

Ruth Mansoor

# Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 01-27-2017



DON CLIFTON

Father of Strengths Psychology and Inventor of CliftonStrengths

# CliftonStrengths<sup>™</sup>

# Ruth Mansoor

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#### YOUR TOP 5 THEMES

- 1. Connectedness
- 2. Strategic
- 3. Restorative
- 4. Learner
- 5. Responsibility

# CliftonStrengths™

### 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

### Connectedness

#### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

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

#### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Because of your strengths, you usually welcome a wide array of people into your life. From the first moment you meet them, you are likely to sense that an unspoken bond exists between you. You are curious, so you probably search for explanations about why you linked up with each other at this particular moment. Even when it remains a mystery, you contend there is a reason. Instinctively, you usually come away refreshed after conversing with future-oriented thinkers. You probably inspire many of them with your passion for projects or causes that benefit humanity as well as the environment. You likely feel restless when your life lacks a noble purpose. It's very likely that you sense you are not all alone in the world. You probably feel linked with every person and living thing. This openness explains why you invite a vast array of people to participate in conversations, activities, social events, or groups. Chances are good that you genuinely like to help people overcome obstacles that prevent them from linking up with one another. This explains why you engage so many newcomers or outsiders in small talk as well as serious discussions. Driven by your talents, you often are the one who helps people understand how they are linked across time, distance, race, ethnicity, religion, economic levels, languages, or cultures. You make it possible for individuals to work together. You aim to break down barriers that separate them.

- 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 can reconfigure factual information or data in ways that reveal trends, raise issues, identify opportunities, or offer solutions. You bring an added dimension to discussions. You make sense out of seemingly unrelated information. You are likely to generate multiple action plans before you choose the best one. Chances are good that 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. Instinctively, you are much more innovative when you have ample time to process ideas. As long as you are not pressured to think fast, you can generate many original proposals, alternatives, or tactics for the coming months, years, or decades. It's very likely that you demonstrate an ease with language. You effortlessly verbalize your thoughts. You relish the opportunity to share your insights. You derive pleasure from actively participating in conversations when group members propose ideas, seek solutions, or debate issues. 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.

- 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?

### Restorative

#### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.

#### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Because of your strengths, you often consider what you need to do better so you can rank in the top tier of performers. Being "number one" is of less interest to you than making continual progress in your personal and/or professional life. Instinctively, you frequently consider methods for becoming more organized. You probably like to complete tasks before they are due. You tend to execute your plans far better when you have ample time to process your ideas in an orderly and efficient manner. Chances are good that you intentionally keep abreast of current events. You study areas of special interest to you either personally or professionally. You consistently acquire new information to make needed upgrades. You seek to understand things that most people do not comprehend. You want to make things better tomorrow than they were today. It's very likely that you are a no-nonsense person. This explains why you spend time thinking about things you could and should review, revise, repair, reorganize, or do better. Driven by your talents, you routinely produce the right results. Why? You pause to think about what you need to perfect or upgrade. By having specific aims from the start, you usually accomplish what you set out to do.

- 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?

### Learner

#### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

#### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Chances are good that you yearn to know a lot. It makes little sense to you to skim through a book and read only the highlights. You delve more deeply into intriguing subjects than most people do. You love to gather all kinds of information. This explains why you take time to grasp ideas that appear in print. Driven by your talents, you naturally harbor feelings of good will toward almost everyone you meet. From the start, you probably pose questions that reveal to you another person's strengths, interests, or goals, Knowing as much as you do about an individual allows you to appreciate him or her more than others can. People often turn to you for insights about strangers or newcomers to the group. Your knowledge usually helps them to accept these outsiders sooner rather than later. Instinctively, you fill your mind with new ideas by asking questions, reading, studying, observing, or listening. Normally, you accumulate facts, data, stories, examples, or background information from the people you meet. Determining what they want to accomplish in the coming weeks, months, or years generally satisfies your curiosity. These insights also allow you to understand why individuals behave they way they do in different situations. Because of your strengths, you prefer to register for rigorous courses of study rather than take easy classes. This often satisfies your need to do things that do not come naturally. You trust you can endure the unpleasantness and difficulties that accompany the expansion of your knowledge base, the acquisition of skills, and the conquest of deficiencies. It's very likely that you yearn to increase your knowledge by being kept in the information loop. This explains why you gravitate to people who converse about ideas at a deeper and more thoughtful level than most individuals are capable of doing. "Making small talk" — that is, engaging in idle conversation probably seems like a waste of time to you.

- 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?

Chances are good that you may enjoy hearing people describe you as more serious than some of your colleagues, classmates, teammates, friends, or coworkers. Because of your strengths, you consistently work at assignments and chores to their conclusion. People have confidence that you will see whatever you do through to the very end. By nature, you often ponder what you must do better. You find new ways to deliver on the commitments you have made. Keeping promises is just one way you enhance the quality of your work. Instinctively, you may be exact about certain things you do or how you do them. Perhaps you follow your conscience when you need to distinguish right from wrong or excellence from mediocrity. Driven by your talents, you are a person upon whom others can depend. When you make a promise, you keep it. You feel obligated to honor your commitments. You do things correctly, accurately, and properly.

- 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?

# CliftonStrengths™

# 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

### Connectedness

#### **IDEAS FOR ACTION:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Restorative

#### **IDEAS FOR ACTION:**

Seek roles in which you are paid to solve problems or in which your success depends on your ability to restore and resolve. You might particularly enjoy roles in medicine, consulting, computer programming, or customer service.

Don't be afraid to let others know that you enjoy fixing problems. It comes naturally to you, but many people shy away from problems. You can help.

