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# Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

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## Your Top 5 Themes

Discipline  
Achiever  
Woo  
Responsibility  
Focus

## 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

### Discipline

#### Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.

#### Your Personalized Strengths Insights

*What makes you stand out?*

Driven by your talents, you expect your environment to be kept tidy and orderly. The act of making things presentable gives you pleasure. You know you function better and think more clearly in a structured setting. You probably perform your job and pursue your studies with greater efficiency when everything is in its proper place. It's very likely that you are a good partner for someone who struggles to decide what is most important. With your assistance, people can outline what to do first, second, third, and so on. You probably help individuals narrow down their long lists of tasks and opportunities. Once priorities are finalized, you push, pull, coax, cajole, or urge the person to concentrate on only the targets that deserve full-time attention. Chances are good that you eliminate chaos. You probably walk into out-of-control situations and quickly determine where materials or people need to be placed for the sake of efficiency. You are likely to establish schedules, set up files, make check lists, or order supplies. Individuals tend to rely on you to think of all the steps, pieces, and parts. They usually trust you to establish a logical series of steps and guide them through the execution. By nature, you may consider ways you can enhance standardized procedures that already serve you well. You might understand the importance of doing certain tasks or activities the same way day after day. Even so, you might be inclined to make some things better when the opportunity presents itself. Instinctively, you define for yourself what is most important. You probably have one, two, or three major goals to reach in the coming months, years, or decades. Once you have set your priorities, you are eager to begin working on them. Your enthusiasm might prevent you from maintaining an even balance between your personal commitments and professional duties.

#### 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?

## Achiever

### Shared Theme Description

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

### Your Personalized Strengths Insights

*What makes you stand out?*

Because of your strengths, you normally strive to do things right. Taking shortcuts strikes you as unprincipled, thoughtless, and careless. You likely refuse to produce sloppy work or engage in unethical practices. Chances are good that you do a fine job of imparting knowledge to individuals. You spend a lot of time preparing appropriate stories, vivid examples, graphic illustrations, or useful materials to enliven your training sessions. Driven by your talents, you may accomplish more than some of your teammates accomplish. Perhaps you are driven from within to do more work or better work today than you ever have in the past. Perhaps you are motivated to be the winner when your performance, grades, productivity, or profits are compared to those of others. Perhaps you know how to find the most efficient way to use available time, money, materials, or human resources. By nature, you are determined to talk about the talents, skills, and knowledge you possess. You realize you receive much in return when you risk sharing your thoughts and expertise. You improve personally or professionally each time you participate in the give-and-take process. It's very likely that you possess the physical and mental endurance to withstand hardships as well as stress. Characteristically you work harder and longer than most people are capable of doing.

### 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?

## Woo

### Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.

### Your Personalized Strengths Insights

*What makes you stand out?*

Instinctively, you occasionally enjoy beginning discussions with newcomers or outsiders. Perhaps these private exchanges provide insights into the special talents, sources of inspiration, or other traits of each individual. Chances are good that you occasionally need to know that others appreciate your ability to involve newcomers in discussions. You occasionally use compliments to acknowledge the talents or successes of those you meet. Maybe this prompts some strangers to say, “I’ve heard you are friendly. Now I know it’s true.” Driven by your talents, you may have been told at some point in your life you should not talk to strangers. Whoever said this may have failed to understand how much energy you draw from conversations with outsiders. Because you want people to feel at ease in your presence, you might go out of your way to engage some of them in chitchat or discussions. Perhaps you ignore recommendations to keep your distance from newcomers. It’s very likely that you may be gregarious — that is, outgoing — and enjoy the company of others. Sometimes you enjoy mixing and mingling with people at social events. Once in a while, you might move them beyond small talk. Why? Perhaps you are intrigued with what they think, do, or say. Because of your strengths, you sometimes yearn to have someone listen to you. This partially explains why you are eager to introduce yourself to outsiders and newcomers. Perhaps you tell them about your background, accomplishments, grades, or progress toward certain goals. Leaving them with the impression you are a person of influence or importance might be the objective of this first encounter.

