Journey Toward Excellence
StrengthsQuest™ for the First-Year Experience
Confidentiality Notice

TO: All Participants

From: Gallup Intellectual Best Practices Program

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Course Outline for the First-Year Experience

- Session 1: Getting Started
- Session 2: Time Management
- Session 3: Academics and Study Skills
- Session 4: More Academics
- Session 5: Introduction to StrengthsQuest
- Session 6: Strengths Discovery
- Session 7: Building Awareness — Similarities and Differences
- Session 8: Using Strengths in Relationships
- Session 9: Strengths Learning Activities
- Session 10: Using Strengths in Combination
- Session 11: Applying Strengths to Academics
- Session 12: Strengths, Career, and Calling
- Final Wrap-Up Session
Freshman Seminar: Syllabus Sample

One Credit Hour | Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 to 10:50 a.m.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
This one semester, one-hour course provides students with an introduction to the transitions and adjustments to the challenges of the higher educational experience. All first-time freshmen or students with less than 24 credit hours must take this course. It concentrates on discovering, developing, and applying your strengths to your everyday life, to your academics and classes, and to your career.

II. COURSE PURPOSES
1. To assist entering freshmen with basic survival skills.
2. To acclimate freshmen to personal, academic, career, social, and recreational opportunities at the university.
3. To develop positive lifelong learning skills in students.
4. To help students cope successfully with the demands of the first year of college through the use of challenges and opportunities inside and outside of the classroom.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES
1. To help students become more aware of themselves and become a valuable member of the campus community.
2. To help students discover, develop, and apply their talents and strengths.
3. To develop a community of learners who are also friends.
4. To help students become aware of the educational opportunities as well as the purpose of the general education core and a liberal arts education.
5. To enhance students’ academic skills and academic decision making.
6. To help develop social skills and tools for building lasting relationships.
7. To introduce students to the campus, its facilities, and resources.

IV. COURSE TEXT
Portions of *StrengthsQuest: Discover and Develop Your Strengths in Academics, Career, and Beyond* (2nd Edition), Donald O. Clifton and Edward “Chip” Anderson, with Laurie Schreiner, 2006

V. ATTENDANCE POLICY
Students must attend and participate fully in all class sessions, except in the case of serious illness or other unavoidable circumstances. A student should not miss more than one session. Students must make up any missed assignments. Failure to meet the attendance criteria will result in receiving no credit for the course.

VI. GRADING POLICY
This course will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. The student’s evaluation will be based on attendance, class demeanor and participation, attitude, and completion of assignments and other required activities.
Lesson Plan for Class Session 1: Getting Started

Objective: To continue the process of helping freshmen in their adjustment, to create a safe environment where they can ask for help and get answers to their questions, to enable them to continue to make friends within the small group, and help them begin to understand the university culture.

Preparation: Need enough Play-Doh for each student, mentor, and faculty member.

Start-Up:
- Take attendance.
- Is everybody doing OK?
- How are classes?
- Are there any specific things still needed (i.e., computer hookup, parking sticker, books, questions about syllabus)?

Before beginning the activity/discussion, distribute the folders.
- Students will receive handouts and homework assignments throughout the course and will want to keep their handouts and assignments in this folder (there are some already inserted).
- Students should bring their folder to every class with them.
- The folder includes the syllabus page. It gives the meeting dates and topics for each class session.
- Please emphasize the attendance policy and how the “grading” works.
- Also explain that this course is part of the general education requirements and counts as one credit hour toward graduation.

Activity — Take about 15 to 20 minutes to go through the following information:
- Although you have already “met” one another and spent time together in New Student Orientation (NSO), several days have passed since you have been with your freshman group. Thus, you might want/need to spend additional time getting better acquainted to help students become more comfortable with one another. Be sure you participate in the activities and sharing as well.
  1. Distribute Play-Doh to each student and mentor. (Keep some for yourself.)
  2. Each individual should create an object(s) that symbolizes something about him or her: what he or she likes, a hobby, his or her family, who he or she is, etc.
- Each student creates and then shares his or her object. You should do the same.
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Miscellaneous

1. Discuss with students the concept and topic of academic integrity (optional).
   - Academic integrity: Copy and distribute for students to keep in their folder and follow along as you review.
     - Review the university policy on academic integrity (MNU policy sample included).
     - Review the disciplinary action
     - Review the topic of plagiarism and help students understand what it is.

2. Show students how to use MY CAMPUS PORTAL (or whatever online learning system the university uses such as Moodle, Blackboard, etc.) and how to log in, find their courses, submit papers, etc. (The instruction sheet is in their folder.)
   - Demonstrate on the computer in your classroom. (Use your mentors if you are uncertain about using the portal.)
   - Also show students where to find the assessment. They will need to take this assessment as part of their homework assignment for next time.

Assignment for Next Time

1. Write an autobiography that you will turn in at the beginning of the next class.
   - Write your autobiography by identifying the five most important events in your life.

2. Take the self-assessment and Engaged Learning Index (posted on MY CAMPUS PORTAL — online learning system).
   (copies included)
Academic Integrity

MidAmerica Nazarene University expects its students, faculty, and staff to be honest and to have the highest personal integrity. This standard should govern relationships and behavior in the residential living areas, classrooms, chapel, and other campus entities. As a Christian community, faculty, staff, and students have a moral and ethical responsibility to uphold the principle of honesty and to refrain from any activity or behavior that would suggest academic dishonesty and lack of personal integrity. Dishonesty is defined as a misrepresentation of facts to slant consequences in one’s favor, minimize one’s workload, or make untruthful claims to benefit self or others.

Disciplinary Action for Integrity Violation

The thrust of the academic integrity policy of MidAmerica Nazarene University is two-fold. The university endeavors to communicate clearly its positive expectations about the principle of academic integrity and to educate its members accordingly. The university also endeavors to discipline violations of academic integrity in a fair and consistent manner. The penalty for an academic integrity violation may include any of the following depending on the severity and/or the pattern of violation:

1. A zero (0) or “F” on that particular assignment, examination, or project. No makeup work or extra credit project will be permitted. The zero or “F” may not count as the lowest grade to be dropped, if a faculty member uses a lowest-grade-dropped policy.
2. Failure for that course.
3. Dismissal from the university.

The university may impose more severe penalties when the integrity offense is an organized group action or when criminal actions result. The University reserves the right to prosecute alleged criminal offenses. In cases of academic dismissal, the “dismissal” designation will appear on the student’s transcript.
Engaged Learning Index

Please rate your agreement with each of the items by using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 indicating “Strongly Disagree” and 5 indicating “Strongly Agree.”

1. I am learning a lot in most of my classes this semester. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I often discuss with my friends what I’m learning in class. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I regularly participate in class discussions in most of my classes. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I feel as though I am learning things in my classes that are worthwhile to me as a person. 1 2 3 4 5
5. It’s hard to pay attention in many of my classes. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I can usually find ways of applying what I’m learning in class to something else in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I ask my professors questions during class if I do not understand. 1 2 3 4 5
8. In the last week, I’ve been bored in class a lot of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I find myself thinking about what I’m learning in class even when I’m not in class. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Sometimes I am afraid to participate in class. 1 2 3 4 5
11. I feel energized by the ideas that I am learning in most of my classes. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I usually think about how the topics being discussed in class might be connected to things I have learned in previous class periods. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Often I find my mind wandering during class. 1 2 3 4 5
14. When I am learning about a new idea in a class, I think about how I might apply it in practical ways. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Sometimes I get so interested in something I’m studying in class that I spend extra time trying to learn more about it. 1 2 3 4 5

Gender: ___ Female ___ Male
Class Level: ___ First Year ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior

Please check if you are the first in your family to attend college: ___ Major: __________________________

Please indicate the highest degree you see yourself obtaining:
___ Associates ___ Bachelors ___ Teaching Credential ___ Masters ___ Doctorate ___ Medical or Law degree

Age: _____ Are you a student athlete? ___ Yes ___ No  Do you live on campus? ___ Yes ___ No

Race/Ethnicity: ___ African American ___ American Indian/Alaskan Native ___ Asian American/Pacific Islander ___ Caucasian/White ___ Hispanic ___ Multiracial

Rate your overall satisfaction with your experiences on this campus so far:
___ Very Dissatisfied ___ Dissatisfied ___ Neutral ___ Satisfied ___ Very Satisfied

Rate the extent to which you are satisfied with the amount you are learning in college so far:
___ Very Dissatisfied ___ Dissatisfied ___ Neutral ___ Satisfied ___ Very Satisfied

Please insert the total number of hours you work per week on ___ and off ___ campus in paid employment.

Thank you for your time! Your responses, when grouped with those of other students, will help us understand the college student experience better.
Self-Awareness and Attitude Assessment

Male _____ Female _____ Age ________ Student ID _______________________

Please note that we are requesting your age and student ID number to track patterns or groups of students. We will never publish individual results. We are only interested in grouped data. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please answer each question using a 1 to 5 scale as indicated:

1. Strongly Disagree (SD)
2. Disagree (D)
3. Neither Agree or Disagree (U)
4. Agree (A)
5. Strongly Agree (SA)

1. I believe in my abilities.
2. I believe in myself.
3. When hard times come, I know I can get through them.
4. I have confidence in who I am.
5. I have confidence in my academic ability.
6. I have set goals for myself.
7. I am aware of my strengths.
8. I believe I can do great things.
9. I am clear about my life goals.
10. I am confident about the future.
11. I understand myself.
12. I know how to increase my academic performance.
13. I am an academically confident person.
14. I value who I am as a person.
15. I think of my life as a series of steps toward an ultimate goal.
16. I can achieve whatever I put my mind to.
Self-Awareness and Attitude Assessment (continued)

17. I am willing to work for my goal.

18. My future goals are very clear.

19. I can see how college fits into my future goals.

20. My plans for the future are very clear.

21. I struggle with keeping my academic commitments.

22. When I go to class, I am academically prepared.

23. I get my schoolwork done on time.

24. I take responsibility for my own learning.

25. I am certain that being in college is the right thing for me.

26. I am confident that I will graduate from college.

27. I am confident that I will achieve in college.

28. I am confident that I can earn high grades in college.

29. I have good strategies for succeeding in college.

30. I have a sense of direction for careers that are right for me.

31. I have a sense of direction for majors that are right for me.

32. I have a sense of purpose for my life.
Lesson Plan for Class Session 2: Time Management

Objective: To help students understand the importance of effective time management and the effect it has on their success during their college career.

