

LEADING FROM YOUR STRENGTHS

*"How blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and the one who finds understanding".
Proverbs 3:13*

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Understanding Strengths and Blending Differences

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! You have just taken a significant step in the process of understanding the unique strengths that God has designed in you. This report will provide insight into your natural strengths and how those strengths are operating in your life. As you learn more about yourself and God's plan for the uniqueness of strengths, you will also begin recognizing and valuing the strengths in others.

There are several sections in this report and each contributes to the knowledge and understanding that will produce the greatest transformation in your relationships. Therefore, please commit yourself to read and explore this report completely.

In I Corinthians 12:12-18 we read that although the body is one, it is made up of many parts. Each part has a vital function and is no less a part of the body because it is different. As you study the passage, it is apparent that God not only intentionally created differences, but He designed them very specifically. God's desire in our relationships is for our differences to unite us not divide us. These Biblical principles establish a foundation for understanding ourselves and our relationships and to see that our differences are strengths when allowed to function as God designed.

The mission of Ministry Insights is to transform relationships worldwide. We believe this transformation takes place as you discover God's plan for your unique strengths and the unique strengths of others. As you learn more about yourself and others it is our prayer that your eyes will be opened to clearly see God's divine design for differences.

Additional supporting resources are available at www.ministryinsights.com.

THE SCALES

Interpreting Your Natural Strength Chart

Let's begin with a look at your natural strengths. Your Natural Strengths Chart presents a visual picture of the predictable ways that you naturally approach or respond to problems, information, change and risk. In each of these four scales, there are two different strengths that you may possess; therefore, there are eight strength possibilities. There is a vertical line in the center of the chart that is referred to as the energy line. Proceeding in each direction from that line is a 10 point scale. The number on the scale indicates the intensity of the strength. There may be situations in which you utilize a strength different from your natural strength, but it will require energy for you to do so. (This will be discussed further in later sections.)

If your score on any scale is within 2 points of the energy line, it is indicated as neutral. This means you can move towards either of the strengths outlined in the scales based on the current situation. As opposed to someone that exhibits a clearly observable strength in an area, it will not require as much energy for you to move from one strength to the other in that area. You will tend to take a neutral position until you understand clearly what strength is required.

These strengths are a part of who you are and will remain relatively consistent over time. Typically only very small changes in your natural strengths are observed throughout your life. It is not often that we see major shifts in someone's natural strengths, but it is possible. Such a shift is normally due to a major life changing event.

The Problem Solving Scale

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is more reflective or aggressive in the way in which you approach problems. If you plot on the reflective side of the scale, we can predict that you will take a more reflective or calculating approach to solving a problem or challenge. If you plot on the aggressive side of the scale, it is predictable that when a problem or challenge arises you will take a more aggressive or assertive approach to solving that problem. Depending on the problem or issue, each side of the scale can highlight an important strength.

THE SCALES

The Processing Information Scale

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more optimistic or realistic in the way in which you process information. If you plot on the optimistic side of the scale, it is predictable that when processing new information you will be more trusting and accepting. If you plot on the realistic side of the scale, you will be more skeptical and want to validate information before trusting. Again, each side of the scale represents a strength in processing information.

The Managing Change Scale

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more dynamic or predictable in the way you manage change. If you are on the dynamic side of this scale, you will tend to be fast-paced. You are comfortable managing many projects simultaneously, and you allow change to drive your plan. If you plot on the predictable side of the scale, you will lean toward a slower pace. You prefer to focus on one project at a time, and you tend to want to plan for change. Managing change effectively requires a combination of these strengths.

The Facing Risk Scale

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more structured or pioneering in the way you face risk. If you are on the structured side of the scale, you will tend to follow the established procedures and rules and see them as a source of protection. Therefore you will tend to be a lower risk taker. If you are on the pioneering side of this scale, you will tend to view rules and established procedures as broad guidelines and tend to push the envelope of risk. You may even view them as obstacles standing in the way of your progress. Each of these strengths is important and needed for balancing the risk scale.

