



LEADING FROM YOUR STRENGTHS

Understanding Strengths and Blending Differences

Same Sneed

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Understanding Strengths and Blending Differences
23233 N. Pima Rd. Suite 113-200
Scottsdale, AZ 85255
480-951-9888
www.insightsinternational.com or information@insightsinternational.com

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

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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 Scales

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 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 Scales

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.

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

Same is gregarious and sociable. He will be seen as a good mixer both at work and in social settings. He is optimistic and usually has a positive sense of humor. He tries to influence others through a personal relationship and many times will perform services to develop this relationship. He likes feedback from his leader on how he is doing. His goal is to have and make many friends. At work, he is good at maintaining friendly public relations. He is good at creating enthusiasm in others. He wants to be seen not only as a team player, but also as a leader of the team. He wants to know what others think of him. He wants and tries to please. He is usually filled with good intentions, but often lacks the time to fulfill them. He, because of high standards, is sensitive to criticism of his work. Sometimes he does his best work in order to gain acceptance from others.

Same is good at giving verbal and nonverbal feedback that serves to encourage people to be open, to trust him and to see him as receptive and helpful. He may be inconsistent in disciplining others. When he has strong feelings about a particular problem, you should expect to hear these feelings, and they will probably be expressed in an emotional manner. He will not be overlooked nor uninvolved. He will consistently try to inspire people to his point of view. Because of his trust and willing acceptance of people, he may misjudge the abilities of others. He likes working for a leader who makes quick decisions. He is good at solving problems that deal with people. He likes to be involved in the decision-making process.

Same has the ability to look at the whole problem; for example, thinking about relationships, being concerned about the feelings of others and focusing on the real impact of his decisions and actions. He is positive in his approach to dealing with others. He may not understand why everyone doesn't see life as he does! He will optimistically interact with



General Characteristics

people in an assured, diplomatic and poised manner. He is people-oriented and verbally fluent. Same is good at calming conflict situations. Others can sense that he is truly interested in helping people in a conciliatory role. He will know many people. He has a tendency to be a name dropper. He may do this without thinking, trying to establish rapport with people he may not know well. He tends to influence people to his way of thinking by using verbiage as compared with others who like to use reports. He is comfortable with most people and can be quite informal and relaxed with them. Even when dealing with strangers, Same will attempt to put them at ease.



Value to the Team

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

- ▶ Conscientious and steady.
- ▶ Creative problem solving.
- ▶ Optimistic and enthusiastic.
- ▶ Positive sense of humor.
- ▶ Accurate and intuitive.
- ▶ Negotiates conflicts.
- ▶ Proficient and skilled in his technical specialty.
- ▶ Verbalizes his feelings.
- ▶ Team player.



Checklist for Communicating

Many people find this section to be extremely accurate and important for enhancing communication with Same. 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 Same. Review each statement with Same to identify the statements which are most important to him. We recommend highlighting the most important "DO's" and provide this list to those who communicate with Same frequently.

Do:

- ▶ Leave time for relating, socializing.
- ▶ Provide ideas for implementing action.
- ▶ Deal with details in writing, have him commit to modes of action.
- ▶ Prepare your "case" in advance.
- ▶ Make an organized presentation of your position, if you disagree.
- ▶ Provide testimonials from people he sees as important.
- ▶ Follow through, if you agree.
- ▶ Talk about him, his goals and the opinions he finds stimulating.
- ▶ Plan interaction that supports his dreams and intentions.
- ▶ Provide solid, tangible, practical evidence.
- ▶ Make an organized contribution to his efforts, present specifics and do what you say you can do.
- ▶ Ask for his opinions/ideas regarding people.



Don'ts on Communicating

This section of the report is a list of things NOT to do while communicating with Same. Review each statement with Same 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:

- ▶ Use testimonies of unreliable sources; don't be haphazard.
- ▶ Threaten, cajole, wheedle, coax or whimper.
- ▶ Make conflicting statements.
- ▶ Be dictatorial.
- ▶ Talk down to him.
- ▶ Use gimmicks or clever, quick manipulations.
- ▶ Say "trust me"--you must prove it.
- ▶ Provide special, personal incentives.
- ▶ Drive on to facts, figures, alternatives or abstractions.
- ▶ Be vague about what's expected of either of you; don't fail to follow through.
- ▶ Leave decisions hanging in the air.
- ▶ Legislate or muffle--don't overcontrol the conversation.
- ▶ Make statements about the quality of his work unless you can prove it.



