

CliftonStrengths/StrengthsFinder FAQs

Taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder Assessment:

Can I have the 20-second timer disabled?

If you have a disability that requires you to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder without a time limit, please contact Gallup at <https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/help/en-US/index>

What happens if I am interrupted or lose my connection during my Clifton StrengthsFinder session?

If you are interrupted or lose your connection during your Clifton StrengthsFinder session, simply sign in again. You will be returned to the paired choices you were considering at the point of interruption or disconnection.

What happens if I miss responding to a paired choice?

The average person misses responding to a few paired choices. Doing so will not significantly affect your results.

As I went through the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment, I sometimes felt that although both statements I was asked to choose between described me extremely well, neither statement described me better than the other. In those cases, I used the Neutral option. Why not have a Both option?

The omission of a Both option was intentional. The research that led to the Clifton StrengthsFinder revealed that people are not "well rounded," and that your best opportunity for strength lies in your greatest talents. So rather than allow you to say you are good at everything, the instrument helps you sort and rank your talents as your instincts guide you -- just as you naturally do throughout each day.

Can I retake the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment? Can taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder more than once affect my results?

Your first completion of the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment will yield the purest and most revealing results. For this reason, each Clifton StrengthsFinder access code is valid for only one time through the assessment. Taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder more than once may actually skew the validity of the results. The Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment measures the presence of talents by presenting you with pairs of statements, and by then challenging you to make a top-of-mind choice between the two. The 20-second time limit and your unfamiliarity with the statements ensure your assessment's accuracy by making it difficult to over-think your responses.

How do neutral responses affect the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment?

The purpose of the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment is to help you begin to discover your most dominant talents by identifying the areas, or "themes," in which they lie. It does so by presenting you with a situation in which you are forced to select between two choices that are different, but not necessarily opposite. Obviously, if you can't make a selection because you feel that neither choice applies to you, your neutral response will not count in the final scoring process. Less obviously, if you can't make a selection because you feel that both choices apply to you, your neutral response will still not count in the final scoring process. Why? Because sometimes the most revealing choices are between two positives. If you can't make a choice -- if both statements apply to you equally -- this pair of statements probably is not tapping into one of your most dominant themes.

I sometimes couldn't decide on my response before the Clifton StrengthsFinder moved on to the next set of paired statements. Is that a problem?

Actually, that's just part of the assessment process. Whenever your talents lead you to make a choice, we capture it. If the time limit prevented you from making a choice, it is very likely that neither statement



reached you in a way that allowed you to make a top-of-mind choice. Perhaps each of the two statements described you equally well. Perhaps neither described you well. In either case, your difficulty in making a choice reveals that the statement pair probably did not tap into one of your most dominant themes of talent.

I was in a good/bad mood when I took the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment. Did that affect my results? Should I retake the assessment?

Your mood has little effect on your Clifton StrengthsFinder results. We discovered this by asking the same people to take the Clifton StrengthsFinder twice, on separate occasions, months apart. Despite the fact that their moods were presumably different, each person's results were remarkably consistent between the two administrations. Statisticians will be interested to know that Gallup found test-retest reliabilities of 0.60-0.80. This doesn't mean that your mood will have no effect whatsoever on your responses to the statements. However, it does mean that the Clifton StrengthsFinder effectively cuts through your mood to reveal your most dominant patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior.

Reports

Why does the Clifton StrengthsFinder reveal only my top five themes?

The Clifton StrengthsFinder's purpose is to start you on the path to strengths by helping you discover your most dominant talents. Talents are the required "raw materials" for building strengths, and the more dominant the talents, the greater the opportunity for strength. To encourage focus on your most dominant talents, only your top five themes, called your Signature Themes, are revealed.

What types of reports are available?

Two report types are available on this Web site. One, the Clifton StrengthsFinder certificate, displays only your Signature Theme names; the second, the Talent Discovery and Development Report, lists your Signature Themes and their standard descriptions. Highly customized reports are available and the publication StrengthsFinder 2.0.

What is the difference between HTML and PDF reports? How do I open the PDF report?

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is what you see on your screen. If you print an HTML file, the printed results will look like what you see on your screen. Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) reports are more aesthetically pleasing than the HTML reports. However, to view a PDF file, you need Adobe® Acrobat® Reader®, available free from Adobe. Once you have this application installed on your computer, simply click on "PDF version" underneath the description of the report type you want to print.