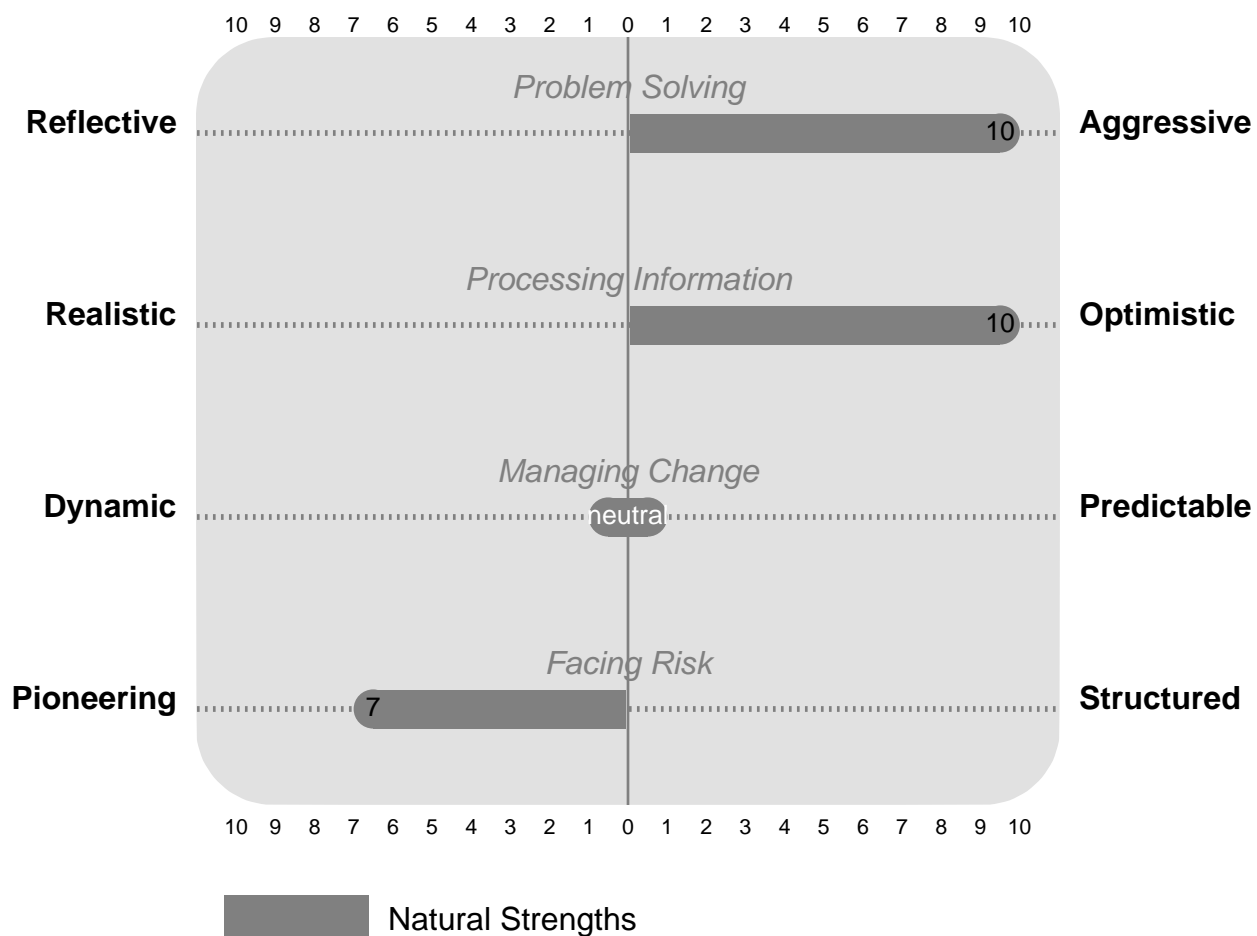
In any relationship – from the team you work with, to your closest friendships, to your marriage, or even your relationship with your children – you'll find that understanding your natural strengths and those of others in these predictable measures is crucial to building trust, closeness, commitment and caring. In fact, by understanding where people differ in these areas, you may even discover a “great secret” – that the differences of others are actually designed to complement your strengths, enabling you to function in that relationship more fully. Living out our strengths and valuing the strengths of others allows us to be more than we can be on our own.