Ideal Environment

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

- Assignments with a high degree of people contacts.
- Freedom of movement.
- Democratic supervisor with whom he can associate.
- An environment where he can use his intuitive thinking skills.



Keys to Motivating

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

Same wants:

- ▶ A friendly work environment.
- ▶ Work assignments that provide opportunity for recognition.
- ▶ More time in the day.
- ▶ Outside activities so there is never a dull moment.
- ▶ Group activities outside the work environment and ministry.
- ▶ Rewards to support his dreams.
- ▶ Freedom from control and detail.
- ▶ Freedom to talk and participate on the team.
- ▶ A support system to do the detail work.
- ▶ Flattery, praise, popularity and strokes.
- ▶ Public recognition of his ideas and results.
- ▶ A leader who practices participative management.



Keys to Leading

In this section are some needs which must be met in order for Same to perform at an optimum level. Some needs can be met by himself, 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 Same and identify 3 or 4 statements that are most important to him. This allows Same to participate in forming his own personal growth plan.

Same needs:

- ▶ A leader who prefers quality over quantity.
- ▶ Objectivity when dealing with people because of his high trust level.
- ▶ To focus conversations on work activities--less socializing.
- ▶ Equipment that will allow him to perform up to his high standards.
- ▶ People to work and associate with.
- ▶ Support in making high-risk decisions.
- ▶ Rewards in terms of specifics--not just shallow words.
- ▶ Participatory leader.
- ▶ Performance appraisals on a regular basis.
- ▶ Time to see and test if the plan will work.
- ▶ To mask emotions when appropriate.
- ▶ Better organization of record keeping.
- ▶ To be informed of things which affect him.



Areas for Improvement

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

Same has a tendency to:

- ▶ Be unrealistic in appraising people--especially if the person is a "friend."
- ▶ Overuse praise in motivating others.
- ▶ Be inattentive to detail unless that detail is important to him or if detail work is of a short duration.
- ▶ Have difficulty planning and controlling time expenditure.
- ▶ Be optimistic regarding possible results of his projects or the potential of his people.
- ▶ Make decisions based on surface analysis.
- ▶ Be so enthusiastic that he can be seen as superficial.
- ▶ Trust people indiscriminately if positively reinforced by those people.



Perceptions

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

SELF-PERCEPTION

Same usually sees himself as being:

Enthusiastic	Outgoing
Charming	Inspiring
Persuasive	Optimistic

OTHERS' PERCEPTION

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

Self-Promoting	Glib
Overly Optimistic	Unrealistic

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

Overly Confident	Talkative
Poor Listener	Self-Promoter



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.