Preparation: Copy the time-management handouts in this section.

Start-Up:
- Take attendance.
- Collect the students’ autobiographies.

Lesson/Activity/Topic of Discussion: Time Management

Note: There are some great illustrations about time management using rice/walnuts/jar or sand/pebbles/big rocks/water/jar. You might want to implement this illustration in your class today.

1. Discuss with students:
   - Now that you have finished your first couple weeks of classes and experienced NSO, how are you managing your time?
   - What have you found to be your biggest time waster each day?
   - What is the biggest cause of interruptions to your study or work time?
   - What area of time management are you doing well with now?
   - What area(s) of time management need the most work?

2. Ask students to write out their current daily classes/work/practices/labs.
   - Discuss the gaps and what they are doing during those “breaks” and gaps in their schedule.

3. Give students the Time Tracker handout.

Assignment for Next Time

- Instruct the students to keep track of their time every day for one week.
  - They will bring this completed worksheet to class next week (assign the specific day it is due).
- Students should write down everything they are doing and the time given to each activity.
- Students should also use the tally grid to summarize their activities each day.
**Time Tracker**

**Directions:** Keep this sheet with you at all times for a week. In the spaces below, place a code letter by every 15 minute segment of time throughout the day.

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## Time Tracker Tally

**Directions:** At the end of each day, record the amount of time you spent on each of the 11 activities listed on your Time Tracker worksheet. Then total your record at the end of the week.

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<th>MONDAY</th>
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<td>Devotions/Spiritual Life (D)</td>
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Lesson Plan for Class Session 3: Academics and Study Skills

Objective: To help students think about their current study skills, classes, academic life and habits; to identify areas of academic ease and academic struggle; and to learn from one another “best practices” in the area of study strategies and note-taking and test-taking skills.

Preparation: Copy the handouts in this section. You might also want to use poster paper or poster board and markers — or you may choose to use the chalk/white boards in the class rooms.

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Remind students to continue keeping track of their time and to bring their completed Time Tracker worksheet to next week’s class session.
- Check on students: How are they doing? Any needs/questions/confusion, etc? How are their classes, roommates, commuting, studying, other issues?
- Ask students: What is your favorite thing so far about college? Or your favorite class? Or something else?

Lesson/Activity/Topic of Discussion: Academics and Study Skills

1. Begin by giving each student a copy of the simulation exam. Explain that they have three minutes to take this short exam. Don’t say any more. Give them the paper and begin the clock.
   - At the end of the three minutes, discuss the errors students made while taking this exam.
   - Discuss the consequences when they fail to follow instructions on a test that counts and what they can learn from this that might help them in their classes.

2. Tape three sheets of poster paper/poster board around the room (or use the chalk/whiteboard). These should be entitled:
   - Our Best Practices: Note Taking
   - Our Best Practices: Study Strategies
   - Our Best Practices: Test Taking

Give each student the handout to write down his or her best practice for each category. After students have listed their own strategy on the handout, they will write their best practice under each heading. When everyone is finished, discuss those strategies each has shared.

Note: If it is too time consuming for each student to write all three, then divide your group into three groups. Students then write their best practices for the group they are assigned. After each student is finished, discuss the practices listed.
Note: The importance of the whole group discussion/participation is to help students see that there are several methods students use academically and that they are not alone in their academic successes and struggles.

As you discuss students’ best practices for each area (notes, study, tests), be sure to also emphasize and inform students that if they need help in any of these areas or want more information refer them to an Academic Support Center for tutoring and other services.

- Reiterate the services provided, location of the center, and hours available.
- Encourage students to ask for or to go for extra help; there is no need to be embarrassed.
  - This is a good time for the mentors to share their academic experiences as a freshman and beyond and their experience (if any) with the academic support center's services.
  - Mentors can/should also offer to walk with the students to the center, or meet them there to set up a tutoring appointment, etc.

Assignment for Next Time

1. Have students complete their Time Tracker worksheet and bring it to class for discussion.
   - Be sure they tally their time spent in each area for the day/week.
2. Give students the Academic Tasks I Do With Ease worksheet.
   - Students should complete the left column of this worksheet.
   - Students should list three academic tasks that are easy for them.
     - This may be a subject they learn with ease such as history, psychology, mathematics, chemistry, etc.
     - This may be an academic activity they do with ease such as library research, studying for exams, taking exams, conducting scientific investigations, working with peers in a study group or on group projects, making oral presentations, etc.
   - Students should also identify two specific academic tasks that they struggle with.
     - They should write notes about where they struggle in a particular class, subject, academic activity, etc.
Simulation Exam

Name ____________________________

Date ____________________________

Disclaimer: The following is a test of the emergency broadcast system. For the next three minutes you will be asked to participate in this simulation of a timed-exam environment. If this were an actual exam, your heart might be beating fast and you might be sweating. Because this is not an actual exam, do your best to play it up right. You have three minutes, so quit reading this disclaimer and get busy.

1. Read all of the instructions below.
2. Write your name in the upper-right corner of this page.
3. Write the date below your name.
4. If you have done the first three items, write “Yes” in this space: _____________
5. Draw a stick man in the space below.
6. Draw a stick dog in the space below.
7. Draw a stick in the space below.
8. Close your eyes and silently count to 10.
9. Turn your paper over and put an A on it. That is your grade so far if you are still within the time limit.
10. Now that you have read all of the instructions, ignore steps two through nine.
My best practice for note taking:

My best practice for studying:

My best practice for test taking:
Academic Tasks I Do With Ease

List three academic tasks you do with ease:

1.

2.

3.

Academic Tasks That I Struggle With

List two specific academic tasks that you struggle with:

1.

2.
Lesson Plan for Class Session 4: More Academics

Objective: To continue helping students focus on their classes, study skills, and academic success.

Preparation: None

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Ask the students if they have any questions/concerns/struggles.

Lesson/Activity/Topic of Discussion: More on Academics

1. Before you begin the second part of the academics discussion, work through the Time Management review. Do not spend more than 15 to 20 minutes reviewing time management.

   - Have students take out their Time Tracker worksheet that they have been using to keep track of their time usage for the week. They should have also completed the tally portion of time spent per day in each category and have their weekly total.
   - Discuss the following:
     - Besides sleep, work, and attending class, where do you spend most of your time?
     - How much sleep are you getting each night on average?
     - How much time do you spend each day socializing? Watching TV? Playing sports, video games, Xbox, etc.?

   For fun, you could tally these categories for the entire class to obtain an average.
     - Are there any surprises as to how much time you are spending in one particular area?
     - What is your biggest time waster each day?
     - What is the biggest cause of interruptions to your study time?
     - What areas do you see as needing to be changed?

   - How is your time management affecting your studying and class performance?
     - This is a good segue into talking about the students’ homework.

2. Have students take out their Academic Tasks I Do With Ease homework.

   - Have them find a partner to share their responses with.
     - Partners might offer suggestions for those areas in which he or she struggles. Or perhaps just support with a listening ear. This will help the students to see that they are not alone in their struggles.
     - Time for this activity: not more than 10 minutes.

3. Complete the academic imagery exercise in this section.
Assignment for Next Time: Instructions You Should Provide Students

Copy the handouts on the next two pages for students to use for their homework.

1. Students should write a two-part reflection paper.

Part I

- Students should respond to the imagery exercise by reflecting on the answers to the questions in greater depth.

Part II

- Students should also reflect on their adjustments:
  - living with a roommate
  - time management
  - academics: class/study difficulties
  - spiritual aspects
  - anything else they wish to share
- Students should turn in this paper during the next class session.
An Exercise in Imagery and Interaction

The instructor reads the following as students listen and follow:

Relax in your chair. Recline or lean back if you like, and close your eyes if you want to. Pay attention to the instructions that follow: Think about a time when you felt really successful in a class or in completing an assignment or project. A time when you felt really motivated and used your strengths to do really well on an assignment. Sometimes people find it helpful to close their eyes to see the images more clearly. Have you thought of a time like this? A time when you felt hopeful or energized by the success you had academically: something that motivated you, something that you had the ability to achieve? [long pause] You might notice how driven you felt — how empowered. You might remember times when you wanted to give up, but you didn't. You kept going because of your commitment and desire. And instead of giving up, you might have worked harder, you might have tried different things for dealing with the hard times, or you might have broken down your goal into steps. With each step you achieved, you felt more energized, more empowered, and more confident, helping you notice how you focused on the goal. Also adjusting the goal based on what was happening so that you knew that your goal was challenging and difficult, but achievable. All helping you realize that once you achieved your goal, you would feel confident, motivated, and proud of yourself, knowing that you have everything that it takes: the motivation, the ability to use multiple strengths, the ability to set challenging goals and achieve them, and everything that it takes to be successful with future goals. Take a moment to absorb all of your thoughts, and then, if your eyes are closed, open your eyes.

Instructions for reflection:

Now, moving very slowly, maintaining a mood of imagery and reflection, ask the students to write down a one or two word/phrase in response to each of the following questions. You might also instruct them to write a key word from the question so they can complete the homework assignment and will remember why they wrote their answer.