THE SCALES

Here are some last thoughts before you move on to your strengths chart. The order in which the information on the chart is presented is not an indication that one scale is more important than another. Also, you are a combination of strengths, so while each scale is important individually, they are not independent. Your unique combination of strengths will give you a better understanding of who you are. Therefore, the pages of text that follow your Natural Strengths Chart are essential to help you interpret your mix of strengths into a word picture that will give you a comprehensive understanding of your strengths. They will also serve as an objective platform to facilitate discussion with others.



YOUR NATURAL STRENGTHS CHART





GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Based on Jane's responses, the report has selected general statements to provide a broad understanding of her strengths. These statements identify the "Natural" strengths that she brings to the position or relationship. That is, if left on her own, these statements identify how she would choose to carry out her work and relate to others. Use the general characteristics to gain a better understanding of Jane's "Natural" strengths.

Jane is driven toward goals completion and wants to be in a position to set policy that will allow her to meet those goals. Nothing bores Jane more than the status quo, things becoming routine and people always agreeing, or pretending to agree. She may lose interest in a project once the challenge ceases. She may then be ready for another challenging project. Most people see her as a high risk-taker. Her view is, "nothing ventured, nothing gained." Jane exudes self-confidence and exemplifies an individual who is not afraid to state her case or present new and creative ideas. She is a goal-oriented individual who believes in pulling in others to help her achieve her goals. She needs people with other strengths on her team. She is forward-looking, aggressive and competitive. Her vision for results is one of her positive strengths. She may be so self-confident that others see her as arrogant. This confidence may be something others wish they had. Some would see Jane as an initiator. She is a dominant, forceful and direct person who wants to be seen as an individualist. She displays a high energy factor and is optimistic about the results she can achieve. The word "can't" is not in her vocabulary.

Jane should realize that at times she needs to think a project through, beginning to end, before starting the project. Logic and people who have the facts and data to support this logic influence her. She admires the patience required to gather facts and data. Many people see her decisions as high-risk decisions. However, after the decision is made, she tends to work hard for a successful outcome. She is decisive and prefers to work for a decisive leader. She can experience stress if her leader does not possess similar traits. Sometimes she may be so opinionated about a particular problem that she has difficulty letting others participate in the

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

process. She prefers authority equal to her responsibility. She is a good problem solver and troubleshooter, always seeking new ways to solve old problems. Sometimes she becomes emotionally involved in the decision-making process.

Jane is influenced by people who communicate with a logical presentation of the facts, impressed by the apparent efficiency involved. She may lose interest in what others are saying if they ramble or don't speak to the point. Her active mind is already moving ahead. She may sometimes mask her feelings in friendly terms. If pressured, Jane's true feelings may emerge. She tends to influence people by being direct, friendly and results-oriented. Jane challenges people who volunteer their opinions. She has the ability to ask the right questions and dismiss a shallow idea. Some people may feel these questions are a personal attack upon their integrity; however, this is just her way of getting the appropriate facts. She likes people who give her options as compared to their opinions. The options may help her make decisions, and she values her own opinion over that of others! She likes people who present their case effectively. When they do, she can then make a quicker assessment or decision.



VALUE TO THE TEAM

This section of the report identifies the specific talents and strengths Jane brings to the ministry. By looking at these statements, one can better identify her role. Understanding these strengths can help capitalize on Jane's God-given strengths that make her an integral part of the team.

