
Graham Cohen

Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 04-20-2018



DON CLIFTON

Father of Strengths Psychology and
Inventor of CliftonStrengths

Graham Cohen

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YOUR TOP 5 THEMES

1. Ideation
2. Strategic
3. Activator
4. Individualization
5. Self-Assurance

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 who are especially talented in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you contribute many innovative ideas to the group during brainstorming sessions. You tend to be highly imaginative when proposals are fully heard and any criticism is reserved for a later time. It's very likely that 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 ask questions. You ponder answers. You find the underlying causes of a situation, problem, system, mechanism, plan, regulation, or prohibition. Logical and ordered in your thinking, you study every detail, however small. You are determined to examine the facts. Because of your strengths, you thoroughly examine the idiosyncrasies, interests, talents, successes, fears, or dreams of each person you encounter. You contend that no two people are the same. You argue that the same individual reacts quite differently depending on the circumstances and the human beings present. People simply fascinate you. Chances are good that you engage life with gusto. Bursting with creativity, you approach assignments, tasks, projects, opportunities, or problems. You like to take the innovative path rather than follow the traditional and tried-and-true ways of doing things.

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.

Strategic

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

It's very likely that you are known for your ease with language. This ability serves you well when you need to talk with newcomers or outsiders. Your vocabulary probably allows you to tell stories or express your ideas with great clarity. Chances are good that you frequently find the precise words to express your thoughts and feelings. You spontaneously start conversations with total strangers. You quickly discover what interests them. You probably enliven discussions by telling stories to illustrate things that capture your attention. Because of your strengths, you are a self-reliant person who needs time alone to think and work. You generate innovative ideas and propose systematic programs of action. You likely identify recurring configurations in the behavior of people, the functioning of processes, or the emergence of potential problems. Instinctively, you work diligently to invent alternative courses of action. You notice new as well as unusual configurations in facts, evidence, or data. Others, however, can see only separate, unrelated bits of information. You are fascinated by problems that puzzle, confound, or frustrate most people. Driven by your talents, you may see solutions before other people know there is a problem. You might start formulating answers before your teammates, coworkers, or classmates understand the question. Sometimes you generate numerous ideas before sorting to the one that makes the most sense in a particular situation.

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Activator

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

It's very likely that you typically are described as a "what you see is what you get" person. There is very little mystery about who you are. You usually make a point of talking with strangers. You are apt to tell them about yourself without their having to ask you any questions. Your forthright approach encourages many individuals to be as open with you as you are with them. Driven by your talents, you generate enthusiasm so people become as eager as you are to transform an idea into something tangible. You are energized, not paralyzed, by opportunities and possibilities. Instinctively, you notice that people heed your demands. What you say and how you say it can even frighten and threaten people. You probably have used this effect to influence individuals to do what you want. Chances are good that you feel a surge of energy when you start talking with newcomers. You typically generate such enthusiasm in these outsiders that they participate in activities, join teams, register for classes, or interview for jobs. Because of your strengths, you sometimes make people feel special. Typically you point out the importance or usefulness of something they said.

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Individualization

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

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

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Instinctively, you easily identify with what others are thinking and feeling. You intuitively understand their hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows. This helps you consider things from each individual's perspective. Chances are good that you occasionally lighten the loads of others by shouldering part of their burdens. Maybe you are more apt to assist to individuals who speak candidly to you about your shortcomings because you feel their comments are helpful rather than harmful. It's very likely that you often help visionaries discover ways they can work with people who concentrate on the past or the present. Rather than let differences separate them, you point out areas where they share similar backgrounds, work styles, talents, or interests. You understand the loneliness that forward-looking people can experience when listeners call their ideas "far-fetched," "impractical," or "ridiculous." You are quick to show people how their unique traits complement each other. Driven by your talents, you sometimes enjoy helping individuals savor their moments of excellence. Perhaps you enable certain people to distinguish between their ordinary and extraordinary accomplishments. By nature, you gain a certain degree of satisfaction when you can be of some service to others.

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Self-Assurance

SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Self-Assurance theme feel confident in their ability to manage their own lives. They possess an inner compass that gives them confidence that their decisions are right.

YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

What makes you stand out?

Chances are good that you have great fun exchanging large-scale thoughts and opinions with your colleagues, associates, coworkers, or fellow students. These animated conversations allow you to refine your thinking and test your ideas. By nature, you typically enroll in demanding classes. You thrive in situations where you can test your talents as well as your endurance to discover how much you can accomplish. You need to prove yourself to yourself each day. It's very likely that you exhibit an awareness about what you do and do not do well. You trust your instincts in this regard. Over time, you have progressed faster and moved further by relying on your talents. You simply refuse to risk losing confidence in yourself by tackling assignments for which you lack the talent, even when you may possess some relevant knowledge, skills, or experience. Instinctively, you yearn to be inspired by your work. You want experience to be your teacher. You need to feel enthused by your work or studies. You constantly acquire knowledge and skills. Whenever you study facts, ponder concepts, test theories, or sharpen your skills, you feel most alive. You are inclined to avoid people and situations that prevent you from expanding your mind. Driven by your talents, you forge ahead to build the life you envision. You reach your goals by finding as many opportunities as possible to use your unique abilities and natural gifts.