- What situation, class, assignment, and/or project did you think of?
- Why was this particular one so important to you?
- How did you maintain your motivation when things got difficult?
- How did achieving/accomplishing this assignment, class, etc. make you feel?
- How did that experience prepare you for college?
- What did you learn from that experience that will help you now in your classes?
Assignment for Next Time

Write a two-part reflection paper based on the questions/instructions below:

Part I

- Respond to the imagery exercise by reflecting on the answers to the questions in greater depth.
  - What situation, class, assignment, and/or project did you think of?
  - Why was this particular one so important to you?
  - How did you maintain your motivation when things got difficult?
  - How did achieving/accomplishing this assignment, class, etc. make you feel?
  - How did that experience prepare you for college?
  - What did you learn from the experience that will help you now in your classes?

Part II

- Reflect on and write about your adjustments so far:
  - living with a roommate (if applicable)
  - time management — areas needing improvement
  - academics: classes/studying/ difficulties
  - spiritual aspects
  - anything else you wish to share

- Turn this paper in at the beginning of the next class session.
Lesson Plan for Class Session 5: Introduction to StrengthsQuest™

Objective: To introduce students to the concept of strengths and the StrengthsQuest program. Each student will receive instructions and an access code for taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.

Preparation:

- Read the material to familiarize yourself with the information so that you can help students understand the nature and concept of strengths. You will need the StrengthsQuest instructions and ID information to distribute and explain to the students about taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment for homework.

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Collect the students’ reflection papers.

Lesson/Activity/Topic of Discussion: The Concept and Nature of Strengths

Using the notes in this section, share the background, philosophy, and concept of strengths:

1. Introduction to Strengths
2. The Concept of Strengths
3. Activity: You at your Best
4. Activity: The Writing Challenge
5. Provide instructions for homework — taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.

Session/Lecture Notes: The introduction to Strengths and StrengthsQuest.

Today, we begin our discussion of discovering our strengths. What does this mean, how are we going to do it, and why is this significant?

Over the next few weeks, we will help you discover, understand, and learn more about yourself, your natural talents, and how to develop them into strengths.

The concept of strengths has to do with recognizing what you do naturally, and developing and applying what you do naturally to every aspect of your life and in your relationships, which all begins with your talents. Each of us is different. Each of us has different talents and abilities that help us do certain things well — and sometimes even better than another person.

How many of you can name three things that you do well — whether it is how you process information or think through things, how you relate to people or accomplish things, or how you reach your goals, etc.? Encourage students to think about this question. Ask them to respond out loud. Or, ask them to write down three things, and then later reference this list after they take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.
Lesson/Activity/Topic of Discussion: The Concept and Nature of Strengths (continued)

Before the next class, you will take an assessment that will identify your natural talents and describe them. The talents are identified by a theme name that is considered to be one of your top five strengths. The instrument is called the Clifton StrengthsFinder and you will receive full instructions on taking the assessment.

The mission of strengths is to help you discover your talents and use them to achieve success. Not only is it important to discover your natural talents and identify your natural patterns of thoughts, feelings, behavior, and motivation, but it is also important to develop your natural talents into powerful strengths and apply them to every aspect of your life, including academics, relationships, your career, extra-curricular activities, and more.

- Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., developed the Clifton StrengthsFinder.
- Clifton was interested in learning about what people did well and what they did right, rather than what they couldn’t do or what they did wrong.
- He wanted to know what the “best of the best” did every day that made them successful.
- To find the answers to his questions, Clifton and other researchers interviewed more than 2 million people from virtually every profession, career, and field of achievement.
  - What the researchers discovered is that top achievers understand their talents and strengths and build their lives around doing what they do best — using their natural talents every day to help them achieve their goals, strengthen relationships, identify patterns, creating new ideas, and more. The top achievers manage their weaknesses by using their strengths to help them or by partnering with others.
- Also, from these millions of interviews, researchers heard more than 400 themes.
- Researchers narrowed these 400 themes to 34 strengths themes, which became the basis for the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment you will take to receive your top five strengths.

The research shows that individuals gain more when building their life on their talents than spending time and energy trying to improve their weaknesses.

The concept of strengths is this:

1. You have a group of talents within you.
2. Your greatest talents hold the key to your achievement, success, and personal excellence.
3. You can apply each of your talents in many areas, including relationships, learning, academics, leadership, service, ministry, and careers.
4. Developing and applying your talents into strengths results in reaching levels of personal excellence and becoming the person you have the potential to be, which is exciting.
Learning Activities

Activity — 8 to 10 minutes: You at Your Best

- Have students find a partner or two, but no more than three people in a group.
- Have the partners think of one thing they have accomplished in the past three to four months since high school graduation.
- Have them share their accomplishment with their partner(s):
  - What was it/how did it feel?
- Bring the group together and discuss:
  - How did it feel to talk about your accomplishment?
  - What kinds of things did you share with your partner?
  - How often do you recognize your successes and things you accomplish?
  - Did anyone have difficulty thinking about an accomplishment? If so, why?
  - Did anyone have a hard time telling your partner about your accomplishment or feel weird about it?? If so, why?
- Sometimes we have a hard time telling other people about a time when we have done something good or accomplished something.
- Sometimes we don’t recognize our little successes as anything significant and we tend to think it is no big deal; probably everyone “does that” anyway.
- Sharing our accomplishments, thinking about when we do something well, or have success is important. Doing this gives you clues as to your natural talents and abilities.
- If you continue to think about doing what you do naturally and focus on that more than what you don’t do, you will further develop your talents into strengths and experience success more and more.

Activity: The Writing Challenge (instructions)

- Have students take out a blank piece of paper:
  - Have students write the numbers 1 through 5 on their paper.
  - Instruct them to write their full name on each line as quickly as they can.
    - Give them 35 seconds to complete the activity.
  - Now ask students to write the numbers 1 through 5 on their paper again.
  - Instruct them to write their full name on each line as quickly as they can using their other hand.
    - Again, give them 35 seconds to complete the activity.
Learning Activities (continued)

Discuss and debrief with students:

- How many finished the second time? Why not?
- What was so difficult the second time?
- What was it like?
- How did it feel?
  - frustrating, confusing, more concentration, felt like quitting, didn't want to try, too hard, etc.
- This is a quick exercise to show how much more time it takes you to do something that doesn't come naturally to you.
- Sure you could have written your name again five times if you had as much time as you needed to finish the exercise.
  - This exercise shows how much time one can waste on trying to do what doesn't come naturally and how frustrating it is.
  - This is why we want to help you focus on doing what you do best, learning to manage your weaknesses.
- (Note: You could comment on how quiet the room was the first time compared with the laughing, giggle, chatter, etc. when using the other hand.)
- This focus on our strengths also helps us see ourselves for who we ARE, not who we ARE NOT.
  - We also begin to see others for who they ARE and not who they ARE NOT.
- By focusing on your strengths, you will also begin to see your future differently.

Your talents develop into strengths that empower you to succeed. This developmental process involves:

- learning experiences
- acquiring skills
- critical thinking
- reflection
- acquiring knowledge

Defining talents:

- **Talents** are recurring, frequent patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that can be productively applied.
- These patterns, or talents, are the raw materials for building a strong and productive life.
- And every talent is a potential strength — what you were born with — that you have developed over your life and what has helped you to be successful and achieve up until this point.

A talent is a talent; however, it is important to understand that even more what these recurring feelings, thoughts, behaviors can really help you do when you focus on what you do well and apply them to your life.
Learning Activities (continued)

How do talents become strengths?

- Every talent is a potential strength.
- For those talents to become strengths, you must invest some time and energy.
  - Effort is involved: There is an investment that is made in adding knowledge and skills to add to your natural talent.
- This combination results in power and the ability to consistently experience success.
  - **Knowledge** is what we need to KNOW: What kind of information is going to help us in the situation or relationship, what things we need to be aware of, the facts we need to know and/or understand, etc.
  - **Skills** are HOW we do something, connect with a person, accomplish our task or goal, etc.
- If you have talent x (knowledge + skill) $\rightarrow$ that equals STRENGTH.
- We define a **strength** as the ability to provide consistent, near perfect performance in any specific activity.

Strengths are more than just athletics or music or art, your strengths are:

- behaviors
- thought patterns and processes
- attitudes
- motivations
- beliefs
- habits/impulses
- how you relate to people
- ways you perceive the world or
- how you work with materials

Strengths and talents energize and strengthen you, and they fulfill a need within you.

Weaknesses are not ignored, they are addressed from a strengths perspective, which you will discover throughout the next few sessions of this class.

Before the next class, your homework assignment is to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment on the StrengthsQuest website.

- Distribute the instructions and access code for taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.
Assignment for Next Time

Take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.

Distribute the StrengthsQuest instruction sheet with student ID code to students.

- The homework assignment and the same instructions you are giving to them are on the back.

Share with students the following instructions:

- Register on StrengthsQuest website to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.
- Follow the instructions for registering on the StrengthsQuest website on page 36.
  - Demonstrate: Go to the StrengthsQuest website and show students how to log on.
- It will take a few minutes to register, and then students should allow about 30 to 45 minutes of uninterrupted time to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.
- When taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment, choose the item that is most like you.
  - Students should make an actual choice on as many items as they can.
  - They should not spend too much time debating which phrase to choose because they only get 15 to 20 seconds per pair of statements, and then the neutral button is selected and the next pair of statements appear.
  - If students choose the middle or neutral option on the assessment too many times, it is likely they will not get an adequate report because of insufficient data.
- After taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment, students will complete Part II of the assignment, which appears on the back of the StrengthsQuest registration-ID code handout.
  - Have students print their top five strengths and the descriptions.
- Tell students that they might want to email the results to themselves and/or a friend as a backup or for them to print later at the library or computer lab.
  - After reading the strengths theme descriptions, tell students to highlight or underline any particular words or phrases that stand out.
  - Next, tell students to:
    - Contact two or three people who know you well and read the theme descriptions to them.
    - Ask them, “Does this sound like me?”
    - Ask them to give you an example or two.
    - Write down the examples.
    - Bring all printouts to the next class.
- Students should also email their top five strengths to their professor and mentors. (Be sure to provide email addresses.)
Assignment for Next Time (continued)

- Students should read chapters 1 and 2 from the StrengthsQuest book. Students can read the chapter online on the StrengthsQuest website or download and print a copy.
  - To access the book from the website, go to www.strengthsquest.com.
  - Students can sign in using their email address and password.
  - Click tab 6, Online Book (or go directly to this link: https://www.strengthsquest.com/home/book.aspx).
  - Click HTML next to Chapters 1 and 2 to read them online, or click PDF to print the chapters and read them.
GALLUP® StrengthsQuest™

StrengthsQuest™ Access Code and Instructions

Access Code:

Begin the StrengthsQuest experience by registering at www.strengthsquest.com:

1. In the upper-right corner of the page, click the Register button.
2. On the Registration page, carefully type the access code listed above in the Access Code field. Enter the verification code in the correct field.
3. Click the Continue with Registration button.
4. Proceed through the registration. You will need an email address to complete the registration process.
5. Take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.