- Verbalizes her feelings.
- Team player.
- Thinks big.
- Competitive.
- Builds confidence in others.
- Challenge-oriented.
- Usually makes decisions with the bottom line in mind.
- Forward-looking and future-oriented.

CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNICATING

Many people find this section to be extremely accurate and important for enhancing communication with Jane. Whether at work, home or in the ministry, understanding how best to communicate with others can be a great relationship asset. This page provides a list of things to DO when communicating with Jane. Review each statement with Jane to identify the statements which are most important to her. We recommend highlighting the most important "DO's" and provide this list to those who communicate with Jane frequently.

Do:

- Motivate and persuade by referring to objectives and results.
- Provide ideas for implementing action.
- Read the body language--look for impatience or disapproval.
- Stick to business--let her decide if she wants to talk socially.
- Provide questions, alternatives and choices for making her own decisions.
- Provide testimonials from people she sees as important.
- Use enough time to be stimulating, fun-loving, fast-moving.
- Offer special, immediate and continuing incentives for her willingness to take risks.
- Provide a warm and friendly environment.
- Support the results, not the person, if you agree.
- Be clear, specific, brief and to the point.
- Talk about her, her goals and the opinions she finds stimulating.



DON'TS ON COMMUNICATING

This section of the report is a list of things NOT to do while communicating with Jane. Review each statement with Jane and identify those methods of communication that result in frustration or reduced performance. By sharing this information, both parties can negotiate a communication system that is mutually agreeable.

Don't:

- Legislate or muffle--don't overcontrol the conversation.
- Take credit for her ideas.
- "Dream" with her or you'll lose time.
- Ramble on, or waste her time.
- Direct or order.
- Reinforce agreement with "I'm with you."
- Drive on to facts, figures, alternatives or abstractions.
- Leave decisions hanging in the air.
- Be dictatorial.
- Forget or lose things, be disorganized or messy, confuse or distract her mind from important tasks.
- Try to build personal relationships.
- Try to convince by "personal" means.
- Be redundant.



IDEAL ENVIRONMENT

This section identifies the ideal environment based on Jane's God-given strengths or "Natural" Style. Use this section to identify specific duties and responsibilities that Jane enjoys and also those that may create frustration.

- Freedom from controls, supervision and details.
- Democratic supervisor with whom she can associate.
- Evaluation based on results, not the process.
- An innovative and futuristic-oriented environment.
- Forum to express ideas and viewpoints.
- Assignments with a high degree of people contacts.
- Nonroutine work with challenge and opportunity.

KEYS TO MOTIVATING

Understanding what motivates a person is often found by understanding what it is she wants or values. This section of the report can help understand Jane's wants and desires. Those statements that ring true, but aren't a current part of her ministry, can become goals to reach.

Jane wants:

- A forum to ventilate her emotions.
- No close supervision.
- Independence.
- To be trusted.
- Freedom to talk and participate on the team.
- No restrictions to hamper results.
- The chance to have fun (play hard--work hard).
- Public recognition of her ideas and results.
- Work assignments that provide opportunity for recognition.
- Freedom from many rules and regulations.
- Unusual, new or difficult assignments.
- Exposure to those who appreciate her results.

KEYS TO LEADING

In this section are some needs which must be met in order for Jane to perform at an optimum level. Some needs can be met by herself, while leadership must provide for others. It is difficult for a person to enter a motivational environment when that person's basic needs have not been fulfilled. Review the list with Jane and identify 3 or 4 statements that are most important to her. This allows Jane to participate in forming her own personal growth plan.

Jane needs:

- To be confronted when in disagreement, or when she breaks the rules.
- To maintain focus on results and not sacrifice productivity just to make everyone happy.
- People to work and associate with.
- To negotiate commitment face-to-face.
- To mask emotions when appropriate.
- A rational approach to decision making--analyze the facts.
- Help on controlling time and setting priorities.
- An awareness of the parameters or rules in writing.
- To develop an appreciation for people who have a different approach to work.
- More control of body language.
- Assignments that challenge her.



AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

This section lists possible “Natural” limitations or tendencies for Jane. It does not consider life and work experiences or formal education and training that she may have received to overcome these obstacles. Review with Jane and cross out those limitations that do not apply. Highlight one to three statements that are hindering her performance and develop an action plan to eliminate or reduce these tendencies.

Jane has a tendency to:

- Blame, deny and defend her position--even if it is not needed.
- Make "off the cuff" remarks that are often seen as personal prods.
- Dislike routine work or routine people--unless she sees the need to further her goals.
- Have trouble delegating--can't wait, so does it herself.
- Set standards for herself and others so high that impossibility of the situation is common place.
- Overstep authority and prerogatives--will override others.



PERCEPTIONS

A person's actions and feelings may be quickly telegraphed to others. This section provides additional information on Jane's self-perception and how, under certain conditions, others may perceive her actions. Understanding this section will enable Jane to balance her emotions to be successful in different situations.

"See Yourself As Others See You"

SELF-PERCEPTION

Jane usually sees herself as being:

Pioneering
Competitive
Positive

Assertive
Confident
Winner

OTHERS' PERCEPTION

Under moderate pressure, tension, stress or fatigue, others may see her as being:

Demanding
Egotistical

Nervy
Aggressive

And, under extreme pressure, stress or fatigue, others may see her as being:

Abrasive
Arbitrary

Controlling
Opinionated



STRENGTHS MOVEMENT

During your response to the online questionnaire we were able to identify more than just your natural strengths. We also identified your strengths movement. Strengths movement is a measure of how the current environment impacts your natural strengths. Some environmental issues impact your strengths in a positive way and some negative. The Strengths Movement Chart illustrates this impact on your natural strengths.

As stated earlier, your natural strengths will typically remain stable over time. However, it is common for you to adapt to your current environment based on your perception of whether your strengths are being valued or discounted, or whether they are different than what may be required by your current role.

The Strengths Movement Chart provides a picture of how much you feel you need to "change" or "adapt" your natural strengths to match the needs or requirements of your current environment. You will see the same strength indicators from your natural strengths chart, but an additional indicator is overlaid that displays a measurement of your strengths movement. That movement can be positive or negative, or there may be areas where there is no movement.

Areas without any movement could indicate that your natural strengths are in alignment with your environment. Areas that have positive movement could indicate that the environment may require you to use more of that strength. In both of these scenarios, you will typically feel valued and comfortable.

