prompts you to pay close attention to what individuals and groups think and do. Instinctively, you hold tightly to your core values. They form the foundation of your day-to-day existence. Your internal moral compass always points in the direction of what is right, proper, and true. You trust your strong convictions to direct you to the right path, regardless of the obstacles you face. It's very likely that you often are the one who helps people understand how they are linked across time, distance, race, ethnicity, religion, economic levels, languages, or cultures. You make it possible for individuals to work together. You aim to break down barriers that separate them.

### 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?

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## Includer

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you might join games for fun. Maybe you avoid people who make others feel like unwelcome guests or outsiders. Perhaps you push to let novices participate, too. Your opinion may be that this is more important than winning. It's very likely that you occasionally ask questions and intently listen to the answers of certain people. This behavior might surface when you meet a stranger or newcomer. Occasionally you eavesdrop on what they are telling someone else. Not wanting anyone to feel like an outsider, you try to draw individuals into the conversation. This partially explains why you search for a specific reason to involve them in a few of your own or the group's activities. By nature, you live peacefully with many types of people. You seek opportunities to cooperate with outsiders. You welcome newcomers into your life. You help them fit into the group. Usually they permit you to draw them into casual chitchat or serious discussions. Talking with strangers probably energizes you. Instinctively, you derive much joy from teaming with people to accomplish things. You view work, study, and play as opportunities to socialize and be productive. This explains why you need to interact with others on a regular basis. People probably energize you. Chances are good that you sense there is something good in each person you meet. Your open approach to people makes you a very likeable individual.

### QUESTIONS

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

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## 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

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### Communication

#### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

You will always do well in roles that require you to capture people's attention. Think about a career in teaching, sales, marketing, ministry, or the media. Your Communication talents are likely to flourish in these areas.

Start a collection of stories or phrases that resonate with you. For example, cut out magazine articles that move you, or write down powerful word combinations. Practice telling these stories or saying these words out loud, by yourself. Listen to yourself actually saying the words. Refine.

When you are presenting, pay close attention to your audience. Watch their reactions to each part of your presentation. You will notice that some parts are especially engaging. Afterwards, take time to identify the moments that particularly caught the audience's attention. Draft your next presentation around these highlights.

Practice. Improvisation has a certain appeal, but in general, an audience will respond best to a presenter who knows where he or she is headed. Counterintuitively, the more prepared you are, the more natural your improvisations will appear.

Identify your most beneficial sounding boards and audiences — the listeners who seem to bring out your best communication. Examine these individuals or groups to learn why you are so good when you speak with them or to them, and look for the same qualities in potential partners and audiences.

Keep getting smarter about the words you use. They are a critical currency. Spend them wisely, and monitor their impact.

Your Communication talents can be highly effective when your message has substance. Don't rely on your talents alone; take your communication to the level of strength by developing your knowledge and expertise in specific areas.

You are gifted in fostering dialogue among peers and colleagues. Use your Communication talents to summarize the various points in a meeting and to build consensus by helping others see what they have in common.

If you enjoy writing, consider publishing your work. If you enjoy public speaking, make a presentation at a professional meeting or convention. In either case, your Communication talents will serve to assist you in finding just the right way to frame your ideas and state your purpose. You delight in sharing your thoughts with others, so find the medium that best fits your voice and message.

Volunteer for opportunities to present. You can become known as someone who helps people express their thoughts and ambitions in a captivating way.

## 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.

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## 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.

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## Belief

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Clarify your values by thinking about one of your best days ever. How did your values play into the satisfaction that you received on that day? How can you organize your life to repeat that day as often as possible?

Actively seek roles that fit your values. In particular, think about joining organizations that define their purpose by the contribution they make to society.

The meaning and purpose of your work will often provide direction for others. Remind people why their work is important and how it makes a difference in their lives and in the lives of others.

Your Belief talents allow you to talk to the hearts of people. Develop a “purpose statement” and communicate it to your family, friends, and coworkers. Your powerful emotional appeal can give them a motivating sense of contribution.

Create a gallery of letters and/or pictures of the people whose lives you have substantially influenced. When you are feeling down or overwhelmed, remind yourself of your value by looking at this gallery. It will energize you and revive your commitment to helping others.