### Questions

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

## Responsibility

### Shared Theme Description

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

### Your Personalized Strengths Insights

*What makes you stand out?*

Instinctively, you may wish to have a broader range of control and accountability on the job or in your personal life. Because of your strengths, you are sometimes determined to be victorious. As much as you yearn to be “number one,” you might realize cheating is unacceptable. You might experience remorse when you unintentionally take unfair advantage of anyone. Perhaps you think finishing first counts only when you have followed the rules just like everyone else. By nature, you may be the team member whom others count on to do what is right. Perhaps you make sure your job or assignments are done correctly. You might conduct yourself in such a way that your ethics are above reproach — that is, anyone’s disapproval. It’s very likely that you sometimes feel twinges of guilt when certain tasks are done carelessly. Perhaps you want to be associated with quality. You might be disappointed in yourself when you compromise some of your beliefs about right and wrong. Chances are good that you might do everything possible to fulfill obligations. Maybe you are thorough and devoted to doing what you promise. This partially explains why people describe you as reliable. To some extent, you have established a reputation for honoring your commitments. Perhaps this causes individuals to trust you more than they trust others.

### 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?

## Focus

### Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, then act.

### Your Personalized Strengths Insights

*What makes you stand out?*

By nature, you may like participating in goal-planning meetings when you can suggest what needs to be perfected, completed, or done better. Perhaps you propose a few specific objectives. You hope your remedies upgrade final outcomes, change people's behavior, or replace outdated procedures. Because of your strengths, you may like to participate in discussions where decisions are made about what an individual or group needs to accomplish in the near-term or the long-term. Instinctively, you may 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 probably devote a bit more energy and time to studying it. Driven by your talents, you may join certain teams to enhance your chances of attaining fame, fortune, power, prestige, promotions, or success. Sometimes you do things to build up your resume. Chances are good that you sometimes work hard to reach specific personal or professional goals. These include, but are not limited to, earning a pay raise, winning a promotion, receiving a degree, acquiring something you value, or completing a certification program. Perhaps challenges related to status motivate you more than others do.

### 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?

## Questions

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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

### Discipline

#### Ideas for Action:

- Don't hesitate to check as often as necessary to ensure that things are right. You feel an urge to do it anyway, and soon others will come to expect it from you.
- Accept that mistakes might depress you. Precision is a core part of who you are; however, you must find ways to move through these moments of annoyance to prevent becoming discouraged.
- Recognize that others may not be as disciplined as you are. More than likely, their clumsy process will frustrate you, so try to look beyond it, and focus on their results, not on their process.
- Exactitude is your forté; you enjoy poring over details. Seek opportunities to peruse contracts, important communications, or financial documents for errors. You can save yourself and others from making costly mistakes and looking foolish.
- Increasing efficiency is one of your hallmarks. You are a perfectionist at heart. Discover situations in which time or money is being wasted because of inefficiency, and create systems or procedures to improve efficiency.
- You not only create order, you probably also crave it in the form of a well-organized space. To completely free your Discipline talents, invest in furniture and organization systems that enable you to have "a place for everything and everything in its place."
- Timelines motivate you. When you have a task to complete, you like to know the deadline so you can plan your schedule accordingly. Apply your Discipline talents by outlining the step-by-step plan you will use. Others will appreciate your cues because they will help keep everyone "on task."
- Others may confuse your Discipline talents with rigidity. Help them understand that your discipline helps you pack more effectiveness into a day — often because you prioritize your time. When working with others who are not as disciplined, ask them to clarify deadlines so you can adjust your workload to accommodate their requests.
- Seek out roles and responsibilities that have structure.
- Create routines that require you to systematically follow through. Over time, people will come to appreciate this kind of predictability.