After completing the registration process, you will have access to all components of the StrengthsQuest website. Enjoy the StrengthsQuest experience.

If you have technical problems, contact the StrengthsQuest Technical Support Team at 888.211.4049 or strengthsquesthelp@gallup.com.

*Note: If you have already taken the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment, you can transfer your results. Follow the instructions for registering with your code, but before you take the assessment, it will ask if you have been through the assessment. Click Yes and the system will try to find your results. If you have an email address registered in the system from another book or code, you may have to use an alternative email address to register with your new code. If you have any problems transferring your results, contact the StrengthsQuest Technical Support Team.
Session 5: Homework Assignment

Part I

- Register on StrengthsQuest website to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.
- Follow the instructions for registering on the StrengthsQuest website on the previous page.
- It will take a few minutes to register, and then you should allow about 30 to 45 minutes of uninterrupted time to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment.
- When taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment, choose the item that is most like you.
  - Make an actual choice on as many items as you can.
  - Do not spend too much time debating which phrase to choose because you only get 15 to 20 seconds per pair of statements, and then the neutral button is selected and the next pair of statements appear.
  - If you choose the middle or neutral option on the assessment too many times, it is likely you will not get an adequate report because of insufficient data.

Part II

- After taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment:
  - Print out your top five strengths and the descriptions.
- You might want to email the results to yourself and/or a friend as a backup to print later at the library or computer lab.
  - After you have read your strengths and descriptions, highlight or underline any particular words or phrases that stand out.
  - Next:
    - Contact two or three people who know you well and read the them descriptions to them.
      - Ask them, “Does this sound like me?”
      - Ask them to give you an example or two.
      - Write down the examples.
  - Bring all printouts to the next class session.

Part III

- Email your top five strengths to your professor and mentors.
- Read chapters 1 and 2 from the StrengthsQuest website (www.strengthsquest.com).
  - You can sign in using your email address and password.
  - Click tab 6, Online Book (or go directly to this link: https://www.strengthsquest.com/home/book.aspx).
  - Click HTML next to Chapters 1 and 2 to read them online, or click PDF to print the chapters and read them.
Lesson Plan for Class Session 6: Strengths Discovery

Objective: To help students better understand the descriptions of the themes of talent the Clifton StrengthsFinder measures. Students will begin to understand why each strengths theme is beneficial and will come to know and understand others in the group in terms of their talents.

Preparation: Have enough placards (pg. 33) for each student in your group, including you and your mentors. You will need a marker to write on the placards. You will also want to make copies of the handout My Signature Themes and How I Use the Talents in Them. [Note: Make the placards ahead of time; one per each participant. Copy pg. 33 onto card stock. Punch two holes in the top center of the placard. Insert yarn or string (approximately 29 inches) into the holes and tie so students can wear the placards around their necks.]

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Check in with students: How are they doing? Any questions, needs, etc.? (Make sure each student took the Clifton StrengthsFinder and brought his or her strengths to class. If students did not take the Clifton StrengthsFinder, send them to a computer to take the assessment.)
- Ask students: What was your reaction to your top five strengths?

Lesson/Activity/Topic of Discussion: Focusing on Understanding Our Strengths and Becoming Aware of the Talents Associated With Each

1. Give each student a copy of the “Hello! My name is . . .” strengths placard and a marker.
   - Ask each student to print his or her name and top five strengths from their printout onto this placard.
   - Ask them to also write their top five strengths on the front of their folder.
   - Students should then place the placard around their necks.

2. For discussion:
   - Think about your strengths results and the feedback you received from people you called or talked to.
   - Part of the discovery process begins when you start thinking about how and where you have used these talents in your life.
   - However, sometimes it is difficult to recognize them as a strength because:
     - We think, “doesn’t everybody do that?”
     - We do it so naturally and easily that we don’t even realize what or how we do something. If someone asks you, “how do/did you do that?” and you respond with, “How did I do what?” or “I don’t know, I just do . . .” then you are using your natural talents.
     - Other times you might be trying to communicate with someone or helping him or her figure out something or see your viewpoint and he or she doesn’t “get it.” Your response to this person might be frustration or thinking/saying, “How hard is it!?”
   - To that individual, it is very difficult. He or she doesn’t get it because he or she doesn’t do/think/feel/relate the way you do. He or she doesn’t have the same talent (strengths) that you have.
Activity: Tappers and Listeners

- Many times we don't recognize our talents as being that special or unique, but they are special and unique to you because of the combination of all of your talents working together.
  - Ask each student to find a partner.
  - Partners should decide that one will be the “tapper” and one will be the “listener.”
  - Show the tapper the song (Mary had a little lamb), while listeners close their eyes.
  - Give a few minutes for each pair to try to tap the song and correctly guess the name of the song. (Most won't get it.)
- Call group back together and ask if anyone guessed the song.
  - What worked (if guessed)?
  - What was difficult?
  - What would have made it easier for you as the listener?
  - Address other questions about the experience.
- This activity is based on a research project referenced in the recent book, Made to Stick.
- In the original project, tappers predicted a 70% chance the listener would guess the song, but it was actually 3%.
  - Why the disparity? Talk with the group about how people don't get the song in our heads (our strengths) either.
- What typically happens is that a few people get it, but most struggle with hearing the tune. The tappers can hear it in their head, and it seems clear what the song is, but to most listeners, the song isn't that clear and many do not guess it.
- Compare this exercise with strengths. We do what comes naturally and often times expect others to understand it or do it our way.
- We hear the melody of our “strengths song” in our head. We get it, and we “tap” it out all day long, but others don't know the tune and can't catch the rhythm of how our strengths “flow.”
- Sometimes it is difficult to recognize our strengths because other have criticized them.
  - People might not understand who you are; they might not appreciate the difference between you and them, so they might be critical.
    - For example, if you have Activator, people might have called you impatient.
    - If you have Communication, people might have told you that you talk too much.
    - With Positivity, or Woo, people might have criticized you for being phony or a fake.
    - If you have Intellection or Deliberative, people have misunderstood your quietness or contemplation, or how long it takes you to think about something before making a decision.
  - If people have been misunderstood or criticized your talents, it might be especially difficult for you to accept your talents as strengths.
  - You might feel like the strengths “song” you sing has always been out of tune, yet it is the perfect melody for you.
Activity: Group Discussion

Ask students to get into groups of three or four.

- Be sure students are wearing their placard listing their strengths so that they can see what strengths other members of their small group have.

Using their printout of their top five strengths, have students discuss what they discovered:

- How many of you were surprised at what strengths were identified? Explain.
- Was any of the information difficult for you to accept at first?
- What was difficult for you? Why?
- How do you feel about what your printout says? Explain.
- Do you think the results are true and descriptive?

More Discussion

Students were asked to call two or three people who know them well and ask them to verify their strengths after reading the descriptions.

In their groups — students will answer these questions:

- Whom did you call?
- What did you learn?
- What strengths did the people you contacted verify?
- What new strengths did the people you contacted identify?
- What examples did the people you contacted give you about your strengths? Do you recognize the use of those strengths in other areas of your life?

Every student may not get to share, depending on time, but try to allow for each to have an opportunity for sharing some discovery/validation.

Debrief

- Ask students if they recognize when others have criticized them for something that is a strength and how they feel now about it.
- What is most affirming or validating?

Closing, If Time

- Take five minutes to ask students to write about any discovery they made about themselves today or anything about their strengths, class, etc.
- Collect these reflections.

If you do not have time, ask students to write this brief reflection as part of the homework.
Assignment for Next Time

1. Using the worksheet titled, My Signature Themes and How I Use Them, ask students to complete the following.
   - Ask the students to identify their top five Signature Themes and to write a description of each theme in their own words in the appropriate boxes.
   - Tell the students that during this session, their personal challenge is to clearly understand why each of their five Signature Themes is beneficial and to be able to explain what the talents in each of their Signature Themes helps them do.
   - They should also give one example of how they recently used each particular strength effectively.
     - If they can specify, students should identify a specific time, date, and place when they used their strengths effectively. Doing this will help them recognize their strengths in use in multiple areas, at multiple times, and on multiple days.

2. Have students write a brief reflection about class, their strengths, or anything new they have discovered about themselves (If not completed at the end of class).

You can suggest that students return to the website (as a returning user) and print their top five Clifton StrengthsFinder theme names as certificates, postcards, or door hangers.
Hello!

My Name Is:

________________________________________

My Top Five Strengths Are:

1. _______________________________________

2. _______________________________________

3. _______________________________________

4. _______________________________________

5. _______________________________________

Name __________________________________________

My Signature Themes and How I Use the Talents in Them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF THE THEME</th>
<th>WHY THIS THEME IS BENEFICIAL (WHAT IT ENABLES ME TO DO)</th>
<th>WHEN/WHERE I RECENTLY USED TALENTS IN THIS THEME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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Lesson Plan for Class Session 7: Building Awareness — Similarities and Differences

Objective: Students will begin to gain a deeper understanding of their own strengths, themes, and those of others. They will begin to discover similarities they have with others and different ways they use the same strengths they have in common with another individual. In addition, they will learn about strengths they do not have and become aware of the differences.