QUESTIONS

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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

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.

Strategic

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Take the time to fully reflect or muse about a goal that you want to achieve until the related patterns and issues emerge for you. Remember that this musing time is essential to strategic thinking.

You can see repercussions more clearly than others can. Take advantage of this ability by planning your range of responses in detail. There is little point in knowing where events will lead if you are not ready when you get there.

Find a group that you think does important work, and contribute your strategic thinking. You can be a leader with your ideas.

Your strategic thinking will be necessary to keep a vivid vision from deteriorating into an ordinary pipe dream. Fully consider all possible paths toward making the vision a reality. Wise forethought can remove obstacles before they appear.

Make yourself known as a resource for consultation with those who are stumped by a particular problem or hindered by a particular obstacle or barrier. By naturally seeing a way when others are convinced there is no way, you will lead them to success.

You are likely to anticipate potential issues more easily than others. Though your awareness of possible danger might be viewed as negativity by some, you must share your insights if you are going to avoid these pitfalls. To prevent misperception of your intent, point out not only the future obstacle, but also a way to prevent or overcome it. Trust your insights, and use them to ensure the success of your efforts.

Help others understand that your strategic thinking is not an attempt to belittle their ideas, but is instead a natural propensity to consider all the facets of a plan objectively. Rather than being a naysayer, you are actually trying to examine ways to ensure that the goal is accomplished, come what may. Your talents will allow you to consider others' perspectives while keeping your end goal in sight.

Trust your intuitive insights as often as possible. Even though you might not be able to explain them rationally, your intuitions are created by a brain that instinctively anticipates and projects. Have confidence in these perceptions.

Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. With this person's need for action and your need for anticipation, you can forge a powerful partnership.

Make sure that you are involved in the front end of new initiatives or enterprises. Your innovative yet

procedural approach will be critical to the genesis of a new venture because it will keep its creators from developing deadly tunnel vision.

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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Activator

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Seek work in which you can make your own decisions and act on them. In particular, look for start-up or turnaround situations.

At work, make sure that your manager judges you on measurable outcomes rather than your process. Your process is not always pretty.

You can transform innovative ideas into immediate action. Look for creative and original thinkers, and help them move their ideas from conceptual theory to concrete practice.

Look for areas that are bogged down by discussion or blocked by barriers. End the stalemate by creating a plan to get things moving and spur others into action.

You learn more from real experience than from theoretical discussions. To grow, consciously expose yourself to challenging experiences that will test your talents, skills, and knowledge.

Remember that although your tenacity is powerful, it may intimidate some. Your Activator talents will be most effective when you have first earned others' trust and loyalty.

Identify the most influential decision makers in your organization. Make it a point to have lunch with each of them at least once a quarter to share your ideas. They can support you in your activation and provide critical resources to make your ideas happen.

You can easily energize the plans and ideas of others. Consider partnering with focused, futuristic, strategic, or analytical people who will lend their direction and planning to your activation, thereby creating an opportunity to build consensus and get others behind the plan. By doing this, you complement each other.

Give the reasons why your requests for action must be granted. Otherwise, others might dismiss you as impatient and label you a 'ready, fire, aim' person.

You possess an ability to create motion and momentum in others. Be strategic and wise in the use of your Activator talents. When is the best time, where is the best place, and who are the best people with whom to leverage your valuable influence?

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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Individualization

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTIONS

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

Self-Assurance

IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Look for start-up situations for which no rulebook exists. You will be at your best when you are asked to make many decisions.

Seek roles in which you convince people to see your point of view. Your Self-Assurance talents (especially when combined with Command or Activator talents) can be extremely persuasive. Leadership, sales, legal, or entrepreneurial roles might suit you.

Let your self-confidence show. It can be contagious and will help the people around you grow.

Realize that sometimes you will find it hard to put your certainty or intuition into words, possibly

leading others to see you as self-righteous. Explain that your confidence does not mean that they should withhold their opinions. It might not seem like it to them, but you do want to hear their ideas. Your conviction doesn't mean that you are unwilling to listen to them.

Your independent streak can leave you standing alone. If this happens, make sure you are out in front, or partner with someone who can help others see how they can benefit from following you.

Partner with someone with strong Strategic, Deliberative, or Futuristic talents. This person can help you assess the goals to which you commit. You need this help because once you set your sights on a goal, you are likely to stay with it until you achieve it.

