

# FAMILY STRENGTHSQUEST HANDBOOK

## West Texas A&M University

### WHAT IS STRENGTHSFINDER?

#### StrengthsFinder Overview

- StrengthsFinder is an assessment that measures an individual's talents, things that come naturally. It helps answer the question: who are you at your best?
- StrengthsFinder focuses on and measures the 34 Talent Themes found to be most prevalent in individuals.
- StrengthsFinder is based on Positive Psychology – the study of what is right with people, not what is wrong with people.

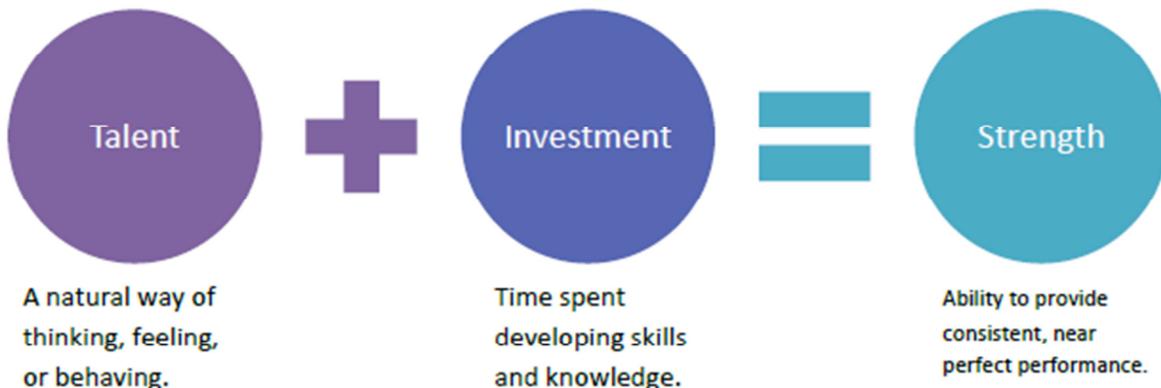
#### Why focus on Strengths?

- As you develop and use your Strengths, success will naturally follow.
- If you focus on your Strengths, you can go from average to excellent. If you focus on non-Strengths, you may only go from poor to average.
- Top achievers invent ways to use their Strengths (and manage their non-Strengths).

*The likelihood that someone has the same Top 5 Talent Themes in the same order as you*

# 1 in 33.39 Million

#### Strengths Building Equation



## HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT

- Give examples of how you see your student's strengths in action, especially if there is a strength they are having a difficult time understanding
- Remind your student that strengths is a common language they have with other students! Strengths can offer a great way to start a conversation and build relationships with others
- Ask your student: *what kind of activities do you really enjoy? What about these activities made them fun and/or meaningful?* Consider providing examples of activities they did growing up and in high school that brought them joy that could help them begin to reflect on what excites them. Then help them consider opportunities at WTAMU that could allow them to use their strengths.
- If your student is trying to decide what courses to take and/or what to major in, encourage them to examine the class/major looking at their strengths and how much they would use their strengths or how their strengths could play out in each choice.
- Give praise to your student for their academic achievements. Talk to them about what they did that helped them to be successful and how their strengths played out in those successes.
- Encourage your student to look for internships and jobs. After they read through a job description ask them if they think they would be a good fit for the opportunity. Ask if they think the job would be a good fit for their strengths and why/why not.
- Ask your student: *How could you use your strengths to have better time management? What tools or strategies would be helpful to you?* This same question could be asked regarding health/wellness and finances.
- If your student is having difficulty with a friend or classmate, encourage them to think about the person's strengths to help them better understand the other person. Strategize with them ways in which they could use their strengths to work on the relationship.
- If your student is struggling with a particular assignment or class, help them to look at what their strengths are and what their strengths allow them to do. Encourage them to think of ways in which they could approach the situation using their strengths.
- Encourage your student to use their strengths to get engaged on and off campus. As they explore student groups, study abroad options and more, help them to think through how their strengths can be used in each opportunity.
- Help your student think through ways in which they can represent their strengths in the job search process, such as in their resume and in interviews. Encourage them to visit their career center to refine their job search skills.