Give yourself a break. Your Restorative talents might lead you to be overly self-critical. Try to redirect this either toward things about yourself that can be fixed, such as knowledge or skill deficits, or toward external, tangible problems.

Let other people solve their own problems. You might want to rush in and solve things for them, but by doing that, you might hinder their learning. Watch out for this, particularly if you are in a manager, coach, teacher, or parent role.

Turnaround situations activate your natural forté. Use your Restorative talents to devise a plan of attack to revitalize a flagging project, organization, business, or team.

Leverage your Restorative talents not only to tackle existing problems, but also to anticipate and prevent problems before they occur. Share your foresight and your solutions with others, and you will prove yourself a valuable partner.



Study your chosen subject closely to become adept at identifying what causes certain problems to recur. This sort of expertise will lead you to the solution that much faster.

Think about ways you can improve your skills and knowledge. Identify any gaps you have and the courses you can take to fill them.

Constant improvement is one of your hallmarks. Seek opportunities to enhance your abilities through a demanding field, activity, or endeavor that requires exceptional skill and/or knowledge.

Use your Restorative talents to think of ways to "problem proof" your work. Identify existing and potential issues, and design systems or processes to prevent errors in the future.

#### QUESTIONS

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### Learner

#### **IDEAS FOR ACTION:**

Refine how you learn. For example, you might learn best by teaching; if so, seek out opportunities to present to others. You might learn best through quiet reflection; if so, find this quiet time.

Develop ways to track the progress of your learning. If there are distinct levels or stages of learning within a discipline or skill, take a moment to celebrate your progression from one level to the next. If no such levels exist, create them for yourself (e.g., reading five books on the subject or making three presentations on the subject).

Be a catalyst for change. Others might be intimidated by new rules, new skills, or new circumstances. Your willingness to soak up this newness can calm their fears and spur them to action. Take this responsibility seriously.

Seek roles that require some form of technical competence. You will enjoy the process of acquiring and maintaining this expertise.

As far as possible, shift your career toward a field with constantly changing technologies or regulations. You will be energized by the challenge of keeping up.



Because you are not threatened by unfamiliar information, you might excel in a consulting role (either internal or external) in which you are paid to go into new situations and pick up new competencies or languages quickly.

Research supports the link between learning and performance. When people have the opportunity to learn and grow, they are more productive and loyal. Look for ways to measure the degree to which you and others feel that your learning needs are being met, to create individualized learning milestones, and to reward achievements in learning.

At work, take advantage of programs that subsidize your learning. Your organization may be willing to pay for part or all of your instructional coursework or for certifications. Ask your manager for information about scholarships and other educational opportunities.

Honor your desire to learn. Take advantage of adult educational opportunities in your community. Discipline yourself to sign up for at least one new academic or adult learning course each year.

Time disappears and your attention intensifies when you are immersed in studying or learning. Allow yourself to "follow the trail" by scheduling learning sessions during periods of time that will not be interrupted by pressing engagements.

#### QUESTIONS

- 1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
- 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.

- 1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
- 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.

#### CONNECTEDNESS SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

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

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

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

#### 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."

#### **RESTORATIVE SOUNDS LIKE THIS:**

Nigel L., software designer: "I have these vivid memories of my childhood woodworking bench with hammers and nails and wood. I used to love fixing things and putting things together and making everything just so. And now with computer programs, it's the same thing. You write the program, and if it doesn't work, you have to go back and redo it and fix it until it works."

Jan K., internist: "This theme plays in my life in so many ways. For example, my first love was surgery. I love trauma, love being in the OR, love sewing. I just love fixing things in the OR. Then again, some of my best moments have been sitting at the bedside of a dying patient, just talking together. It is incredibly rewarding to watch someone make the transition from anger to acceptance about grief, to tie up loose ends with family members, and to pass with dignity. And then with my kids, this theme fires every day. When I see my three-year-old buttoning her sweater for the first time and she buttons it crooked, I feel this powerful urge to walk up and rebutton the sweater. I have to resist, of course, because she has to learn, but, boy, it's really hard."

Marie T., television producer: "Producing a morning TV program is a fundamentally clumsy process. If I didn't like solving problems, this job would drive me up the wall. Every day, something serious goes wrong, and I have to find the problem, fix it, and move on to the next one. If I can do that well, I feel rejuvenated. On the other hand, if I go home and a problem remains unsolved, then I feel the opposite. I feel defeated."

#### LEARNER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Annie M., managing editor: "I get antsy when I am not learning something. Last year, although I was enjoying my work, I didn't feel as though I was learning enough. So I took up tap dancing. It sounds strange, doesn't it? I know I am never going to perform or anything, but I enjoy focusing on the technical skill of tapping, getting a little better each week, and moving up from the beginners' class to the intermediate class. That was a kick."

Miles A., operations manager: "When I was seven years old, my teachers would tell my parents,



'Miles isn't the most intelligent boy in the school, but he's a sponge for learning, and he'll probably go really far because he will push himself and continually be grasping new things.' Right now, I am just starting a course in business-travel Spanish. I know it is probably too ambitious to think I could learn conversational Spanish and become totally proficient in that language, but I at least want to be able to travel there and know the language."

Tim S., coach for executives: "One of my clients is so inquisitive that it drives him crazy because he can't do everything he wants to. I'm different. I am not curious in that broad sense. I prefer to go into greater depth with things so that I can become competent in them and then use them at work. For example, recently one of my clients wanted me to travel with him to Nice, France, for a business engagement. So I started reading up on the region, buying books, and checking the Internet. It was all interesting and I enjoyed the study, but I wouldn't have done any of it if I wasn't going to be traveling there for work."

#### **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."



- 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?