Preparation: Make copies of the front and back of the handout Signature Themes in Common: Similar and Dissimilar Experiences and Understanding and Respecting Strengths Differences.

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Collect reflection papers if assigned as homework or not collected at the end of the last class.
- Ask students: Has anyone noted differences in the ways they are thinking about themselves, previous experiences, or ways they are thinking about others? Ask them to provide specific examples.
- Ask students what new insights/discoveries they have gained.
- Ask students to take five to seven minutes to share with a partner their answers from their My Themes and How I Use Them homework assignment. Have students:
  - Identify the one strength they think best describes them.
  - Say the name of the strength, their own definition of the strength, and why/how it helps and give a specific example of why/how it helps.
- After a few minutes, ask if anyone wants to share publicly.

Lesson/Activity/Topic of Discussion: The Similarities and Differences of Our Strengths; Understanding and Respecting the Differences of Others

1. Optional: Begin with the Choices activity: (pictured on the right)
   (Students should wear their placards.)
   - Use the room as a continuum.
   - Have students stand up and respond to three choices:
     - Using PowerPoint, ask the students to make a choice and go to the appropriate side of the room or place themselves appropriately on the continuum in response to the statement on the screen.

Discuss for each statement the extremes as well as those in the middle. Why did students choose a particular position on the continuum and which of their strengths might have had an influence on their choice?

- Also discuss the differences if students with the same strength (Input, for example) line up in different places on the continuum with each statement.
- Point out that the combination and influence of the other strengths affect how someone with one particular strength responds to the situation.
- We see that it is possible to have one strength the same as another person, yet different values, thoughts, and feelings about the situation and where we align ourselves.

Introduce the Scavenger Hunt learning activity for today.
Learning Activity — Part I: Strengths Discovery: Similar and Dissimilar

*Students should wear their placards.*

Distribute the two-sided worksheet: side one is Similar and Dissimilar; side two is Understanding Differences.

**Set Up the Activity**

Side ONE: Similar and Dissimilar

- Explain that while we may have Signature Themes in common with other people, our specific other themes — for example, a person who has Activator and Achiever among his or her Signature Themes — may be different from a person who has Activator and Includer in his or her top five.
- The point is that talents do not act in isolation.
- The talents in each of our themes influence and interact with our talents in all other themes.
  - In addition, our family traditions, culture, and society in general send us many messages about what is considered appropriate and inappropriate for people in general.
- Therefore, our families, culture, and society may influence how we experience our talents and the extent to which we feel free to express them.
  - For example, some families may consider talents in Empathy to be positive assets, while others may consider them a weakness or only appropriate for women.
  - Similarly, Competition and Command talents may be thought of positively within certain families or cultures, but considered negatively within others.
- Additional examples come to mind as we consider ethnic and cultural groups or religious groups.
  - Within one culture or religious group, Harmony talents are looked upon positively, while in another it might be considered a lack of courage.

**Activity Instructions**

While wearing their strengths placards, have student complete the following tasks.

- Ask the students to *walk around the room and find someone* with whom they have a Strengths Theme in common.
  - Then ask the pairs to sit down and have a discussion with one another about their experiences with the Signature Theme they have in common.
- *Using the worksheet* titled Signature Themes in Common: Similar and Dissimilar Experiences, have the pair note on their worksheets the person’s name with whom they shared a Signature Theme, their similar experiences with the talents in it, how talents in their other themes influence the Signature Theme they have in common, and how society, culture, and family have encouraged or discouraged their talents in this theme.
Learning Activity — Part II: Understanding and Respecting Differences in Talent

Ask students to turn their worksheet over to Understanding and Respecting Differences in Talent activity.

Set Up and Introduce Activity

- Introduce this activity by explaining that sometimes we fail to understand people because their talents are different from ours.
- There are even some cases where one person negatively judges another person and may consider the person “weird,” “defective,” or “abnormal” because that individual has talents that are different from his or her own.
- For many reasons, not the least of which is our ability to provide leadership and assume future professional roles dealing with people much different from ourselves, we must learn to see each other more clearly.
- Part of seeing each other more clearly involves understanding talents within other people that are different from ours.
- This part of the scavenger hunt is designed to help you understand and respect the differences in others.

Instructions for Part II

- Walk around the room and find a person who has one Signature Theme that you do not have in your top five.
- Ask that person to tell you:
  1. What is the greatest challenge about having talents in this theme?
  2. What is the greatest benefit of having talents in this theme?
- Give enough time for each person to explain one of their Signature Themes that they do not share.
  - Then call time and ask the students to move to another person.
- Attempt to provide enough time for each person to talk to at least four to five people who have Signature Themes different from his or her own.

After each person has interacted with at least four to five people, call the group back together and get feedback by asking questions such as:

- What did you discover about the Signature Themes you don’t have?
- What new understandings are you gaining about people as you learn about talents that are different than your own?
- In what ways are you coming to respect others as you see them for the talents they have?
- In what ways are you seeing yourself more clearly as you understand the talents and strengths of others?
Assignment for Next Time

1. Ask the students to go to www.strengthsquest.com.
   - On the Reports page, scroll down to the Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide.
     - Click the Download button to download the report.
     - Review the 10 action steps for each of your top five themes.
     - Mark the action steps that appeal/apply to you.
     - Bring the report to the next class session.
Name ____________________________________________

Signature Themes in Common: Similar and Dissimilar Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME NAME</th>
<th>A PERSON WHO HAS THIS THEME AS A SIGNATURE THEME</th>
<th>OUR SIMILAR EXPERIENCES WITH THIS THEME</th>
<th>HOW OTHER THEMES INFLUENCE THIS THEME AND OUR EXPERIENCES WITH IT</th>
<th>HOW SOCIETY, CULTURE, AND FAMILY ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE TALENTS IN THIS THEME</th>
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Homework Assignment for Next Time

Go to www.strengthsquest.com.

- On the **Reports** page, scroll down to the Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide.
  - Click the **Download** button to download the report.
  - Review the 10 action steps for each of your top five themes.
  - Mark the action steps that appeal/apply to you.
  - Bring the report to the next class session.
Understanding and Respecting Strengths Differences

This activity is designed to help you deepen your understanding of the talents in your Signature Themes by learning about the Signature Themes of others. Your objective is to learn about themes that are not a part of your own top five. In doing so, you will begin to better understand the talents of others and your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME NAME</th>
<th>GROUP MEMBER NAME</th>
<th>THE CHALLENGES OF TALENTS IN THIS THEME</th>
<th>THE BENEFITS OF TALENTS IN THIS THEME</th>
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Lesson Plan for Class Session 8: Using Strengths in Relationships

Objective: This session will help students reflect on the previous session, differences in others, and how they apply their strengths to their relationships. Students will continue to understand and become aware of the differences and uniqueness of each individual.

Preparation: Copy the handouts in this section for each student.

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- **Ask students:** Have you noticed or are you noticing any differences in the ways you are thinking about yourself or ways you are thinking about others? Ask them to give specific examples.
- **Ask students:** How might others misunderstand your strengths?
- **Ask students:** How have you used your strengths this week?
- **Ask students:** Share with a partner one action item for each of their top five strengths.
- **Ask students:** Write a short reflection on anything they have learned/discovered in the action plan they created or since beginning their strengths journey.
- Wait a few minutes, and then collect these reflections.

Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Using Strengths in Relationships

As we discover more about our own talents and strengths, and in the scavenger hunt talking to someone with strengths we didn’t have, this helps us understand the differences in other people.

- The exercise helps us appreciate the talents that others have.
- We begin to realize how much we need them, especially if their strength is our weakness.

The more we discover about ourselves, the more we become aware of others.

- We tend to sort people according to our mental categories.
- These mental categories create our stereotypes of people and influence how we judge them.
- Understanding strengths also increases our ability to take the other person's perspective and to see his or her view in a given situation; from their different strengths and view.
- We often ascribe motives out of our own lens and values — and our values come from our strengths.

For example:

- If you have Achiever, you are a hard worker, like to be productive, and are committed. These are values of yours.
  - You might think someone who is not as committed to something or doesn’t work as hard is lazy, or you might even think they are annoying.
- If Responsibility is one of your top strengths, you have great follow-through, you are on time, and your word is your bond.
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Using Strengths in Relationships (continued)

- If someone is late to a meeting with you, you might think they are disrespectful of your time; if they don't follow through on something, you might feel you can't depend on them.

  ▪ These values and differences can affect our relationships.
  ▪ There are several stages we go through as we become more aware of ourselves and others.
    - First, we recognize there are differences.
    - Second, we appreciate the differences.
    - Third, we begin to understand the other person's perspective.
  ▪ One important aspect of the process of developing your strengths involves considering how your talents affect your relationships.
  ▪ We also know that strengths develop within the context of healthy relationships.

Activity: Answer Questions About Relationships (handout attached)

  ▪ Find a partner to discuss the questions on the handout.
  ▪ Give students time to discuss each question.
  ▪ Debrief:
    - In what ways do their strengths influence their relationships?
    - Do they recognize any particular relationships in which their strengths are more evident than others?
    - Are there any of their strengths they use more than the others in their relationships?
    - Are there any other insights about where/how they see themselves applying their strengths in relationships?
    - Also discuss the value of relationships:
      ▪ Some who have strengths predominantly in the relationship area may place a higher value on relationships with others.
      ▪ Those who have more strengths in the areas focused on goal setting/motivation and Achiever may not feel as strong a need to build or develop relationships.
      ▪ The combination of strengths also affects the value we place on being in relationship with others.

Assignment for Next Time

1. Students should complete the A Strengths Dialogue With Your Roommate exercise. If a student is a commuter student, he or she should interview one of the mentors if he or she is not living with a roommate familiar with strengths.

