

CliftonStrengths Notes

Why “Strengths” are so important to success?

“Individuals gain more when they build on their talents, than when they make comparable efforts to improve their areas of weakness”. – Donald Clifton

People who have the opportunity to focus on their strengths everyday are:

1. *Six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and*
2. *More than three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general.*
3. *Teams that focus on strengths have 12.5% greater productivity.*

Focusing on strengths is also the key to being engaged in your classes, extra-curricular activities, relationships, and other areas of your life.

Expand your “strengths” vocabulary. So, if focusing on your strengths is so important, you better be able to recognize and articulate what your strengths are and how you can apply them. Also, during an interview future employers and graduate/professional schools will ask you: “What are your strengths?”

How can CliftonStrengths help? By expanding your vocabulary about your strengths. Based on Gallup company’s 40 year study of human strengths, scientists lead by Donald Clifton created a language of 34 most common themes of talent that are used when people are successful.

The CliftonStrengths assessment provides you with a list of your top 5 Signature Themes of Talent that you can develop and apply as Strengths in your academics, career, activities and relationships.

What is a Talent vs. Strength?

Talent (a natural way of thinking, feeling or behaving)

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Investment (time spent practicing, developing your skills, and building your knowledge base)

= Strength (the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance, doing something that makes you feel strong)

After reading about your 5 signature themes...

1. Choose one of your signature themes that you feel describes you best. Write out a brief description of this theme in your own words.
2. Describe an example of a time in which you used this theme in a recent success in school, a group or activity in which you are involved. (Strengths Success-Story)
3. Identify a major or future career you are considering. Describe one or more specific ways you could apply one of your signature themes in this major or career.

After today...

1. Think about a challenge or task you have to accomplish. How could you apply your talents to accomplish it?
2. Use your talents and recognize the talents of others in your group-work, other classes, activities, leadership roles, etc.
3. Recognize your classmates when you notice their talents.
4. When conflict arises, remember to see the situation from the strengths of the other person and realize you are seeing the situation from your strengths.
5. Revisit the StrengthsQuest.com website to see more reports i.e. *Strengths Insight and Action Planning Guide*; create a *Team Talent Map*; get free on-line access to the book: *StrengthsQuest: Discover and Develop Your Strengths in Academics, Career, and Beyond (2006)*. Read more about using your strengths in academics, relationships, leadership and career.

Keep talking about your talents...

1. Discuss your signature themes with others such as your Academic Advisor or a Career Counselor.
2. Meet with a Career Counselor at your college to talk specifically about how you can use your signature themes in the career planning process, interviewing for jobs/internships.
3. Share your list of 5 signature themes with someone that you trust and ask them to give you an example of how they’ve seen your talents in action.
4. Invite other students you interact with to take CliftonStrengths for Students by having them go to strengthsquest.com – “Purchase”.

Sources:

1. Clifton, D. O., Anderson, C. E., & Schreiner, L. A. (2006). *StrengthsQuest: Discover and develop your strengths in academics, career, and beyond* (2nd ed.). New York: Gallup Press.

2. Rath, T (2007) *StrengthsFinder 2.0* Gallup Press
3. Buckingham, M. (2007). *Go put your strengths to work*. New York: The Free Press.

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Feb. 2020