Set aside time to ensure that you are balancing your work demands and your personal life. Your devotion to your career should not come at the expense of your strong commitment to your family.

Don't be afraid to give voice to your values. This will help others know who you are and how to relate to you.

Actively cultivate friends who share your basic values. Consider your best friend. Does this person share your value system?

Partner with someone who has strong Futuristic talents. This person can energize you by painting a vivid picture of the direction in which your values will lead.

Accept that the values of other people might differ from your own. Express your beliefs without being judgmental.

## 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.

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## Connectedness

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Consider roles in which you listen and counsel. You can become adept at helping other people see connection and purpose in everyday occurrences.

Explore specific ways to expand your sense of connection, such as starting a book club, attending a retreat, or joining an organization that puts Connectedness into practice.

Within your organization, help your colleagues understand how their efforts fit in the larger picture. You can be a leader in building teams and helping people feel important.

You are aware of the boundaries and borders created within organizations and communities, but you treat these as seamless and fluid. Use your Connectedness talents to break down silos that prevent shared knowledge.

Help people see the connections among their talents, their actions, their mission, and their successes. When people believe in what they are doing and feel like they are part of something bigger, commitment to achievement is enhanced.

Partner with someone with strong Communication talents. This person can help you with the words you need to describe vivid examples of connection in the real world.

Don't spend too much time attempting to persuade others to see the world as a linked web. Be aware that your sense of connection is intuitive. If others don't share your intuition, rational argument will not persuade them.

Your philosophy of life compels you to move beyond your own self-interests and the interests of your immediate constituency and sphere of influence. As such, you see the broader implications for your community and the world. Explore ways to communicate these insights to others.

Seek out global or cross-cultural responsibilities that capitalize on your understanding of the commonalities inherent in humanity. Build universal capability, and change the mindset of those who think in terms of “us” and “them.”

Connectedness talents can help you look past the outer shell of a person to embrace his or her humanity. Be particularly aware of this when you work with someone whose background is very different from yours. You can naturally look past the labels and focus on his or her essential needs.

## 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.

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## Includer

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Consider roles in which you can take responsibility for representing voices that are not usually heard. You will derive a great deal of satisfaction from being a spokesperson for these people.

Look for opportunities to bring together people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. You can be a leader in this area.

Help those who are new to an organization or group get to know other people. You will always be adept at quickly making people feel accepted and involved.

An anti-elitist, you may clash with those who feel they have earned the right to perks and power. Rather than disputing their claim, use your Includer insights to help everyone find common ground and value in their contributions.

Acknowledge the dissonance you feel when you must be the bearer of bad news. Look for partners who can help you justify your position so you don't apologize or soften the message too much.

Not every person is lovable or even likeable. While many of your friends or colleagues may be put

off by difficult people, you have a natural capacity to truly care for all people. Let others know that if they ever come to the end of their rope with a problematic individual, they can call on you to step in.

Choose roles in which you are continuously working and interacting with people. You will enjoy the challenge of making everyone feel important.

Partner with someone who has dominant Activator or Command talents. This person can help you when you have to deliver news that might hurt someone's feelings.

Realize that people will relate to each other through you. You are a conduit for information. You can interact with all parts and all people in a group and keep them effectively connected to each other.

Explain what we all have in common. Help others understand that to respect the differences among us (our diversity), we must begin by appreciating what we all share (our similarity).

## 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.

### COMMUNICATION SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Sheila K., general manager of a theme park: “Stories are the best way to make my point. Yesterday I wanted to show my executive committee the impact we can have on our guests, so I shared this story with them: One of our employees brought her father to the flag-raising ceremony we have for Veterans Day here at the theme park. He was disabled during World War II, and he now has a rare form of cancer and has had a lot of surgery. He’s dying. At the start of the ceremony, one of our employees said to the group, ‘This man is a World War II veteran. Can we give him a hand?’ Everybody cheered, and his daughter started crying. Her dad took off his hat. He never takes off his hat because of the scars on his head from the war and the cancer surgery, but when the national anthem started, he took off his hat and bowed his head. His daughter told me later that it was the best day he’s had in years.”

