

The Strengths Portrait

What Am I Wired to Do?

This guide is your reference. The writing happens in your Session 8 Workbook — this is what you keep, and what you will come back to at Session 11 and again in the spring.

Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

What This Morning Was

Two reports in. One sentence out.

You walked in holding two assessment reports, the two core values you narrowed to at Session 7, and three or four pages of your own story written in December. None of that was new. What was new is that for the first time they were laid side by side on one page — and what repeats across five independent readings of a man is not a coincidence. It is a description.

That is the whole design of the morning. Five instruments, five different questions, one man showing up in all of them. Two pieces of it happened in the room, in your Workbook: the Crosswalk (your two values beside your VIA and CliftonStrengths) and the Skills Harvest (the verbs in your own story). Nothing to finish on either at home.

FIVE INSTRUMENTS, FIVE QUESTIONS

INPUT	WHAT IT ACTUALLY ANSWERS	IMAGE
CliftonStrengths	How I naturally work — my process, untrained	The grain of the wood
VIA Character	Who I am while working — my expression	The finish
Practical Skills	What I was trained to do — earned capacity	The trained hand
Core Values	What I will not violate	The frame
Spiritual Gifts	What the Body needs from me — assigned, not chosen	The commission

These are not five flavors of the same thing. If two of them were measuring the same trait, every repeat between them would be an artifact of the instrument rather than a fact about you. Five genuinely independent readings converging on one thing is evidence. Two correlated readings agreeing is arithmetic.

CliftonStrengths

Key summary — keep this

Thirty-four themes, sorted into four groups (Gallup calls them domains). Your report gave you five of them, in order. Gallup's figure for another man sharing your exact top five in your order is roughly one in 33 million — which means nobody has already worked out what to do with your combination.

GALLUP'S FOUR GROUPS

GROUP	WHAT IT DOES	SAMPLE THEMES
Executing	You make things happen.	Achiever · Discipline · Focus · Responsibility
Influencing	You take charge and speak up.	Command · Communication · Woo · Maximizer
Relationship Building	You hold people together.	Empathy · Harmony · Developer · Connectedness
Strategic Thinking	You take in and think it through.	Learner · Input · Ideation · Context

Sample themes only — there are 34. Your report names the group for each.

The group skew

Careers reward Executing and Influencing. Somebody else supplied the target; you supplied the drive. The second half runs on Relationship Building and Strategic Thinking, because nobody supplies the target any more — you have to find it, and find the people.

If your five cluster on the left, that is not a character problem. It is a structural one, and structural problems have solutions. Your most developed themes are simply the ones your employer gave targets to for forty years.

Strengths do not retire. They go looking for work.

Achiever does not stand down at 65. Command does not resign. If you do not assign a strength a job, it will assign itself one — usually a small one. The lawn. The portfolio checked six times a day. Your wife's kitchen.

Every theme has a basement

For forty years you had guardrails. A deadline told Achiever when enough was enough. A colleague told Command to sit down. An HR department told Responsibility it was not actually his job. Retirement removes all of them at once, and nobody warns you.

- Achiever — cannot rest, and cannot receive
- Responsibility — over-commits, then quietly resents
- Deliberative — weighs it so long that nothing starts
- Command — fills a room that did not ask to be filled

The theme your job paid for has been tangled up with the job for decades — you cannot easily tell where the theme ends and the role begins. The theme you exercised with no compensation, no title, and no audience is unambiguously yours. It survived forty years without institutional support, which is strong evidence it will survive this transition too.

Built to Carry This

The Knapsack, again: capacity, not just weight. Some heavy things are yours to carry. Others were never yours.

Carry what you're wired for — the strengths you would use for free. The knife in the pack: one tool, many uses.

Set down what you're not wired for — someone else can carry it better.

The Knapsack isn't only about what's heavy. It's about what you can carry well.

VIA Character Strengths

Key summary — keep this

You met VIA at Session 7, when you laid your top 5 beside your two values. For the record: twenty-four strengths under six virtues that appear in nearly every major moral tradition. Peterson and Seligman built it in 2004 as the deliberate counterpart to the DSM — psychiatry had a nine-hundred-page manual of everything that can go wrong with a person and nothing at all cataloguing what goes right. VIA is that missing volume.

SIGNATURE STRENGTHS *your top five carry three markers*

Essential

It feels like you, not a role you are playing.

Effortless

It comes without being summoned.

Energizing

It gives energy rather than taking it.

The third marker is the one that matters most in this season, and it returns twice. You can be extremely competent at something that drains you — that is a skill, not a strength, and a skill that drains has no future here.