## STRENGTHS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

### **Achiever** (Executing)

People strong in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** tireless, strong work ethic, leads by example, go-getter, hungry

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** unbalanced, brownnoser, overcommitted, can't say no, burns the candle at both ends, too concentrated on work.

### **Activator** (Influencing)

People especially talented in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. Once a decision is made, they want to act quickly.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** self-starter, fire-starter, energy source, fearless.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** ready-fire-aim, loose cannon, speaks before thinking, in left field(because others haven't caught up).

### **Adaptability** (Relationship Building)

People strong in the Adaptability theme prefer to "go with the flow". They tend to be "now" people who

take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** flexible, comfortable in times of change, easy to get along with, goes with the flow.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** directionless, indecisive, sheep, inconclusive, whimsical.

### **Analytical** (Strategic Thinking)

People strong in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** Thinks things through, smart, logical, deep, thorough, comfortable with numbers, figures, and charts.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** rude, short, tough, never satisfied with the answer, asks too many questions.

### **Arranger** (Executing)

People strong in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** flexible, organizer, juggler, aligns and realigns tasks to find the most productive configuration possible, efficient, conductor.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** lacks structure, too flexible, doesn't follow the existing rules or procedures, constantly changes priorities, lacks vision.

### **Belief** (Executing)

People strong in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** passionate, steadfast, knows where he or she stands, altruistic, family- oriented, ethical, responsible.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** stubborn, set in his or her ways, elitist, unaccepting of other ideas, opinionated, goody-two-shoes.

**Command** (Influencing)

People strong in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** charismatic, direct, driven, inspirational, easy to follow, clear, concise.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** bossy, know-it-all, domineering, rude, abrupt, short, strong-willed, inflexible, stubborn.

**Communication** (Influencing)

People strong in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** storyteller, great presence, easy to talk to, energizer, entertaining, charismatic.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** blabbermouth, poor listener, self-absorbed, show-off, always needs attention.

**Competition** (Influencing)

People strong in the Competition theme measure their progress against the performance of others. They strive to win first place and revel in contests.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** driven, motivated, No. 1, measurement-oriented, winner.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** sore loser, not a team player, puts down others, self-centered, confrontational.

**Connectedness** (Relationship Building)

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

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** spiritual, “doesn’t sweat the small stuff”, strong faith, always looking at the big picture, helps others see purpose.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** passive, naïve, too idealistic, wishy-washy.

**Consistency** (Executing)

People strong in the Consistency theme are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same. They try to treat everyone in the world with consistency by setting up clear rules and adhering to them.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** just, problem-solver, policy-maker.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** “by the book”, inflexible, unwilling to customize/ individualize.

**Context** (Strategic Thinking)

People strong in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** has robust historical frame of reference, learns lessons from the past, knows how things came to be, can leverage knowledge of the past.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** slow to move and react to change, closed-minded, lives in the past.

**Deliberative** (Executing)

People strong in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** good judgment, identifies risk, makes solid decisions, can plan for the unexpected.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** standoffish, aloof, cautious, slow, introverted, afraid to act.

**Developer** (Relationship Building)

People strong in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** grows talent in others, teacher, coach, enjoys helping others succeed, invests in others.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** not an individual contributor, wastes time on low-potential people, spectator.

**Discipline** (Executing)

People strong in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** highly productive and accurate because of ability to structure, breaks down complex into steps, great planner, promotes efficiency.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** overbearing, rigid, mechanized, can't handle change.

**Empathy** (Relationship Building)

People strong in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others' lives or situations.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** creates trust, brings healing, knows just what to say/do, customizes approach to others

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** "soft", moody, over-involved.

**Focus** (Executing)

People strong in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, and then act.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** point person, disciplined, purposeful, laser-like precision, identifies important areas quickly, goal setter and goal getter.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** Absorbed, tough to relax, intense, stressed.