About the Clifton StrengthsFinder

What is the Clifton StrengthsFinder?

The Clifton StrengthsFinder is a Web-based assessment of normal personality from the perspective of Positive Psychology. It is the first assessment instrument of this type developed expressly for the Internet. Specifically, the Clifton StrengthsFinder measures the presence of talents in 34 general areas referred to as "themes." Talents -- the ways in which we naturally think, feel, and behave as unique individuals -- serve as the foundation of strengths development. Over a secure connection, the Clifton StrengthsFinder presents 180 items to the respondent. Each item consists of a pair of potential self-descriptors, such as "I read instructions carefully" versus "I like to jump right into things." The descriptors are placed as if anchoring polar ends of a continuum. The respondent is then asked to choose from that pair the statement that best describes him or her, and also to what extent that chosen option is descriptive. The respondent is given 20 seconds to respond to a given pair of descriptors before the system moves on to the next pair. (Clifton



StrengthsFinder developmental research showed that the 20-second limit resulted in a negligible item non-completion rate.) Upon completing the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment, respondents receive a report displaying their top five (most dominant) themes. The respondent then has the opportunity to delve into those themes to discover his or her greatest talents. The Clifton StrengthsFinder and the top five themes report were designed in keeping with a major component of Gallup's mission: help people learn about and build upon their greatest talents to create strengths that will enhance all aspects of their lives.

On what personality theory is the Clifton StrengthsFinder based?

Research leading to the development of the Clifton StrengthsFinder included more than 30 years of studying talents and strengths and how they relate to performance outcomes. The instrument is based on a general model of Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology is a framework, or a paradigm, that encompasses an approach to psychology from the perspective of healthy, successful life functioning. Topics include optimism, positive emotions, spirituality, happiness, satisfaction, personal development, and well-being. The perspective taken by Positive Psychology, Gallup's strengths concept, and the Clifton StrengthsFinder differs from that of other theories and instruments developed to measure various psychological constructs. For that reason, we have not sought to develop a table that would compare and contrast the Clifton StrengthsFinder approach to that of psychological assessments that theoretically measure other constructs by means of other theoretical starting points.

What is a strength? What is the difference between a talent and a strength?

A strength is the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance in a specific activity. The key to creating a strength is to identify your dominant talents -- the ways in which you most naturally think, feel, and behave as a unique individual -- then complement them by acquiring knowledge and skills pertinent to the activity.

Can you build a strength through practice alone, or does "consistent, near-perfect performance" require some natural talent?

Development of a strength in any activity requires talents, which are naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied. Knowledge and skill are key components of strength, but to possess true strength you must use the best of your natural self: your dominant talents.

Can my Signature Themes change?

Because talents are naturally enduring, it is unlikely that your top themes will change significantly over the course of your life. However, by shifting your focus and acquiring new skills and knowledge to capitalize on your greatest talents in different ways, you can develop new strengths.

Are any of the themes opposites?

No. Each theme is discrete. The Futuristic theme -- a fascination with the future -- is not the "opposite" of the Context theme -- a fascination with the past. Similarly, the Discipline theme -- a desire for routine and structure -- is not the opposite of the Adaptability theme -- the ability to "go with the flow." Your powerful talents in one theme do not prevent you from being highly talented in any other theme.

Can the Clifton StrengthsFinder reveal whether I am in the right career?

The Clifton StrengthsFinder was designed for use in a purely developmental context. It is not designed to direct you into specific professions. Although certain themes do appear to be quite consistently dominant within certain professions, it would be wrong to say that a given profession requires dominant talents in certain themes. During our research, we discovered many individuals who were excelling in the same profession but who had very different top five themes. The best way to use the Clifton StrengthsFinder to guide your career is to closely examine your top five themes -- and other themes you may claim among your most dominant -- and figure out how to best capitalize on your talents in those themes in whatever role or profession you select. (For a more detailed look and ideas about how the Clifton StrengthsFinder may help you guide your career, see Part II of the book StrengthsFinder 2.0.)



Have demographic comparisons revealed any differences in Clifton StrengthsFinder results between races, sexes, nationalities, or age groups?

Some slight differences do exist, but on an individual level these differences are negligible. The most interesting and the most significant talent differences can be found between people, not peoples.