What VIA measures that CliftonStrengths does not

CliftonStrengths tells you what you do. VIA tells you who you are while you do it. Two men both score Achiever — one drags people along behind him, one carries them. Same theme, same report, completely different men to be around. You have worked for both, and twenty years later you can still name which one you would follow again.

THE VIA-VALUES LINK *how Session 7 and Session 8 connect*

Your value is the destination. Your VIA strength is the road. Your CliftonStrengths are how you drive.

You value family. VIA tells you whether that arrives as Kindness, Loyalty, Leadership, or Humor. One man notices. One man organizes Thanksgiving. One man makes the room survivable. Same value — three completely different roads.

The orphan value

A value with no VIA carrier is something you named as non-negotiable and currently have no reliable way of delivering. That is the most useful mark on the Crosswalk page you did this morning — with two

core values, most men find exactly one — and it is a gap in practice, not a gap in character. You may hold something deeply and simply never have been handed a road to it.

Bring it forward. The orphan value returns at Session 13, when you build the filter that decides what actually gets your calendar.

Talent and Calling

Key summary — keep this

Talent is not calling.

An assessment can tell you the shape of the tool. It cannot tell you the job.

Gallup measures natural pattern. It is very good at that, and it makes no claim to anything more. Nothing in your report knows who you belong to or what you were made for.

Frederick Buechner's line is the key, and the thing to notice is that it has two terms in it — the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. Deep gladness is your side; that is the report in your hand. The world's deep hunger is not in your report at all. Most men arrive at retirement holding one term and wondering why it will not produce an answer. Half an equation does not solve.

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." — Ephesians 2:10. Poima: workmanship, a made thing, crafted on purpose. The wiring was prepared, and so was the work. Neither one was self-assigned.

The Caring Shift

Laura Carstensen · Stanford

When a person perceives time as open-ended, he optimizes for information, novelty, and a wider network — meet everyone, learn everything, keep every door open. When he perceives time as limited, he shifts toward emotional meaning, depth, and the people he already loves.

The finding that makes this more than a truism is that the trigger is not age. It is perceived time horizon. Younger people given a limited horizon in Carstensen's studies re-sort in exactly the same direction. Age is simply the most common way of learning that time is finite.

You did not get soft. You re-sorted.

The drive did not diminish. It got re-aimed — the moment you understood that time is finite. That is not decline. That is accuracy. And a re-aimed drive is a far more dangerous thing than a scattered one.

"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." — Psalm 90:12. Numbering the days is not morbid. It is the mechanism by which wisdom arrives.

Working the Harvest to Ready the Climb

The Harvest Tree shows what each part is. This is what you do to bring the fruit to ripeness. The work is for rest, not endless toil.

The Goal — choose the fruit and domain. Where one value meets one domain, a goal is born. Pick the apple you will grow this season.

The Equipping — know your roots and trunk. You are not starting from zero: your CliftonStrengths Top 5, VIA strengths and personality are your path of least resistance.

The Tending — do the daily work. Skill-building (deliberate practice), small identity-based habits (Atomic Habits), and experiments you run this week.

The Harvest — gather the fruit. The ripe apple goes into your Harvest Charter: proof of a season worked with persistence, attention and observation.

Domain and fruit give focus. Strengths power the work. Habits sustain it. Experiments keep it honest. Persistence carries it to fruit.

The Convergence

What the six rows are for

The Board is not a summary sheet. It is a convergence test. Five independent readings of one man, laid side by side, so that what repeats becomes visible — not analyzed, noticed.

ROW	WHERE IT CAME FROM	WHAT IT ANSWERS
Wiring	CliftonStrengths	How I work when nobody is directing me
Character	VIA	Who I am while I do it
Non-negotiables	Session 7 values	What I will not trade away
Trained Hand	Story, Range, career	What forty years put in my hands
Direction	The Caring Shift	What I now care most about
Commission	Session 9	What this body has seen God give me

The sixth row was left blank on purpose. It is the one row you cannot fill in by yourself — not a reading of how you are wired, but of what was assigned and what other men have watched in you. It is also the reason your Board comes back to Session 9 instead of going in a drawer.

THE RULE THAT MADE ROUND TWO WORK

Where. Who. Never Why.

“Why do you want to work with young men?” produces a justification — a well-constructed answer you have given before, that tells nobody anything. “Who, specifically?” produces a name. And a name produces an action you can take this week.