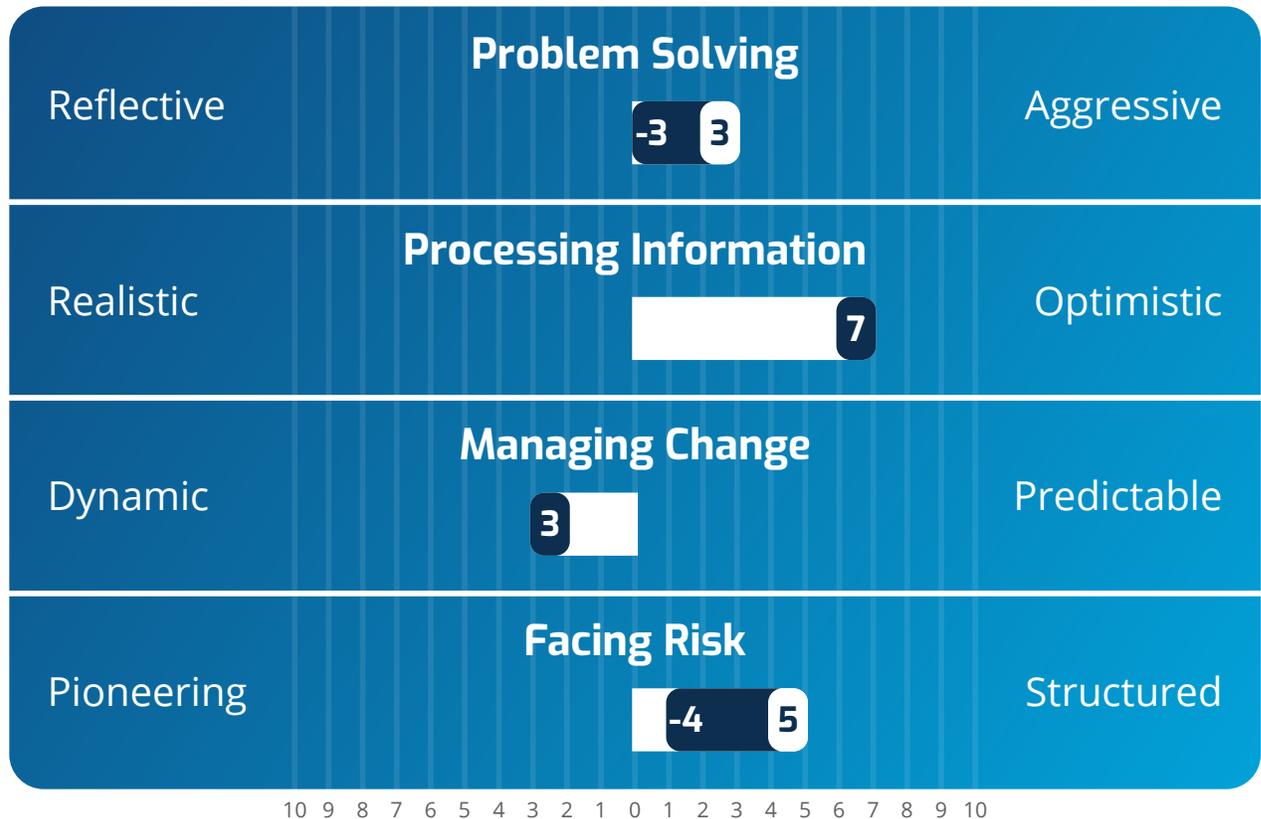
Strengths Movement

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



 Natural Strengths
 Strengths Movement



How Are You Having to "Adapt?"

This list of descriptions can give you a picture of the way Same feels he 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 Same's current situation and his need to "adapt" to be accepted.

- ▶ Coping with rapid changes in the work arena.
- ▶ Obtaining results through people.
- ▶ Flexibility.
- ▶ Handling a variety of activities.
- ▶ Making tactful decisions.
- ▶ Moving quickly from one activity to another.
- ▶ Exhibiting an active and creative sense of humor.
- ▶ Positive, outgoing, friendly behavior.
- ▶ Working without close supervision.
- ▶ Possessing a strong sense of urgency toward results.
- ▶ Maintaining an ever-changing, friendly, work environment.
- ▶ Preferring people involvement over task focus.



Natural and Adapted Style

Same'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 Same may feel when he "Adapts" his style to the environment.

Problems - Challenges

Natural Style

Same is ambitious in his approach to problem solving, displaying a strong will and a need to remove all obstacles. Same has a tendency to make decisions with little or no hesitation.

Adapted Style

Same sees the need to be somewhat conservative in his approach to solving problems. He wants to accept challenges but will be calculated in his response.

People - Information

Natural Style

Same's "Natural" style is to use persuasion and emotion to the extreme. He is positive and seeks to influence people by the virtues of his personality and verbal skills. He will convince you that what he is saying is not only right, but is exactly what is needed. He displays enthusiasm for almost any project.

Adapted Style

Same sees no need to change his approach to influencing others to his way of thinking. He sees his "Natural" Style to be what the environment is calling for.



Natural and Adapted Style

Pace - Change

Natural Style

Same likes mobility and the absence of routine does not traumatize him. He feels comfortable juggling different projects and is able to move from one project to another fairly easily.

Adapted Style

Same sees his natural activity style to be just what the environment needs. What you see is what you get for activity level and consistency. Sometimes he would like the world to slow down.

Rules - Risk

Natural Style

Same naturally is cautious and concerned for quality. He likes to be on a team that takes responsibility for the final product. He enjoys knowing the rules and can become upset when others fail to comply with the rules.

Adapted Style

Same sees the need to be open-minded about rules. However, he is aware and sensitive to the implications of not following rules and procedures.



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.

One color represents your natural strengths. The other 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 these scales have something in common. They both represent task orientation. At the bottom of the wheel you will see that these scales represent people orientation.

Taking another look at the wheel and you will see on the left side scales have something in common as well. They are slower paced. The opposite side of the wheel you will see that these scales are faster paced.

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



NATURAL STYLE Persuading Promoter (across)

ADAPTED STYLE Analyzing Promoter (across)