**Futuristic** (Strategic Thinking)

People strong in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** imaginative, creative, visionary, even prophetic, inspiring.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** dreamer, "Fantasy Island", out in left field, lack pragmatism.

**Harmony** (Relationship Building)

People strong in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** negotiator, can see both sides of a situation, great at asking questions, able to arrive at consensus, great facilitator.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** weak, indecisive, not confrontational, avoids conflict.

**Ideation** (Strategic Thinking)

People strong in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** improves on the existing, learns quickly, agile mind.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** serendipitous, lack follow-through, creates more work.

**Includer** (Relationship Building)

People strong in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out and make an effort to include them.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** invites others in, caring, engages others, sensitive, takes up for others.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** indiscriminate, unable to decide, generous to a fault.

**Individualization** (Relationship Building)

People strong in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person.

They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** sees the uniqueness in all individuals, intuitively knows that “one size doesn’t fit all”, appreciates the differences in others.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** unable to synthesize when it comes to people, has difficulty placing group above individual, difficulty in making people decisions.

**Input** (Strategic Thinking)

People strong in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** great resource, knowledgeable, excellent memory, mind for detail, collects interesting things, excellent conversationalist.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** knows a lot of worthless information, pack rat, cluttered house- cluttered mind, boring conversationalist.

**Intellection** (Strategic Thinking)

People strong in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** excellent thinker, enjoys musing, capable of deep and philosophical thought, able to work alone.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** a loner, slow to act or wastes time thinking too much, isolated, doesn’t work well with others.

**Learner** (Strategic Thinking)

People strong in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve.

In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** always learning, catches on quickly, interested in many things, finds life intriguing.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** know-it-all, lacks focus on results, learns a lot – produces little, bookish.

**Maximizer** (Influencing)

People strong in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** mastery, success, excellence, enjoys working with the best.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** perfectionist, picky, never good enough, always reworking.

**Positivity** (Relationship Building)

People strong in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** enthusiastic, lighthearted, energetic, generous with praise, optimistic.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** insincere, naïve, superficial, Pollyanna.

#### **Relator** (Relationship Building)

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

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** caring, trusting, a great friend, forgiving, generous.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** lives in a clique, crony, has an inner circle, plays favorites.

#### **Responsibility** (Executing)

People strong in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** committed, accountable, independent, trusted, conscientious.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** micromanager, obsessive, can't say "no", takes on too much.

#### **Restorative** (Executing)

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

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** problem solver, troubleshooter, finds improvements and solutions.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** focuses on weaknesses, punitive, negative, critical.

#### **Self-Assurance** (Influencing)

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

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** self-confident, strong inner compass, risk-taker.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** arrogant, self-righteous, overconfident, stubborn.

#### **Significance** (Influencing)

People especially talented in the Significance theme want to make a big impact. They are independent and sort projects based on the level of influence it will have on their organization and others around them.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** seeks outstanding performance, does things of importance, independent.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** recognition-hungry, self-focused, needy.

#### **Strategic** (Strategic Thinking)

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

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** good judgment, identifies risk, makes solid decisions, can plan for the unexpected.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** standoffish, aloof, cautious, slow, introverted, afraid to act.

#### **Woo** (Influencing)

People strong in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.

**Healthy/Productive Descriptors:** outgoing, people-oriented, networker, rapport-builder.

**Unhealthy/Barrier Descriptors:** fake, shallow, does not care about deep relationships.

## Resources and Sources of Information

WTAMU's StrengthsQuest Web, go to [wtamu.edu/buffstrong](http://wtamu.edu/buffstrong)

Take the StrengthsFinder assessment, go to [www.strengthscenter.com](http://www.strengthscenter.com) or purchase one of Gallup's books to obtain a code.

Original Source for the Workbook is The University of Minnesota. Strengths Quick Reference Guide.

Created by Created by Housing and Residential Life at the University of Minnesota. Clifton

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