#### 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.



## Achiever

### Ideas for Action:

- Select jobs that allow you to have the leeway to work as hard as you want and in which you are encouraged to measure your own productivity. You will feel challenged and alive in these environments.
- As an achiever, you relish the feeling of being busy, yet you also need to know when you are “done.” Attach timelines and measurement to goals so that effort leads to defined progress and tangible outcomes.
- Remember to build celebration and recognition into your life. Achievers tend to move on to the next challenge without acknowledging their successes. Counter this impulse by creating regular opportunities to enjoy your progress and accomplishments.
- Your drive for action might cause you to find meetings a bit boring. If that’s the case, appeal to your Achiever talents by learning the objectives of each meeting ahead of time and by taking notes about progress toward those objectives during the meeting. You can help ensure that meetings are productive and efficient.
- Continue your education by attaining certifications in your area or specialty in addition to attending conferences and other programs. This will give you even more goals to achieve and will push your existing boundaries of accomplishment.
- You do not require much motivation from others. Take advantage of your self-motivation by setting challenging goals. Set a more demanding goal every time you finish a project.
- Partner with other hard workers. Share your goals with them so they can help you to get more done.
- Count personal achievements in your scoring “system.” This will help you direct your Achiever talents toward family and friends as well as toward work.
- More work excites you. The prospect of what lies ahead is infinitely more motivating than what has been completed. Launch initiatives and new projects. Your seemingly endless reserve of energy will create enthusiasm and momentum.
- Make sure that in your eagerness to do more at work, you do not skimp on quality. Create measurable outcome standards to guarantee that increased productivity is matched by enhanced quality.

### Questions

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2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

## Woo

### Ideas for Action:

- Choose a job in which you can interact with many people over the course of a day.
- Deliberately build the network of people who know you. Tend to it by checking in with each person at least once a month.
- Join local organizations, volunteer for committees, and find out how to get on the social lists of the influential people where you live.
- Learn the names of as many people as you can. Create a file of the people you know, and add names as you become acquainted. Include a snippet of personal information — such as their birthday, favorite color, hobby, or favorite sports team.
- In social situations, take responsibility for helping put reserved people at ease.
- Find the right words to explain that networking is part of your style. If you don't claim this theme, others might mistake it for insincerity and wonder why you are being so friendly.
- Partner with someone with dominant Relator or Empathy talents. This person can solidify the relationships that you begin.
- Your Woo talents give you the ability to quicken the pulse of your surroundings. Recognize the power of your presence and how you open doors for an exchange of ideas. By simply starting conversations that engage others and bring talented people together, you will take performance up a notch — or several.
- The first moments of any social occasion are crucial to how comfortable people will be and how they will remember the event. Whenever possible, be one of the first people others meet. Your capacity for meeting and greeting new people will help to quickly put them at ease.
- Practice ways to charm and engage others. For example, research people before you meet them so you can talk about your common interests.

### Questions

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

## Responsibility

### Ideas for Action:

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

### Questions

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

## Focus

### Ideas for Action:

- When you set goals, discipline yourself to include timelines and measurements. These will provide regular proof that you are indeed making progress.
- Seek roles in which you can function independently. With your dominant Focus talents, you will be able to stay on track with little supervision.
- Your greatest worth as a team member might be helping others set goals. At the end of meetings, take responsibility for summarizing what was decided, for defining when these decisions will be acted on, and for setting a date when the group will reconvene.
- Others will think, act, and talk less efficiently than you do. Pay attention. Sometimes their “detours” will lead to discoveries and delights.
- Stretch your goal setting beyond work. If you find yourself becoming too focused on work goals, set goals for your personal life. They will give weight to your personal priorities and thereby help create balance in your life.
- Hours can disappear when you are intent on a task; you lose track of time. Make sure that all of your objectives are met and all of your priorities are followed by scheduling your efforts and sticking to that schedule.
- You function best when you can concentrate on a few well-defined initiatives and demands. Give yourself permission to reject projects or tasks that do not align with your overall mission. This will help you concentrate your efforts on your most important priorities — and will help others appreciate your need for focus.
- Take the time to write down your aspirations, and refer to them often. You will feel more in control of your life.
- At work, be sure to tell your manager your mid-term and short-term goals. This might well give your manager the confidence to give you the room you need.
- Make sure that the focus points you set for yourself take into consideration both quantity and quality. The integrity of your objectives will ensure that the application of your Focus talents leads to solid and long-lasting success.