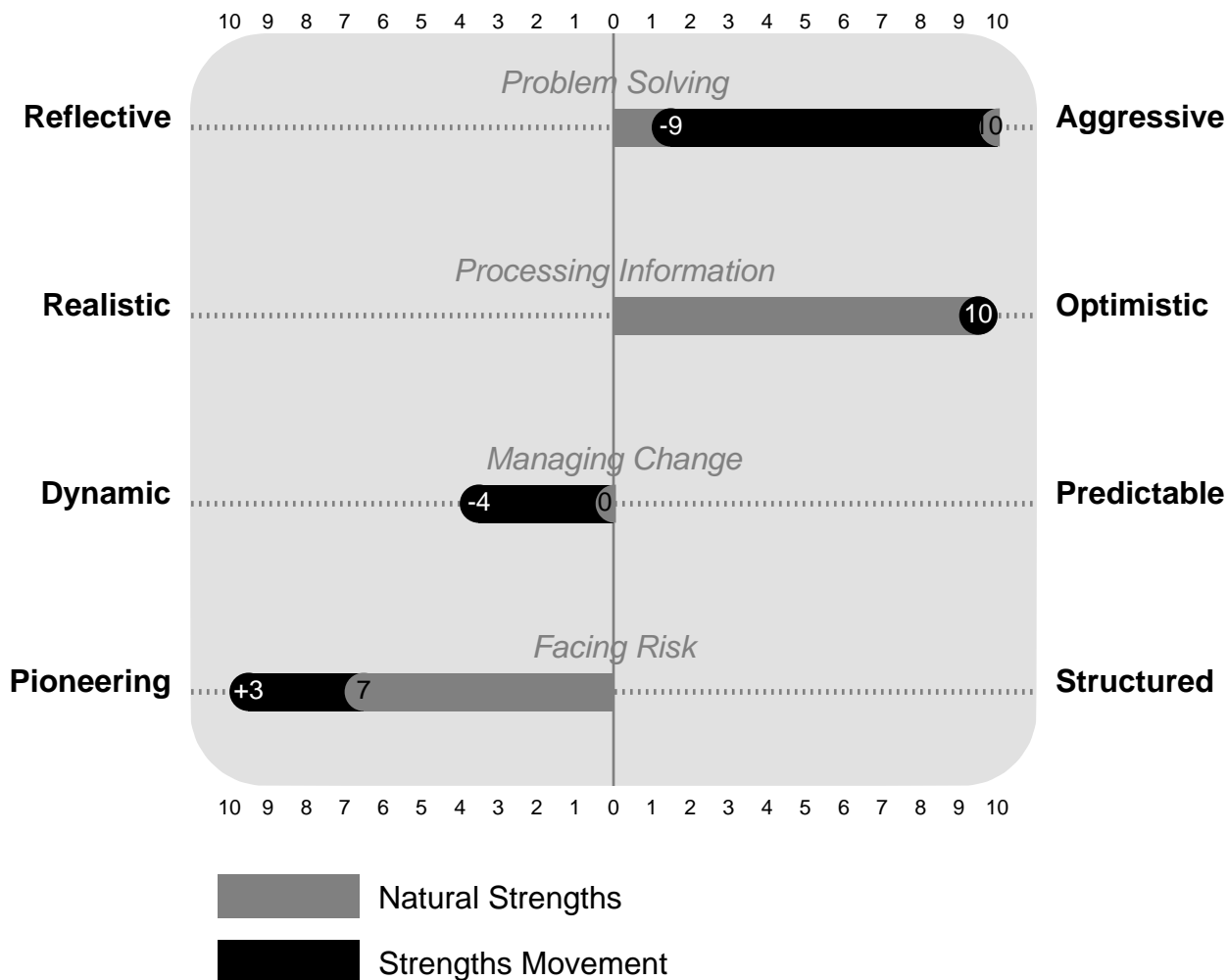
If there is negative movement in a scale, you may feel that your environment requires you to be something other than what you naturally are. You may want to explore these areas further. As you do, keep in mind that some adaptation is good and also necessary. However, long term adaptation consumes energy and can lead to stress and frustration. The greater the degree of movement away from your natural strength, the greater the degree of energy you are expending to adapt.

Changes in your current environment can dramatically impact the movement in your strengths. Therefore, it is our recommendation that you retake this assessment on an annual basis, or sooner, if there are significant changes in your current environment. This will provide an objective point of reference and help you to focus your natural strengths.

Following the Strengths Movement Chart are pages that interpret your strength movement mix into a word picture to help you explore this movement in your strengths. These subsequent text pages and the strengths movement chart can serve as an objective platform to facilitate discussion with others in your current environment.

YOUR STRENGTHS MOVEMENT CHART

As you review this chart, pay special attention to areas where the movement is away from your natural strengths. Negative movement of 5 points or more and especially movement across the center (energy) line are areas that could be costing you energy and should be explored further.





HOW ARE YOU HAVING TO "ADAPT?"

This list of descriptions can give you a picture of the way Jane feels she may need to respond to the current environment to be accepted. If these statements DO NOT sound related, explore the reasons why as a key to understanding Jane's current situation and her need to "adapt" to be accepted.