2. Students will write a reflection paper on anything they have learned, discovered, liked, struggled with regarding their strengths quest up to now. They will turn in the reflection paper at the beginning of the next class.
Name ____________________________________________

With a partner, answer and discuss the following questions:

1. How do you build and develop relationships? How important are relationships to you?


3. What does “respect” mean to you? How do you establish respect and trust within your relationships?

4. When you feel frustrated or uncomfortable, do you prefer people to ask how you are doing or do you prefer people to leave you alone? Please explain.

5. Do any of your top five strengths influence, contribute, or play a part in your relationship style? Which ones?

6. What would/do others (family, friends, coworkers) say you do best?

7. Which of your strengths (talents) do others most appreciate?

8. Which of your strengths (talents) sometimes annoy others?
A Strengths Dialogue With Your Roommate

With the goal of building healthy relationships while understanding individual strengths, use these questions to begin a strengths dialogue with your roommate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST REACTIONS TO DISCOVERING YOUR TOP FIVE STRENGTHS?</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHAT STRENGTHS BEST DESCRIBE YOU? WHY?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN WHAT WAYS ARE OUR STRENGTHS SIMILAR?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN WHAT WAYS ARE OUR STRENGTHS DIFFERENT?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT DO YOU NEED IN A LIVING SPACE? WHAT BOTHERS YOU?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW MIGHT YOUR STRENGTHS RELATE TO YOUR LIVING SPACE PREFERENCES?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT CAN I DO TO BE A GOOD ROOMMATE FOR YOU?</td>
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</table>
Lesson Plan for Class Session 9: Strengths Learning Activities

Objective: This session provides the students with learning activities to continue to deepen their understanding of their own strengths and the strengths of others. These activities will also help students understand how their strengths interact together, how they are misunderstood, and how their strengths help them accomplish tasks, process information, develop relationships, and more.

Preparation: Determine which learning activities to use during this session. Collect or copy the necessary materials.

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Collect the reflection papers assigned as homework.
- Discuss the dialogue students had with their roommates.
- Ask students: What new things did you learn about your roommate?
- Ask students: What did you discover about how to get along better as a result of understanding each other’s strengths?
- Ask students: What are you learning about yourself and your strengths? Did your roommate dialogue provide any new insight for you?
- Ask students: Where/how are you seeing the strengths of others?

Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Various Strengths Learning Activities

- There are three learning activities to choose from for this session — use one, two, or all three.

Activity Options:

1. Strengths Bingo

   - Learning outcome: Students will learn more about what strengths their classmates possess.
   - Distribute the strengths bingo cards. (One copy per student.)
   - Students should wear their strengths placards.
   - Instruct students to move throughout the room and find other students who have a theme in their top five, covering a square when they do.
   - To make the game more challenging, or play the game again, play different versions — four corners, postage stamp, coverall, etc.
   - You might want to have prizes available for winners of the game(s).
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Various Strengths Learning Activities (continued)

2. Barrier Labels

- Learning outcome: Students will analyze common labels that lead people to discount talents and the potential strengths of others.
  - A barrier label is a term used when a talent is mistakenly devalued and dismissed as a weakness.
    - For example: We have all known a person with great learning talents who was brushed off by someone as “just a bookworm.”
    - A person with tremendous positivity talents is discounted as naïve.
      - These are barrier labels: a term used when a talent is mistakenly devalued and dismissed as a weakness.
  - Distribute the handout. (One copy per person.)
    - Ask students to get into small groups of three to four people each.
    - Students should wear their strengths placards.
  - Ask students to identify the barrier labels they or others might use to describe an individual with each talent theme listed.
  - Then, students should identify alternative words or phrases that they could use to describe a person that honors that talent theme.
    - Questions to guide students for the “barrier label” column:
      - What are talents that make up each theme?
      - What are some common misperceptions that may cloud recognition of the valuable talents this person has to offer?
      - What might be difficult about working with someone who has strong talents in this theme? What might drive you crazy if you worked with this person?
    - Once students answer these questions, ask them to consider the positive aspects and values of each theme for the “talent enabler” column:
      - What are the positive traits a person with this theme might add to a partnership or team?
      - What are some words or phrases that would characterize and identify this theme?
      - What would be beneficial about working with someone who possesses talents in this theme?
  - Debrief: Bring the class back together and ask:
    - How do we sometimes create barriers that hide the value of our talents?
    - How can we manage our talents so that they don’t become a barrier to others?
    - How can we create opportunities to use our greatest talents in a positive way?
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Various Strengths Learning Activities (continued)

3. Critical Outcomes

- Learning outcome: This activity helps students organize and focus on tasks in a given situation, assignment, team project, etc. Once students identify the outcomes, they should identify the specific resources necessary for each outcome, persons to contact, particular tasks, dates, and more. Finally, students should connect their strengths to each outcome.

- Give each student a copy of the Critical Outcomes handout.
- Ask students to identify a task/project/assignment — whether academic, at work, etc. — that they need to accomplish sometime during the next month.
- Students should identify three outcomes/goals/activities/results and list them in the numbered boxes.
- With each identified result, they should then consider specific details to help them meet that goal.
- In the circles to the right, students should list their top five strengths.
- Students should then connect to each task, with an arrow, which strength(s) they will use to help them meet that goal.
- Students can use this exercise in nearly any situation at any time.

Homework: Write a reflection paper about anything you have learned about yourself, another person, strengths, etc. This paper is due at the beginning of the next class.
# Strengths Bingo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCLUDER</th>
<th>EMPATHY</th>
<th>ACTIVATOR</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>WOO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDEATION</td>
<td>COMMAND</td>
<td>BELIEF</td>
<td>POSITIVITY</td>
<td>LEARNER</td>
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<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>RELATOR</td>
<td>FUTURISTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPER</td>
<td>HARMONY</td>
<td>ACHIEVER</td>
<td>RESTORATIVE</td>
<td>DISCIPLINE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barrier Labels

**barrier label** (bär’ēər lābəl) **n.** a term used when talent is mistakenly devalued and dismissed as weakness

Match each of the following barrier labels (middle column) with the corresponding Signature Theme (left) and the positive contribution that could be missed if the label is allowed to be a barrier rather than a clue to talent (right).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TALENT THEME</th>
<th>COMMON BARRIER LABEL</th>
<th>CLUE TO TALENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Communication</td>
<td>1. Bossy</td>
<td>i. Is an optimistic, uplifting presence who finds the positive aspects in any situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Positivity</td>
<td>2. Pushover</td>
<td>ii. Is confident and a powerful advocate on behalf of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Achiever</td>
<td>3. Workaholic</td>
<td>iii. Invites the differing views of others and finds common ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Harmony</td>
<td>5. Chatterbox</td>
<td>v. Brings new ideas to life by telling stories that are energizing and vivid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moving Beyond Barrier Labels

Identify the barrier labels you or others might use to describe an individual with each talent theme. Then, identify alternative words or phrases that you could use to describe a person that honors that talent theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>BARRIER LABEL: INSTEAD OF SAYING THIS . . .</th>
<th>TALENT ENABLER: SAY THIS . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achiever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Critical Outcomes

List three critical outcomes you are expected to produce in your work. Underneath each outcome, write the tasks required to accomplish it.

1.

2.

3.
Lesson Plan for Class Session 10: Using Strengths in Combination

Objective: Until now, the class has discussed strengths in a linear fashion — each strength individually. This session will help students think about how their strengths work together.

Preparation: You will need paper or card stock and markers.

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Collect reflection papers assigned as homework.
- Ask students: Identify your favorite strength and share it with a partner and why it is your favorite.
  - Ask for three to four students to share a favorite strength, tell why it is their favorite, and give an example of how/when they use(d) it.

Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Using Your Strengths in Combination

Introduce Using Your Strengths in Combination exercise.

- Tell the students that during this session they need to come up with a creative way of expressing their Signature Themes and how they work together.
  - Drawing, poem, acrostic, song, etc.
- To help the students understand what they are being asked to do, show the samples in the PowerPoint slides to give them ideas.
  - You can also show your own creative expression of how you see your Signature Themes working together.
- Some people represent their strengths as a formula that expresses how one theme adds to another theme or how various themes seem to have a multiplier effect in terms of increasing the power and the potency of the talents they hold.
  - Some people express their strengths with drawings, diagrams, or figures, while others will write a poem or even make up a song.
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Using Your Strengths in Combination (continued)

Activity:

• Give the students paper or card stock and markers.
• Some students may be resistant to this exercise, but don’t let this deter you.
  - Some students may want a couple of sheets of paper.
  - Others will get right into it and have no trouble creating their expression.
• This is a powerful learning experience that helps students see how their talents and strengths work together.
• This activity helps students know each other on a deeper, more profound level.
• Most important, this activity helps students see how they, and everyone else, are uniquely talented.
• Students should also be encouraged to write their description on the back of their picture.
  - It would be great if you could/would collect their drawing, poem, etc. and make copies of the diagram and the description and keep a copy; return the original to the student during the next class.

Sample pictures and descriptions: There are many more in the PowerPoint slides.

Diagram and description: I have Belief, Strategic, Activator, Achiever, and Connectedness as my Signature Themes. My visual image of how my talents in these themes work together is of a rocket standing upright on a launch pad. My Belief talents form a giant foundational launch pad. The fuselage of my rocket stands upright on the middle of the launch pad. This is my Activator theme. On each side of the fuselage are two booster rockets. One I call Strategic and the other Achiever. The nose cone on top of the main fuselage is Connectedness.
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Using Your Strengths in Combination (continued)

Two versions of this individual’s top five strengths.

1st Place

Achiever
Discipline
Focus
Significance
Competition

SIGNIFICANCE

A
C
H
E
V
E
R

COMPETITION

D
I
S
C
I
P
L
E
R

A
C
H
E
V
E
R
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Using Your Strengths in Combination (continued)

Activity (continued)

After students have completed their creative expression of using their strengths in combination:

- Have each student stand in front of the group, one at a time, and show and tell about their artistic expression of their strengths and how they work together.
- It is important that this presentation be a positive experience for each student.
  - As each student returns to his or her seat, applaud the individual and help the group to also affirm each student.
- If time permits, allow the students in the class to ask a question or comment on the student’s artistic expressions before the presenter sits down.
- Perhaps you, and/or the mentors, might comment on something you noticed in particular, thought was unique, appreciated about their expression, etc.