Your exceptionally hard work and long hours are natural products of the passion and confidence you feel about your work. Don't assume that others are similarly wired.

You can be decisive, even when things get dynamic and distracting. When there is chaos around you, intentionally display and share the calm and certainty within you. This will give others comfort and security.

Set ambitious goals. Don't hesitate to reach for what others see as impractical and impossible, but what you see as merely bold and exciting — and most importantly — achievable with some heroics and a little luck. Your Self-Assurance talents can lead to achievements that you may not have otherwise even imagined.

You don't have a great need for direction and support from others. This could make you particularly effective in situations that require independent thinking and action. Recognize and actively contribute the value of your Self-Assurance talents when confidence and self-control are crucial.

QUESTIONS

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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."

STRATEGIC SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Liam C., manufacturing plant manager: "It seems as if I can always see the consequences before anyone else can. I have to say to people, 'Lift up your eyes; look down the road a ways. Let's talk about where we are going to be next year so that when we get to this time next year, we don't have the same problems.' It seems obvious to me, but some people are just too focused on this month's numbers, and everything is driven by that."

Vivian T., television producer: "I used to love logic problems when I was a kid — you know, the ones where 'if A implies B, and B equals C, does A equal C?' Still today, I am always playing out repercussions, seeing where things lead. I think it makes me a great interviewer. I know that nothing is an accident; every sign, every word, every tone of voice has significance. So I watch for these clues and play them out in my head, see where they lead, and then plan my questions to take advantage of

what I have seen in my head."

Simon T., human resources executive: "We really needed to take the union on at some stage, and I saw an opportunity — a very good issue to take them on. I could see that they were going in a direction that would lead them into all kinds of trouble if they continued following it. Lo and behold, they did continue following it, and when they arrived, there I was, ready and waiting. I suppose it just comes naturally to me to predict what someone else is going to do. And then when that person reacts, I can respond immediately because I have sat down and said, 'Okay, if they do this, we'll do this. If they do that, then we'll do this other thing.' It's like when you tack in a sailboat. You head in one direction, but you jinx one way, then another, planning and reacting, planning and reacting."

ACTIVATOR SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Jane C., Benedictine nun: "When I was prioress in the 1970s, we were hit by the energy shortage, and costs skyrocketed. We had a hundred and forty acres, and I walked the acreage every day pondering what we should do about this energy shortage. Suddenly I decided that if we had that much land, we should be drilling our own gas well, and so we did. We spent one hundred thousand dollars to drill a gas well. If you have never drilled a gas well, you probably don't realize what I didn't realize: namely, that you have to spend seventy thousand dollars just to drill to see if you have any gas on your property at all. So they dug down with some kind of vibratory camera thing, and they told me that I had a gas pool. But they didn't know how large the pool was, and they didn't know if there was enough pressure to bring it up. 'If you pay another thirty thousand dollars, we will try to release the well,' they said. 'If you don't want us to, we'll just cap the well, take your seventy thousand, and go home.' So I gave them the final thirty thousand and, fortunately, up it came. That was twenty years ago, and it is still pumping."

Jim L., entrepreneur: "Some people see my impatience as not wanting to listen to the traps, the potential roadblocks. What I keep repeating is, 'I want to know when I am going to hit the wall, and I need you to tell me how much it is going to hurt. But if I choose to bump into the wall anyway, then don't worry — you've done your job. I just had to experience it for myself.'"

INDIVIDUALIZATION SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

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

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

time."

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

SELF-ASSURANCE SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

James K., salesman: "I never second-guess myself. Whether I am buying a birthday present or a house, when I make my decision, it feels to me as if I had no choice. There was only one decision to make, and I made it. It's easy for me to sleep at night. My gut is final, loud, and very persuasive."

Pam D., public service executive: "I was raised on a remote farm in Idaho, and I attended a small rural school. One day, I returned home from school and announced to my mother that I was changing schools. Earlier in the day, my teacher had explained that our school had too many kids and that three kids would have to move to a different school. I thought about it for a moment, liked the idea of meeting new people, and decided I would be one of them — even though it meant getting up half an hour earlier and traveling farther on the bus. I was five years old."

Deborah C., ER nurse: "If we have a death in the ER, people call on me to deal with the family because of my confidence. Just yesterday, we had a problem with a young psychotic girl who was screaming that the devil was inside her. The other nurses were afraid, but I knew what to do. I went in and said, 'Kate, come on, lie back. Let's say the Baruch. It's a Jewish prayer. It goes like this: Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Haolam.' She responded, 'Say it slowly so that I can say it back to you.' I did, and then she said it back to me slowly. She wasn't Jewish, but this calm came over her. She dropped back against her pillow and said, 'Thank you. That's all I needed.'"

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?