Why puts a man on trial and he will defend himself. Where and Who make him locate something — an actual place, an actual person. That distinction is worth carrying out of this room and into every conversation you have with your triad this year.

“The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.” — Proverbs 20:5. The man himself often cannot reach his own depths. Someone else draws them out. That is not a weakness in him. That is the design — and it is the whole argument for the triads you form at Session 10.

This Morning's Takeaways

What we leave with

- Nobody has your combination — which means nobody has already worked out what to do with it.
- Strengths do not retire. They go looking for work, and hiring them is now your job.
- Talent is not calling. The report is one term of a two-term equation.
- Your values are destinations; your VIA strengths are the roads. A value with no road is a gap in practice, not in character.
- You did not get soft. You re-sorted, and the thing that re-sorted you was the truth about time.
- What repeats across five independent readings of a man is not a coincidence. It is a description.
- A hypothesis you never test is just a nice sentence about yourself.

ONE LINE TO CARRY HOME

At my best, I am the man who...

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK • BEFORE SESSION 9

The Barnabas Turn

How: When someone runs himself down, hear it, turn it over, hand it back.

Three steps: Hear it • Turn it over • Hand it back

From the Toolkit: 3 • Speak Truly & Encourage

Rooted in: Acts 4:36 • Clifton

Tried it this week ☐ • Bring one moment to the room.

What Goes in Your Charter

And what carries into the break

THIS WEEK'S WORK • ABOUT 55 MINUTES

	§1.3 Strengths & Gifts, with The Signature Your CliftonStrengths Top 5 and VIA top 5 recorded here, one sentence for each of the Top 5, your three kept skills, The Signature expanded to two or three sentences, and the Caring Shift as one line (your line two from this morning). About 35 minutes. Due Session 9.
	Naming the Gift — the card Four passes on the card and evidence page — the last two pages of your Workbook. About 20 minutes. Bring it back to Session 9 with your Convergence Board: the sixth row is waiting.
	Practice of the Week — The Barnabas Turn From the Toolkit: 3 • Speak Truly & Encourage. Try it this week; tick the box (page above); bring one moment to Session 9. It lives inside your week, not on top of it.
	Bring to Session 9 Your Board and your Gift page. Session 9 starts from both. No extra time.
	About 55 minutes this week Not this week: your test action (strongly suggested, under two hours) is Wilderness Week 3 work, before Session 11.
	Optional • Going Deeper — only if it calls to you A full Caring Shift paragraph • the two-hour clearing (take two hours a week off the calendar; it becomes part of §3.1 First Steps at Session 13) • the books below. Not counted.

WHAT CARRIES FORWARD

WHAT YOU WROTE	WHERE IT GOES NEXT	WHEN
The Signature	§1.3 — the capstone of Part One	This week
The Contribution Hypothesis	My Next Chapter, then your Mission	Wilderness Between → S11
Your test action	Session 11 opens by asking what you found out	Wilderness Week 3 (strongly suggested, about 90 min, not counted) — not this week
The orphan value	Your First Steps Card (§3.1)	S13

Your Contribution Hypothesis is not your mission statement. Mission gets written in February, in the Clearness Room at Session 11, after this has had five weeks to sit. A hypothesis exists to be tested — which is exactly what the next five weeks are for.

Readings for This Week

Before Session 9

Required: No required reading this week. Naming the Gift is the work.

BOOKS • ANY TIME, PICK ONE

● Tom Rath, StrengthsFinder 2.0 and Life's Great Question • Arthur Brooks, From Strength to Strength, ch. 2 • Laura Carstensen, A Long Bright Future • Christopher Peterson & Martin Seligman, Character Strengths and Virtues.

SHORTER READINGS • WHYZMEN, IN YOUR GOING DEEPER FOLDER

- Discover Your CliftonStrengths — your 34 themes, explained. About 5 minutes.
- VIA Character Strengths: What Your Results Mean — about 5 minutes.
- The Caring Shift — the reasoning behind this morning's three lines. About 15 minutes.
- Fink's Six Dimensions — why being changed beats knowing more. About 9 minutes.

SCRIPTURE FROM THIS MORNING

REFERENCE	WHY IT WAS THERE
Ephesians 2:10	Poiema. The wiring was prepared, and so was the work.
Proverbs 20:5	Deep waters; one who has insight draws them out. The warrant for Round Two.
Psalms 90:12	Numbering our days. The mechanism by which wisdom arrives.
1 Corinthians 12:7	Gifts given for the common good — which is why the room gets a vote at Session 9.

WhyzMen • Rewire Retirement • Session 8 Participant Guide

Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.