Tom P., banking executive: “My most recent client thought that the flow of capital toward Internet stocks was just a passing phase. I tried using a rational argument to change his mind, but he couldn’t or wouldn’t be convinced. In the end, as I often do when faced with a client in denial, I resorted to imagery. I told him that he was like a person sitting on a beach with his back to the sea. The Internet was like a fast-rising tide. No matter how comfortable he felt right now, the tide was rising with each crashing wave, and very soon, one of those waves would come crashing down over his head and engulf him. He got the point.”

Margret D., marketing director: “I once read a book about giving speeches that gave two suggestions: Talk only about things you’re really passionate about, and always use personal examples. I immediately started doing that, and I found lots of stories because I have kids and grandkids and a husband. I build my stories around my personal experiences because everyone can relate to them.”

### 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.”

### BELIEF SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Michael K., salesperson: “The vast majority of my nonworking time goes to my family and to the things we do in the community. I was on the countywide Boy Scouts board of directors. And when I was a Boy Scout, I was pack leader. When I was an Explorer, I was junior assistant leader for the Boy Scouts. I just like being with kids. I believe that’s where the future is. And I think you can do a whole lot worse with your time than investing it in the future.”

Lara M., college president: “My values are why I work so hard every day at my job. I put hours and hours into this job, and I don’t even care what I get paid. I just found out that I am the lowest paid college president in my state, and I don’t even care. I mean, I don’t do this for the money.”

Tracy D., airline executive: “If you are not doing something important, why bother? Getting up every day and working on ways to make flying safer seems important to me, purposeful. If I didn’t find this purpose in my job, I don’t know if I could work through all the challenges and frustrations that get in my way. I think I would get demoralized.”

### CONNECTEDNESS SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Mandy M., homemaker: “Humility is the essence of Connectedness. You have to know who you are and who you aren’t. I have a piece of the wisdom. I don’t have much of it, but what I do have is real. This isn’t grandiosity. This is real humility. You have confidence in your gifts, real confidence, but you know you don’t have all the answers. You start to feel connected to others because you know they have wisdom that you don’t. You can’t feel connected if you think you have everything.”

Rose T., psychologist: “Sometimes I look at my bowl of cereal in the morning and think about those

hundreds of people who were involved in bringing me my bowl of cereal: the farmers in the field, the biochemists who made the pesticides, the warehouse workers at the food preparation plants, even the marketers who somehow persuaded me to buy this box of cereal and not a different one sitting next to it on the shelf. I know it sounds strange, but I give thanks to these people, and just doing that makes me feel more involved with life, more connected to things, less alone.”

Chuck M., teacher: “I tend to be very black and white about things, but when it comes to understanding the mysteries of life, for some reason, I am much more open. I have a big interest in learning about all different religions. I am reading a book right now that talks about Judaism versus Christianity versus the religion of the Canaanites. Buddhism, Greek mythology — it’s really interesting how all of these tie together in some way.”

### INCLUDER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Harry B., outplacement consultant: “Even as a child, although I was very shy, I always made sure that I was the one inviting others to play. When picking teams or sides in school, I never wanted anyone not to participate with us. In fact, I can remember when I was ten or eleven, I had a friend who was not a member of our church. We were at a church banquet, and he showed up at the door because typically we had our youth activity at the church on that night. Immediately, I got up, brought him over to our family, and sat him down at the table.”

Jeremy B., defense lawyer: “When I first started this job, I met people and became fast, furious friends with them almost on day one, only to find out later that, you know, this person’s got a lot of issues, and I’ve already included them in dinner parties and our social circle. My partner, Mark, is like, ‘What is it exactly that made you want to include this person?’ And then it’s a matter of figuring out what pushed my buttons when I first met them, what made me enjoy them so much. And, you know, making sure that this is the aspect of them that Mark and I focus on . . . because once I include someone in my circle, I don’t dump them.”

Giles D., corporate trainer: “In class, I seem to be able to sense when someone is disengaging from the group discussion, and I immediately draw them back into the conversation. Last week, we got into a lengthy discussion about performance appraisals, and one woman wasn’t talking at all. So I just said, ‘Monica, you’ve had performance appraisals. Any thoughts on the subject?’ I really think this has helped me as a teacher because when I don’t know the answer to something, very often it is the person I pull in who supplies the answer for me.”

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?