

CFANS 3201: Strategic Career Planning

Identifying and Using your Strengths

“Despite the American myth, I cannot be or do whatever I desire—a truism, to be sure, but a truism we often defy. Our created natures make us like organisms in an ecosystem: there are some roles and relationships in which we thrive and others in which we wither and die.”

~Parker Palmer, from “Let Your Life Speak”

“You can’t be anything you want to be, but you can be a whole lot more of who you are.”

~Curt Liesveld, Seminar Leader and Consultant

Step 1: Identify your Five “Signature” themes.

Step 2: Of these, identify your most dependable “life theme”/recurring strength.

- Why did you pick this one theme over the others?
- How and when did you know that this was dominant theme?

Step 3: *Tell a story* that illustrates this theme in your life.

- Any time of life
- Stands out as a highlight
- Felt you made a significant contribution
- Seemed to come easily to you
- Left you feeling proud/humbled/energized/motivated...

In any interview it is important for candidates to **verbalize** and **give detailed information** about what they have done in their past roles. Take one of your outcomes (strengths) and come up with a specific example of how you achieved that success. You must “sell yourself” by using one of your themes to describe how they achieved you success.

Making sense of your data: “The Domains of Strength”

EXECUTING- Achiever, Arranger, Belief, Consistency, Deliberative, Discipline, Focus, Responsibility, Restorative

INFLUENCING- Activator, Command, Communication, Competition, Maximizer, Self-Assurance, Significance, Woo

RELATIONSHIP- Adaptability, Developer, Connectedness, Empathy, Harmony, Includer, Individualization, Positivity, Relator

STRATEGIC THINKING- Analytical, Context, Futuristic, Ideation, Input, Intellection, Learner, Strategic

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Some alternative perspectives/considerations:

As important to knowing your greatest assets/talents/strengths is knowing your “fatal flaw.” Take a moment to reflect on more problematic situations that seem to have occurred more than once in your life recently. Can you identify (one of your) “fatal flaws? *[Hint: Look closely at your signature themes...]*

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Additional Resource

<http://www.authentichappiness.com/default.aspx>

Website created and maintained by Dr. Martin Seligman through the Pennsylvania University. Dr. Seligman is considered a leader in positive psychology, and has produced a variety of free instruments to assess strengths and virtues.