Assignment for Next Time

- Using the handout as your guide, have copies to distribute to the students.
  - Interview someone on campus who is a faculty or staff member or leader or administrator.
Faculty/Staff/Campus Leader Strengths Interview

Identify a faculty, staff, or campus leader who possesses one of your top five strengths. With the goal of increasing personal self-awareness and building campus community, conduct an interview to explore your areas of common strength using the following questions.

1. Describe the role of [insert theme] in your life.

2. What do you like best about having this theme?

3. In your experience, how is this theme often misunderstood?

4. At work, do you have the opportunity to use this theme? Explain.
Lesson Plan for Class Session 11: Applying Strengths to Academics

Objective: Students identified in the early part of the semester the academic tasks they do with ease and those with which they struggle. This session will help students identify talents and strengths they are using in the areas of ease. This session should also help students invent ways of applying their strengths and talents to complete academic tasks with which they struggle. The value of the whole group discussion is that students see there are several methods to use academically, they are not alone in their successes and struggles, and they are most likely already using their strengths.

Preparation: Make extra copies of the worksheet from session 3, Academic Tasks I Do With Ease, in case some students did not bring/have theirs from earlier in the semester.

Start-Up:
- Take attendance.
- Ask students: How have you used your strengths this week?
- Discuss with students their interview results/insight/new information gained from the faculty/staff/leader/administrator interview.
  - Whom did they interview? Role/position/title of that individual on campus? What did they learn or what new insight did they gain?
  - Anything else they wish to add — listen to/for the stories.

Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Applying Talents and Strengths to Academics

1. Engage students in discussion about the following:
   Now that you have been in college for several weeks:
   - What type of study strategies are working best for you?
   - What is motivating you to learn?
   - What do you like best in a professor and/or what kind of classroom situation brings out your best work/performance/discussion/engagement?
   You might want to list their responses on the board/butcher paper/poster board as they respond.
   OR
   Put poster paper up with these headings and ask students to go around and write on the paper their answers to these questions.

   Then discuss the responses at this point in the semester.

   Has anything changed from earlier in freshmen seminar when they focused on their study skills and strategies for note and test taking?
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Applying Talents and Strengths to Academics (continued)

2. Draw students’ attention to the worksheet they partially completed earlier in the semester.
   - Ask students to review the three academic tasks they identified as being able to do with ease.
     - Maybe they are the same, perhaps new tasks have emerged. Give them time to update this portion.
   - Ask students to form groups of three or four. They should try to be in a group with someone who shares at least one or more of their strengths in common.
   - In their groups, ask students to share:
     - What academic tasks they do with ease.
   - Which of their strengths do they use in these academic tasks and studies?
   - Have students identify how their strengths help them in their academic pursuits.
   - Students should be as specific as possible in explaining exactly how they are using their strengths.
   - In the column on the right, students should list the strengths and talents they currently use, or can use, to help them continue to be successful in the easy academic areas and an example.

After a few minutes, ask students to respond to the following in their groups:

- In what areas do students struggle academically?
- What is the greatest struggle?
  - Have them discuss and invent ways to apply their strengths to complete those academic tasks that are a struggle for them.
  - Students should try to identify at least two strengths themes that they could apply to each academic task they struggle with.
    - You and the mentors might have to help students see how to make the connection of their strengths to this area of difficulty.
    - Mentors with a same strength theme might also provide valuable insight.
  - In the right column, students should write the invented ways they can use their strengths to help them improve and manage the academic areas/tasks that are difficult for them.
    - After students have shared in their groups, ask for volunteers to share with the class.
  - The volunteers should share things they have discovered and ways they can and are applying their strengths to help them with their academic tasks, whether difficult or not.
  - Explain the Realizing Your Potential assignment.
    - If there is time, students can start this assignment in class; otherwise, it is a homework assignment.
Assignment for Next Time

1. Complete the Realizing Your Potential worksheet (attached).
2. Read chapters 10 and 11 on choosing and planning a career.
   - Go to www.strengthsquest.com.
   - Sign in using your email and password.
   - Select tab 6, Online Book, and download chapters 10 and 11 to read.
Academic Tasks I Do With Ease

Please list three academic tasks you do with ease:

1.

2.

3.

Academic Tasks That I Struggle With

Please list two specific academic tasks that you struggle with:

1.

2.
Activity: Talent Development

Learning Outcome

• Differentiate between talent, knowledge, and skill.

활동 시간

Approximately 15 minutes

Activity Description

During this activity, students should consciously create a strategy to develop one of their Signature Themes. It is imperative that the instructor provide students with timely feedback concerning their efforts to develop their talents. Send an email back to students congratulating them for their work toward this goal.

Ask your students to select one of their Signature Themes and read the Developing Action Items checklist for this theme in the StrengthsQuest online book or paperback. Ask them to select one strategy to commit to and apply during the next week. Next, ask them to develop a strategy or identify a specific way in which they can make that strategy a reality. Then, ask them to answer the questions on the worksheet.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, you can enhance the positive effect of this activity by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.
# Realizing My Potential

Think about your life at school, work, and home. Identify three tasks that you have to complete within the next few weeks. Then, identify the themes of talent, knowledge, and skills that will be necessary to complete the task successfully.

An example is provided for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>THEME(S)</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>SKILL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collect research for a paper due in psychology.</td>
<td>Responsibility, Input</td>
<td>Knowledge of psychological theories I am discussing</td>
<td>Library and Internet research skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

## Strength
(the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance)
Lesson Plan for Class Session 12: Strengths, Career, and Calling

Objective: This session is designed to help students think about their calling, career, and use of strengths to fulfill their calling and purpose in life and how they find meaning and fulfillment.

Preparation: Copy the handout.

Start-Up:

- Take attendance.
- Ask students: How have you used your strengths this week?
  - Student(s) volunteer to share a story.
- Discuss the Realizing Your Potential worksheet/homework assignment.
  - Any new discoveries/realizations about how to use/apply their strengths to help them?
  - Any quicker actions taken on the upcoming assignment/task identified?

Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Strengths, Career, and Calling

Begin by asking for a show of hands as you ask the following questions:

- How many of you are struggling with deciding on a career?
  - No idea? Some idea? Can’t decide between [X] and [X]?
- How many of you feel fairly certain about what career you are planning for?
  - What have you decided on? How do you know for sure?
- Ask students what makes career planning or thinking about choosing a career so difficult.
  - You might want to share some about your career path/decision process.
  - Mentors should also share their experience thus far.

This brief exercise will help the students see that they are not alone.

- Virtually everyone struggles with these issues during and after college.
- Many who do not struggle with career decisions have simply gone along with what someone else thinks that they ought to do and ought to be, or they have given up and taken the attitude of, “I’ll just see what happens.”

Ideally our careers involve roles in which we get to do what we love to do while we are working in that career. If that is not possible, the career must provide opportunities to do what we love to do when we are not working.
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Strengths, Career, and Calling (continued)

By focusing on strengths, we are convinced that issues of success (including monetary success) and fulfillment will likely follow because developing and applying strengths is the key to achieving.

- Moreover, in the study of the best of the best, the top achievers were all alike in this most important respect:
  - They built their lives on their greatest talents.
- They invented ways of applying their greatest talents in areas where they wanted to achieve and improve.
- They were also in roles where they were thriving, energized, and engaged and not in roles where they were bored, frustrated, withering, or dying.

There is a difference between a job, a career, and a calling.

- With a job, there is no long-term commitment; provides a means to an end (pay check).
- A career is a lifestyle, a long-term commitment; provides path to new work.
- A calling (vocation) gives you a sense of destiny; provides meaning and purpose in your life.
- In thinking about career and calling — and how to apply your strengths — it is important to recognize that your career should be consistent with your values and beliefs.
- Our values and our beliefs give us focus and direction.
- When we work in jobs and settings that are consistent with our values and beliefs, we become more motivated.
- When our careers provide opportunities to express or advance our most deeply held values and beliefs, we become motivated to give our best and to perform at optimal levels.

Beliefs are similar to values because of their importance, but beliefs include what we think is true, most noble, and those things that are most important for us to do.

- Our beliefs and values are those things which we hold most dear and to what we are willing to give our time, our energy, and our resources.
- Our beliefs and values represent the judgments we make about how important various and different things are to us as individuals.
- Those things that we hold most important, and that reflect our values and beliefs, may include family, God, community, freedom, various personal qualities such as honesty and integrity, love, compassion, education, church, providing and extending opportunities to the poor, ethnic and social justice, etc.

There are some additional things to consider that help us to see the importance of following our passions and doing what comes naturally.

Gallup has conducted research that shows:

- 28% of the U.S. workforce is actively engaged at work.
- 53% of the U.S. workforce reports being not engaged in their work.
- When we are engaged in our work and are doing what we do best, our morale, teamwork, productivity, energy, and commitment all improve.
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Strengths, Career, and Calling (continued)

What is a calling?

When we think of a calling, we usually imagine the voice of God coming in the night. We also think that people who are called are somehow special — unusually devout — and not “regular folks” like us. Callings are not just for the devout or holy. Everyone has a calling. You just need to discover what it is.

John Maxwell writes in *Dare to Dream*, “When you discover what you were made for, your heart sings.”

- What are you born to do?
- What makes your heart sing?
- What energizes you and gets you out of bed in the morning?

Parker Palmer has written much about calling and vocation. In *Let Your Life Speak*, he writes specifically:

> Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I intend to do with it, I must listen for what it intends to do with me (p. 4).