### 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.

Discipline sounds like this:

Les T., hospitality manager: “The turning point in my career was attending one of those time-management courses some years back. I was always disciplined, but the power grew when I learned how to use that discipline in an organized process every day. This little Palm Pilot means that I call my mom every Sunday rather than letting months go by without calling. It means I take my wife out for dinner every week without her asking. It means that my employees know that if I say I need to see something on Monday, I will be calling on Monday if I haven’t seen it. This Palm Pilot is so much a part of my life that I have lengthened all of my pants pockets so that it fits right there on my hip.”

Troy T., sales executive: “My filing system may not look that pretty, but it is very efficient. I write everything by hand because I know that no customer is going to see these files, so why waste time making them look pretty? My whole life as a salesperson is based on deadlines and follow-up. In my system, I keep track of everything so that I take responsibility not only for my deadlines and follow-up but for all of my customers’ and colleagues’ as well. If they haven’t gotten back to me by the time they promised, they’re going to receive an e-mail from me. In fact, I heard from one the other day who said, ‘I may as well get back to you because I know you’re going to call me if you haven’t heard from me.’”

Diedre S., office manager: “I hate wasting time, so I make lists — long lists that keep me on track. Today my list has ninety items on it, and I will get through ninety-five percent of them. And that’s discipline because I don’t let anybody waste my time. I am not rude, but I can let you know in a very tactful, humorous way that your time is up.”

### 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.”

## Woo sounds like this:

Deborah C., publishing executive: “I have made best friends out of people that I have met passing in the doorway. I mean, it’s awful, but wooing is part of who I am. All my taxi drivers propose to me.”

Marilyn K., college president: “I don’t believe I’m looking for friends, but people call me a friend. I call people and say, ‘I love you,’ and I mean it because I love people easily. But friends? I don’t have many friends. I don’t think I am looking for friends. I am looking for connections. And I am really good at that because I know how to achieve common ground with people.”

Anna G., nurse: “I think I am a little shy sometimes. Usually I won’t make the first step out. But I do know how to put people at ease. A lot of my job is just humor. If the patient is not very receptive, my role becomes that of a stand-up comedian. I’ll say to an eighty-year-old patient, ‘Hi, you handsome guy. Sit up. Let me get your shirt off. That’s good. Take your shirt off. Whoa, what a chest on this man!’ With kids, you have to start very slowly and say something like, ‘How old are you?’ If they say, ‘Ten,’ then I say, ‘Really? When I was your age, I was eleven’ — silly stuff like that to break the ice.”

## 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.”



### Focus sounds like this:

Nick H., computer executive: "It is very important to me to be efficient. I'm the sort of guy who plays a round of golf in two and a half hours. When I was at Electronic Data Systems, I worked out a set list of questions so that I could conduct a review of each division in 15 minutes. The founder, Ross Perot, called me 'The Dentist' because I would schedule a whole day of these in-and-out, fifteen-minute meetings."

Brad F., sales executive: "I am always sorting priorities, trying to figure out the most efficient route toward the goal so that there is very little dead time, very little wasted motion. For example, I will get multiple calls from customers who need me to call the service department for them, and rather than taking each one of these calls as they come and interrupting the priorities of the day, I group them together into one call at the end of the day and get it done."

Mike L., administrator: "People are amazed how I put things into perspective and stay on track. When people around the district are stuck on issues and caught on contrived barriers, I am able to pole-vault over them, reestablish the focus, and keep things moving."

Doriane L., homemaker: "I am just the kind of person who likes to get to the point — in conversations, at work, and even when I am shopping with my husband. He likes to try on lots of things and has a good time doing it, whereas I try one thing on, and if I like it and it is not horribly priced, I buy it. I'm a surgical shopper."

## Questions

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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?