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Reflective Leadership Paper

## **Introduction**

My five Strengths designated after taking my *Strengthfinder* assessments were Restorative, Deliberate, Analytical, Responsibility, and Relator. After reading my diagnosis, so to speak, I thought that quite a few of them were not descriptors of myself, and others should have placed higher up. Once I read about them in detail, I began to see myself in each category and understand exactly why they are all my strengths. By the conclusion of this paper it should be very clear what my strengths are and how I exemplify them in my daily life.

## **Restorative**

When I saw the term restorative used as a strength of mine, the first thing I thought of was, “When do I care enough to want to restore relationships with people?” I thought of this as how I deal with others as opposed to life and problems in general. As you will gather as you read further, I don’t consider myself a “people person”, so when I saw this, I was somewhat alarmed. I agree with this as a strength because it shares commonalities with the others and describes my tendencies. The text states, first and foremost, that I like to fix things. As far as I can remember, I’ve always liked tinkering with things. When I was younger, I would put my own toys together and even to this day, I find a way to put together the new items that I purchase that need assembly. I am also overly critical of myself and second guess myself often. It’s nice to have an understanding of why. To keep from stressing and being too critical of myself, the book suggests that I redirect my attention towards things that are tangible and can be fixed. It is

suggested that I work best when I anticipate and prevent problems before they occur and share my foresight or solutions to problems with others. One thing that I must keep in mind, though, is the need to let others solve their problems. This is difficult to do and requires much patience on my part when it comes to my students when we're working on a skill for some time and they've been taught explicitly what should be done. I continue to scaffold them and prompt them, but this restorative strength does want to take over

### **Deliberative**

Although there was another that I initially felt should have been placed higher, this descriptor describes me perfectly. I continually ask the questions in various situations, "Why? or How?" I tend to look at things from different angles and determine what steps I should take that are more beneficial. It's stated that I am careful not to give too much praise or recognition, lest it be misconstrued. Sometimes I feel as if I'm being mean or playing the "Devil's advocate", but now see that this is just part of my personality that I can use and sharpen to benefit me. This strength describes my ability to identify the dangers in situations and how they will impact me and act accordingly. In both personal and professional relationships I am extremely deliberative, sometimes to a fault.

At staff meetings or even grade level meetings, I sometimes feel that others see me as being shy or less knowledgeable of what's going on, but in actuality I'm just processing what's going on. When we are discussing some topics, I feel as though I may be perceived as being negative, but now see that it's just my deliberative strength and must find ways to turn this into a valuable strength. I need to find ways to better explain my thought process and trust my instincts. Often I feel as if some things are too good to be true and a lot of the time, they are. I

need to use these cautions to help steer my decisions and help others to understand my apprehensions. Knowing that this Deliberative Talent describes my apprehension when approaching tasks allows me to feel comfortable and gives me reassurance that I'm ok. I just need to be cognizant of my delivery.

### **Analytical**

When I saw my list of descriptors, analytical was the one that I thought would have been number one. I am definitely a "Prove it" type of person. I analyze everything, and this is obvious to anyone that I communicate with on a daily basis. As the text states, I see myself as objective and dispassionate. I have always come across to others as unconcerned about things as well. It annoys me when people approach me with projects or ideas and don't have their facts straight or at least some form of plan. I sometimes feel as if I am quick to react harshly and see now, that this can be a characterization of my analytical strength. Although my skepticism is relevant and assists with ensuring validity to projects, I must make sure that it's delivered in a manner that isn't taken personally by others. When working with any task, I look for patterns to make my job easier. Sound data and facts make it easier for me to visualize and be successful at some tasks. In order to ensure that my analytical abilities don't paralyze projects, the text suggests that I pair up with someone with strong Activator talents. My best friend has an Activator talent, so her impatience will help to move things along.

### **Responsibility**

When I am at home working at all times of the night, I sometimes ask myself, "Why am I still up? Why can't I stop working?" I know that I need to sleep and there are other things that I need to do, but I can't mentally shut down in order to stop. I've never even seen myself as being

very responsible, but I see now that my sense of responsibility explains why I work on tasks until they are completed. When I feel that others are inconvenienced, I do what I can do, within reason, to make things right. The text suggests that those with a responsibility descriptor are selective of the tasks that they take on and this makes a lot of sense. When I say I'm going to do something or be somewhere, I'm going to do it, and need to limit the tasks that I agree to do so that I don't become overwhelmed. This year I have done a much better job of saying, "NO." I have been approached several times to do after school tutoring, and I have declined. I know that with my coursework, and the need to keep my classroom in order, that would be a bad commitment. I am said to work best when I am given the opportunity to follow through on my commitments, and I believe that this explains some of my negative feelings regarding some situations. Much of the time we get new initiatives and before we get an opportunity to fully implement them, they are canceled or we are told that we no longer are using them. When this happens, I become indifferent and negative feelings arise. Those with the talent of responsibility take ownership of every project that they encounter and this can be difficult when working with others. Often I find myself shying away from group projects and am aware that having to work with groups is inevitable. I just have to allow others the opportunity to do their parts. I find it humorous that the text states that we should reflect on whether or not we are the right people for specific tasks in order to manage this area. I am constantly second guessing myself and trying to find out who would best to do a particular job when I see that I may not be the best to complete the task.

### **Relator**

Similar to the initial analysis of my Restorative talent, I saw Relator and didn't feel that it represented me at all. After reading the explanation, though, I do fall into this category

somewhat. Those with a Relator talent are pulled towards those that they already know which is accurate for me. The text states that we are willing to take the risk of being taken advantage of by our close friends, but my Deliberate talent does not allow that to happen. With new people I tend to be courteous and mannerable, but don't delve deeper. Only after repeated interactions with others, do I open up. For example, I worked with a friend of mine for about a year and had no interaction with her other than hello and goodbye. When I left that school, coincidentally, I transferred to the same school where she worked. Again, we were cordial with each other. After a couple of years, she was moved to my grade level team and we've been friends ever since. When meeting new people, I could care less about their status or job titles. I tend to want to get to know the people as opposed to how their status can help me. This is my second year on my current team and of course I kept to myself the first year, but this year we have engaged in more team building activities and are closer. As the text states, I have a small circle of close friends that I hold dear. All other acquaintances are welcomed only after they've been observed, so to speak, and we've been in close proximity for some time.

## **Conclusion**

Although there was apprehension when I say my five strengths listed, it seems that the assessment was accurate in determining the strengths that suit me. After analysis, my first three talents, Restorative, Deliberative, and Analytical, go hand in hand. When approached with a problem, I ask questions and look for patterns to better attack it. I gather and analyze the necessary data in order for a successful outcome. My Responsibility talent then kicks in because once all this is all done; I have to make sure that the task assigned is completed correctly. What I must do is use what I've learned through this process to utilize these descriptors as strengths by recognizing what they are and how I can use them to guide me through challenging situations.

One of my “strengths” had previously been thought of as a weakness because it is so prevalent in my everyday life. By being so analytical, I second guess things and over analyze situations further than necessary. The need for proof or solid data to will be an underlying theme when I feel that this strength becomes a hinderance. If I rely on the facts, and use them for my judgments, the outcomes can be successful.