

Steven Reece

Your Top 5 Themes

Context
Relator
Futuristic
Strategic
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

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- 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

Context

Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.

Your Personalized Strengths Insights

What makes you stand out?

Instinctively, you are intrigued by experts who can enlighten you about past events or historic people. You are particularly interested in history's contribution to the current state of affairs. Because of your strengths, you routinely ask lots of questions when you are meeting someone for the first time. Your curiosity about and interest in someone's past often helps you put your relationship with the person into a framework that makes sense. Chances are good that you examine the past. You discover why things happened. This permits you to foresee the future. You study humankind's story to identify subtle nuances, recurring sequences of events, and predictable human behavior. Generating clever, resourceful, inventive, and original alternatives, you can offer solutions to age-old problems. It's very likely that you derive much pleasure from conversing with people who value history. You are intrigued by the varied philosophical views these experts have concerning the causes of events and the behavior of historic figures. By nature, you are a history buff — that is, someone ardently devoted to studying the past. You are especially drawn to firsthand accounts of global conflicts. You link people to events and trace timelines. You are likely to examine major battles from the perspective of foes and allies as well as neutral parties. The sum of your findings probably allows you to determine what started and eventually ended each war.

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?

Relator

Shared Theme Description

People who are especially talented in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.

Your Personalized Strengths Insights

What makes you stand out?

Because of your strengths, you thoughtfully select your friends. You avoid rushing into relationships. Once you trust and care about someone, the individual probably seeks your counsel. It's very likely that you consistently measure up to your high expectations when working, studying, or playing. Driven by your talents, you have close companions who frequently seek your guidance. You help them find answers to their personal and professional problems. This makes you a valuable friend. Instinctively, you trust your intuition about what someone is thinking, feeling, or needing. You realize that the answers and solutions to many problems spontaneously reveal themselves to you. Your friends frequently ask what you would recommend. They often seek your guidance. By nature, you notice that people you know regularly seek you out. Not surprisingly, they ask for your viewpoint and position on a wide range of issues.

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?

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?

By nature, 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. Instinctively, you have a capacity for envisioning what the coming months, years, or decades could, should, or will be like. Frequently you are prompted to transform your ideas into things you can touch, taste, see, smell, or hear. 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. Because of your strengths, you take advantage of every opportunity to describe to others all the amazing things you see happening in the coming months, years, or decades. Your vision opens people's minds to new and wondrous possibilities. You challenge them to consider ideas they might not have thought of on their own. 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

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?

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?

Because of your strengths, you customarily pinpoint the core problems and identify the best solutions. You artfully and skillfully eliminate distractions. This helps people gain a clear understanding of what is happening and why it is happening. You frequently identify ways to transform an obstacle into an opportunity. Instinctively, you select the right combination of words to convey your ideas or feelings. In the middle of discussions, your vocabulary provides you with precise phrases and terminology. You probably express yourself with ease and grace. Driven by your talents, you generate innovative ideas. You offer unique perspectives on events, people, and proposals. You probably inspire people to start projects and launch initiatives. You tend to identify a goal, devise numerous ways of reaching it, then choose the best alternative. This explains why you see opportunities, trends, and solutions before your teammates, classmates, or peers see them. Chances are good that you pay close attention to what is going on around you. You listen. You quiz people. You read. You probably take notes on key points. As you accumulate lots of information, you disregard what is unrelated, and pay heed to what is really important. The more you reflect on what you know, the more problems begin to reveal themselves, and eventually solutions start taking shape in your mind. Finally, given the situation, you select the best plan from your list of options. By nature, you characteristically find the right words to express whatever you are thinking. You offer explanations, discuss ideas, give examples, or share stories. You effectively use the spoken word.

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?

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?

By nature, you often take part in thought-filled conversations with your colleagues or classmates. Together, you sift through possibilities. You assess the pros and cons of each person's innovative theories, suggestions, or proposals. During these verbal exchanges, ideas expand, narrow, and take on new forms. You thrive in settings where everyone feels safe thinking out loud. Because of your strengths, you intentionally seek out what is new and different. Unexplored territory appeals to your adventurous spirit. You like to test your limits as a human being in travel, work, sports, or thinking. Even when others worry about your well-being, you trust you can take care of yourself. It's very likely that you channel your energy into your work or studies. You seldom count the hours you work. Feeling fully engaged in what you do is a major source of satisfaction. You believe there is always something more challenging you can pursue. Given your ability to withstand hardship, adversity, and stress, it is no surprise you love what you do. You strive to do more and more of it each day. Chances are good that you are attracted to difficult and challenging endeavors. You are not inclined to look for the easy way out. You are bold. You take risks. You dare to stretch your mind. You test the limits of your abilities in ways that timid individuals would not attempt. Driven by your talents, 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.

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?