And he also writes:

> Vocation does not come from a voice “out there” calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice “in here” calling me to be the person I was born to be…

A calling can be seen as:

- a journey that has already begun
- unfolding as we go through life
- multiple
- transcending beyond your major/career
- a God-given purpose to use your time, energy, abilities, and strengths to serve God in the world
- taking time, patience, reflection, introspection, and the help of others to understand your calling

There are also signs that Frederick Buechner identifies that can help us identify our calling. Consider the following questions:

- motivation — what energizes you?
- talent — what comes naturally? “seeds of greatness”
- life experiences — what have you learned? Do you know?
- open and closed doors — the yes and no
- the voice of people — wisdom in the counsel of others
- joyful service:
  - “. . . where my deep gladness meets the world’s deep needs.”
    --Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC*
Lesson/Activity/Discussion Topic: Strengths, Career, and Calling (continued)

A calling also happens from within us from our own deep gladness — when there is something that we love to do, and so we do it. We express our own spirit and heart, and it becomes our way to bless the world. If we follow the deep gladness of our heart, our heart will find a way to meet the world’s deep hunger.

Where do you find deep gladness in your life? Are there things that you like to do? Things that come fairly easily to you, and when you have finished, you have more energy than when you started?

Is there a need that catches your attention? What part of the world’s deep hunger moves your heart?

What brings you great gladness? What things bring energy to your life?

It is important that you begin NOW considering where your passions and energies lie and what you do naturally and the talents you have that you will develop into strengths. If we don’t recognize our gifts, we can’t use them. How can you appreciate a gift that you don’t open?

In-Class Activity:

1. Distribute the handout.
2. Ask students to take a few minutes to respond to the questions on the handout.
3. After most students seem to be finished, ask them to get into small groups of two to four people and share their responses.
4. Wrap up by emphasizing the importance of values, passions, and strengths aligning as they begin to think about their future, calling, and career.

Assignment for Next Time

1. Give students the handout and ask them to write a letter to themselves responding to the questions.
2. Optional: Ask students to take the self-assessment survey (online) one more time — if you used this in the first session. Students should complete this assignment before they come to the next class.
In-Class Activity: Session 12

1. What would your life be like if it were the best, most meaningful and fulfilling life imaginable?

2. What would be your ideal, perfect dream job? Give specific details.
   - This is your ideal and not your mom's or dad's dream for you, not your girl/boyfriend's dream for you, not anyone telling you that "you should be…” Put aside others’ expectations for you. Put aside all fears. Dream.

3. What are you most passionate about?

4. If time and money was no object, what would you do and where would you go?

5. If you could do anything in life and KNOW that you could NOT fail at it, what would you do?

6. Which of your strengths do you identify in your responses to these questions?

7. How do you see your strengths helping you to get to your career goals and to follow your calling to your purpose?
Assignment
You are about to finish freshmen seminar. By now, you have made it through fall break, midterms, and should be settling in. Your journey, your quest here on campus is under way. Think about what you want your four years to look like.

Your Assignment:

- Reflect on your future at this school and after graduation.
- Write a two-part letter to yourself in response to the following:

  Part 1:
  - Imagine a ladder standing before you. The top rung is 10 and the bottom rung is 0.
  - On which step of the ladder do you stand today? Why did you choose this step?
  - What future do you want to create for your next four years here at this school?
  - What legacy do you want to leave here during your four years?
  - What do you want people to say about you after you have graduated?
  - What do you need to do now — and each semester forward — to create that legacy?
  - On which step of the ladder will you stand in five years? Why did you choose this step?

  Part 2:
  Write a paragraph or two explaining how your strengths will help you get to where you want to be in your academics, career, relationships, spiritually, and using your strengths. Be as specific as possible.

- Bring your letter to the next class. Your professor will provide you an envelope in which to put your letter. Put the letter in the envelope and give it to your professor for him or her to mail to you in the spring.
Wrap-Up Session

- Students will put their letters (homework from last time) in an envelope provided for them.
  - They should address the envelope to themselves with either their on-campus or off-campus mailing address.

- Discuss any additional questions/comments students have regarding strengths, the rest of the semester, advising, enrolling for next semester classes, etc.

Encourage students to continue using their strengths in every aspect of their life: academics, personal, career, relationships, leadership, etc.
A Revolutionary Perspective on College Student Achievement and Success

1. Each entering student already has all of the talents he or she needs to achieve and persist in college.

2. Each entering student has a unique set of talents that can enable and empower him or her to do certain things very well in college and beyond.

3. The key to achieving is within a person’s talents; achieving to levels of excellence requires development and application of strengths.

4. Most students do not know what their greatest talents are; even fewer know how to develop or apply strengths.

5. The most important steps in students becoming successful include:
   ▪ Students identifying their greatest talents.
   ▪ Students developing strengths based on those talents.
   ▪ Students applying strengths in academic learning and achievement tasks.

6. Students will determine their future achievements and quality of life by discovering their greatest talents and developing and applying their strengths in college.

7. Therefore, the most critically important job for students is to discover their greatest talents, and then develop and apply strengths in the many courses, programs, services, and opportunities available through a college education.
The Genius of Your Strengths

Achiever talents are valuable because they help you remain motivated to reach your goals and to push for higher levels of excellence. You won’t rest until you reach your most highly desired goals — but they must be your goals.

Activator talents are valuable because they generate the energy to get things going and then done. This theme brings innovation and creative approaches to problem solving.

Adaptability talents are valuable because they allow you to keep moving forward when the unexpected happens. You can move ahead in a world of unknowns and seemingly unfair treatment when others would give up. You can deal with everything from injustices to crises and still find a way to make progress.

Analytical talents are valuable because they enable you to dig deep, find the root causes and effects, and then develop clear thoughts about what is true. This type of thinking helps you become clearer about what excellence is and how you can attain it.

Arranger talents are valuable because they help you keep looking for the right combinations of people and resources to complete projects successfully.

Belief talents are valuable because they produce the motivation for you to work hard, excel, and achieve, as long as achieving is consistent with your values and beliefs. Your set of beliefs does more than energize you — it is the basis for developing a meaningful life.

Command talents are valuable because they help you positively affect other people. You can help people and entire organizations get through difficult times and make substantive changes in the midst of chaos.

Communication talents are valuable because your abilities in this area enable you to reach out and connect with people. Your storytelling ability builds images in the minds of others and makes you a powerful person as you connect and bond with people.

Competition talents are valuable because through them you will influence and even push people in your group to achieve more than other groups. You bring energy to a group and can energize others to move to higher levels of excellence.

Connectedness talents are valuable because they provide you with conviction and faith that sustain and encourage you and your friends in difficult times. You believe that there’s a plan — a design and a power beyond the visible world that provides meaning, comfort, and confidence. Your connectedness gives you hope and helps you to achieve your ultimate goals.

Consistency talents are valuable because you can more easily recognize inconsistencies, and you can readily suggest changes that can create a more equitable world.

Context talents are valuable because they provide perspective that enhances your ability and confidence in making decisions and action planning.

Deliberative talents are valuable because they enable you to eliminate or reduce errors by thoroughly considering each option. As a result, you make outstanding decisions.
The Genius of Your Strengths (continued)

**Developer** talents are valuable because they help you see the potential in others and move them in that direction. People usually grow and improve in the presence of a developer. When you fully apply your Developer talents, it is as if you are educating, counseling, and encouraging people all the time.

**Discipline** talents are valuable because they make you efficient and effective. First, they motivate you to organize tasks. Then they keep you motivated to complete those tasks.

**Empathy** talents are valuable because they enable you to form very close, supportive relationships in which you help and encourage others.

**Focus** talents are valuable because you can quickly evaluate, determine priorities, and get yourself and groups on track quickly. Your Focus motivates you to be efficient. You get a lot done because you don’t get easily distracted.

**Futuristic** talents are valuable because your vision raises others’ sights and focuses their energies.

**Harmony** talents are valuable because you see what people have in common and try to help them to interact on the basis of shared points of view. This binds people to you and helps groups come together. Groups, organizations, and teams function better and achieve more because of what you do to bring people together.

**Ideation** talents are valuable because they enable you to look for new connections and generate new insights when things don’t make sense. You are able to help others take the world they know and turn it around so that they can see it from a new point of view.

**Includer** talents are valuable because they enable you to help individuals, groups, organizations, and communities to be unified and effective. People who have felt rejected will appreciate your efforts.

**Individualization** talents are valuable because they help you form powerful relationships with people. Those people know that you take them seriously and that you see them as distinct individuals. For many, this is very valuable and builds trust. Your individualization talents bring intensity to your relationships.

**Input** talents are valuable because they keep your mind active and lead you to become knowledgeable. You are an expert in something, even though you think you need to learn more.

**Intellection** talents are valuable because they help you find innovative ideas and solutions.

**Learner** talents are valuable because they propel you to thrive in a dynamic world where learning is a necessity. You can learn a lot in a short period of time.

**Maximizer** talents are valuable because they help you focus on talents to stimulate personal and group excellence. If a group or organization is on the move toward excellence, a talented Maximizer is probably somewhere in the midst.

**Positivity** talents are valuable because they have such a helpful influence on the attitudes, motivation, and productive behaviors of others. Groups and individuals are energized to move toward excellence.
The Genius of Your Strengths (continued)

Relator talents are valuable to organizations, groups, and individuals because they foster interpersonal relationships that lead to productivity.

Responsibility talents are valuable because they lead others to trust you and to become more responsible themselves. You might be more of a role model than you realize.

Restorative talents are valuable because you are energized, rather than defeated, by problems.

Self-Assurance talents are valuable because they keep you strong as you withstand many pressures, as you stay on your course, and as you willingly claim the authority to form conclusions, make decisions, and act.

Significance talents are valuable because they can be a source of energy for doing good and helpful things that will outlive you. You are motivated by a driving force to produce transformational, lasting change.

Strategic talents are valuable because they enable you to quickly reach goals by seeing the pros and cons of various alternatives. You carefully consider the whole picture and then generate the most effective set of actions or routes to take.

Woo talents are valuable because people are influenced by your ability to draw them into a group or a relationship.