- Firm commitment to accomplishments.
- Being independent and innovative.
- Positive, outgoing, friendly behavior.
- Preferring people involvement over task focus.
- Responding well to challenges: "You say I can't do it? Just watch me!"
- Making tactful decisions.
- Being creative and unconventional in making a point.
- Contacting people using a variety of modes.
- Using a direct, forthright and honest approach in her communications.
- Willing to take risks when others may be hesitant.
- Motivating people to take action by using persuasive skills.
- Optimistic, future-oriented outlook.

NATURAL AND ADAPTED STYLE

Jane's "Natural" Style of dealing with problem solving (L), processing information (O), managing change (G) and facing risk (B) may not always fit what the environment needs. This section may provide valuable information related to the stress and pressure Jane may feel when she "Adapts" her style to the environment.

"Natural" Style	PROBLEMS - CHALLENGES	"Adapted" Style
<p>Jane tends to deal with problems and challenges in a demanding, driving and "I'm going to win" manner. She is individualistic in her approach and actively seeks goals. Jane will attack problems and likes a position with authority and work that will constantly challenge her to perform up to her ability.</p>	<p>Jane sees the need to be competitive, results-oriented and a little innovative in her approach to problem solving. She has a tendency to evaluate the risk before rushing into solving a problem.</p>	

"Natural" Style	PEOPLE - INFORMATION	"Adapted" Style
<p>Jane's "Natural" style is to use persuasion and emotion to the extreme. She is positive and seeks to influence people by the virtues of her personality and verbal skills. She will convince you that what she is saying is not only right, but is exactly what is needed. She displays enthusiasm for almost any project.</p>	<p>Jane sees no need to change her approach to influencing others to her way of thinking. She sees her "Natural" Style to be what the environment is calling for.</p>	

NATURAL AND ADAPTED STYLE

"Natural" Style	PACE - CHANGE	"Adapted" Style
Jane is deliberate and steady. She is willing to change, if the new direction is meaningful and consistent with the past. She will resist change for change's sake.		Jane wants an environment that is variety-oriented. She feels a great sense of urgency to get things completed quickly. She is eager to accept change and work on many activities.

"Natural" Style	RULES - RISK	"Adapted" Style
Jane does not like constraints, at times she can be somewhat defiant and rebellious. She has a tendency to lack social tact and diplomacy when confronted with too many or unreasonable constraints. She seeks adventure and excitement and wants to be seen as her own person.		Jane shows little discomfort when comparing her "Natural" Style to her response to the environment "Adapted" Style. The difference is not significant and Jane sees little or no need to change her response to the environment.



THE STRENGTHS WHEEL

The Strengths Wheel is a powerful visual tool to help you see the natural strengths of a team or group of people. It can also help you understand how the team or group is moving their strengths collectively to meet the demands of their current environment. If you are part of a group or team who also took the assessment, it would be advantageous to use each person's Strengths Wheel to create a master Strengths Wheel that contains each person's "Natural Strengths" and "Strengths Movement". This allows for quick identification of potential issues and alignment.

The circle represents your natural strengths. The star represents your strengths movement. The Strengths Wheel is divided down and across the middle. By looking at the top of the Strengths Wheel you will see that the L and B scales have something in common. They both represent task orientation. At the bottom of the wheel you will see that the G and O scales represent people orientation. Therefore if a team or group clusters in the top of the wheel we can predict the team will be task oriented and vice versa.

Taking another look at the wheel and you will see on the left side the B and G scales have something in common as well. They are slower paced. The opposite side of the wheel you will see that the L and O scales are faster paced. Therefore if the team or group plotted on the left side of the wheel we could predict a slower paced environment and so on.

Putting all the pieces together can give us a powerful picture of a team. It can drive objective discussion about what the natural strengths of the team are and how the team feels it needs to move, as a whole, to succeed in the current environment.

THE STRENGTHS WHEEL