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

Context

Ideas for Action:

- ☐ Before planning begins on a project, encourage the people involved to study past projects. Help them appreciate the statement: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
- ☐ If you are in a role that requires teaching others, build your lessons around case studies. You will enjoy the search for the appropriate case, and your students will learn from these precedents. Use your understanding of the past to help others map the future.
- ☐ At work, help your organization strengthen its culture via folklore. For example, collect symbols and stories that represent the best of the past, or suggest naming an award after a person who embodied the historical traditions of your organization.
- ☐ Partner with someone with strong Futuristic or Strategic talents. This person’s fascination with what “could be” will stop you from becoming mired in the past, while your deep understanding of context will stop him or her from ignoring the lessons of the past. Together you are more likely to create something that lasts.
- ☐ Accept change. Remember that your Context talents do not require you to “live in the past.” Instead, you can actually become known as an active agent for positive change. Your natural sense of context should allow you to identify more clearly than most the aspects of the past that can be discarded and those that must be retained to build a sustainable future.
- ☐ Use fact-based comparisons to prior successes to paint a vivid picture for others of “what can be” in the future. The real-life illustrations you create can build confidence and emotional engagement.
- ☐ You recognize that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. Probe your friends and coworkers about actions that might have contributed to their current successes so you can help them make better choices in the future. This will help them put their decisions into an overall context.
- ☐ Read historical novels, non-fiction, or biographies. You will discover many insights that will help you understand the present. You will think more clearly.
- ☐ Compare historical antecedents and situations to your current challenge. Identifying commonalities may lead you to a new perspective or an answer to your problems.
- ☐ Seek out mentors who have a sense of history. Listening to their memories is likely to spark your thought process.

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.

Relator

Ideas for Action:

- ☐ Find a workplace in which friendships are encouraged. You will not do well in an overly formal organization. In job interviews, ask about work styles and company culture.
- ☐ Deliberately learn as much as you can about the people you meet. You like knowing about people, and other people like being known. By doing this, you will act as a catalyst for trusting relationships.
- ☐ Let it be known that you are more interested in the character and personality of others than in their status or job title. This is one of your greatest talents and can serve as a model for others.
- ☐ Let your caring show. For example, find people in your company to mentor, help your colleagues get to know each other better, or extend your relationships beyond the office.
- ☐ No matter how busy you are, stay in contact with your friends. They are your fuel.
- ☐ Be honest with your friends. True caring means helping the other person be successful and fulfilled. Giving honest feedback or encouraging your friend to move out of a role in which he or she is struggling is a compassionate act.
- ☐ You probably prefer to be seen as a person, an equal, or a friend, rather than as a function, a superior, or a title. Let people know that they can address you by your first name, rather than formally.
- ☐ You might tend to withhold the most engaging aspects of your personality until you have sensed openness from another person. Remember, building relationships is not a one-way street. Proactively “put yourself out there.” Others will quickly see you for the genuine individual you are, and you will create many more opportunities to cultivate strong, long-lasting connections.
- ☐ Make time for family and close friends. You need to spend quality moments with those you love in order to “feed” your Relator talents. Schedule activities that allow you to get even closer to the people who keep you grounded and happy.
- ☐ Make an effort to socialize with your colleagues and team members outside of work. It can be as simple as lunch or coffee together. This will help you forge more connected relationships at work, which in turn can facilitate more effective teamwork and cooperation.

Questions

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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

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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

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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.

Context sounds like this:

Adam Y., software designer: “I tell my people, ‘Let’s avoid vujá de.’ And they say, ‘Isn’t that the wrong word? Shouldn’t it be déjà vu?’ And I say, ‘No, vujá de means that we’re bound to repeat the mistakes of our past. We must avoid this. We must look to our past, see what led to our mistakes, and then not make them again.’ It sounds obvious, but most people don’t look to their past or don’t trust that it was valid or something. And so for them, it’s vujá de all over again.”

Jesse K., media analyst: “I have very little empathy, so I don’t relate to people through their present emotional state. Instead, I relate to them through their past. In fact, I can’t even begin to understand people until I have found out where they grew up, what their parents were like, and what they studied in college.”

Gregg H., accounting manager: “I recently moved the whole office to a new accounting system, and the only reason it worked was that I honored their past. When people build an accounting system, it’s their blood, sweat, and tears; it’s them. They are personally identified with it. So if I come in and blandly tell them that I’m going to change it, it’s like me saying I am going to take your baby away. That’s the level of emotion I was dealing with. I had to respect this connection, this history, or they would have rejected me out of hand.”

Relator sounds like this:

Gavin T., flight attendant: “I have many wonderful acquaintances, but as for true friends that I hold dear, not very many. And I’m real okay with that. My best times are spent with the people I’m tightest with, like my family. We are a very tight-knit Irish Catholic family, and we get together every chance we can. It’s a large family — I have five brothers and sisters and ten nieces and nephews — but we all get together about once a month and yuk it up. I’m the catalyst. When I’m back in Chicago, even if there is no birthday or anniversary or whatever, I become the excuse for getting together and hanging out for three or four days. We really enjoy one another’s company.”

Tony D., pilot: “I used to fly in the Marines, and, boy, you had better be comfortable with the word ‘friend’ in the Marines. You had better feel good about trusting someone else. I can’t tell you how many times I put my life in someone else’s hands. I was flying off my friend’s wing, and I’d be dead if he couldn’t get me back safely.”

Jamie T., entrepreneur: “I’m definitely selective about my relationships. When I first meet people, I don’t want to give them very much of my time. I don’t know them; they don’t know me — so let’s just be pleasant and leave it at that. But if circumstances make it so that we get to know each other better, it seems like a threshold is reached where I suddenly start wanting to invest more. I’ll share more of myself, put myself out for them, do things for them that will bring us a little closer, and show that I care. It’s funny because I am not looking for any more friends in my life. I have enough. And yet with each new person I meet, as soon as that threshold is reached, I feel compelled to go deeper and deeper. Now I have ten people working for me, and I would call each of them my very good friend.”

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.”

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.”

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?