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Jacob Stephens

# Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 08-05-2017



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## YOUR TOP 5 THEMES

1. Learner
2. Strategic
3. Intellection
4. Analytical
5. Achiever

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## What's in This Guide?

### SECTION I: AWARENESS

A brief Shared Theme Description for each of your top five themes

Your Personalized Strengths Insights, which describe what makes you stand out from others with the same theme in their top five

Questions for you to answer to increase your awareness of your talents

### SECTION II: APPLICATION

10 Ideas for Action for each of your top five themes

Questions for you to answer to help you apply your talents

### SECTION III: ACHIEVEMENT

Examples of what each of your top five themes "sounds like" -- real quotes from people who also have the theme in their top five

Steps for you to take to help you leverage your talents for achievement

## Section I: Awareness

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### Learner

#### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

#### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

##### **What makes you stand out?**

Chances are good that you prefer to concentrate on activities, problems, opportunities, or subjects that really intrigue you. Each time you acquire new information, you feel you can help people who need the same information. Instinctively, you prefer having quiet time to mull over ideas as well as read and examine interesting topics. Periods of uninterrupted thinking give you great pleasure. You probably excuse yourself from noisy, active, or distracting situations to thoroughly process your ideas. Driven by your talents, you have a strong need to know that you are taking the proper course of action before you begin. Without a doubt, your hunger for evidence, data, or background information is immense. Whether your sources of knowledge are people, classes, books, the Internet, or discussions, you are hardwired to be as informed as you possibly can be prior to starting most ventures. You probably prefer to be overly prepared rather than risk being poorly prepared. It's very likely that you ingratiate yourself — that is, gain favorable acceptance — with people who think about bygone events and the people who played a major or minor role in them. Reading historians' writings or listening to their conversations probably fills your mind with many questions. You enjoy filing away their answers, sensing one day all this information will prove to be useful. Whether it actually does become useful makes no difference to you. Knowledge is its own reward, in your opinion. By nature, you are an individual performer who intentionally signs up for tough classes. Your desire to excel is amplified when the only path to a good grade is a steep one.

#### QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

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## Strategic

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

By nature, you can reconfigure factual information or data in ways that reveal trends, raise issues, identify opportunities, or offer solutions. You bring an added dimension to discussions. You make sense out of seemingly unrelated information. You are likely to generate multiple action plans before you choose the best one. Because of your strengths, you examine the past. You discover why things happened. This permits you to foresee the future. You study humankind's story to identify subtle nuances, recurring sequences of events, and predictable human behavior. Generating clever, resourceful, inventive, and original alternatives, you can offer solutions to age-old problems. Driven by your talents, you enjoy brainstorming — that is, a group problem-solving technique that involves the spontaneous contribution of ideas from all participants. Because you have acquired special skills and knowledge, you can suggest a number of alternative solutions. Your expertise often serves as a springboard for your own and others' imaginations. This is the case when you are encouraged to think about the future. Instinctively, you have acquired valuable skills and knowledge. You spend time considering numerous courses of action before choosing one. You invent original and innovative techniques for dealing with expected and unexpected challenges. You use the same approach to take advantage of promising opportunities. Chances are good that you may see solutions before other people know there is a problem. You might start formulating answers before your teammates, coworkers, or classmates understand the question. Sometimes you generate numerous ideas before sorting to the one that makes the most sense in a particular situation.

### QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

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# Intellection

## SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.

## YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

### What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you are likely to be restless until you have collected enough insights to thoughtfully examine an abstract concept, theory, or idea. This is one reason why you are attracted to people who frequently engage in intelligent conversations. They intentionally avoid casual chit-chat or meaningless small talk. By nature, you need uninterrupted quiet time to be alone with your thoughts. Seldom do you automatically accept all the ideas of someone who has authored a book, been interviewed by the media, or been invited to address an audience. Instead, you scrutinize the theories and concepts of writers, speakers, and philosophers. You probably are a critical thinker. It's very likely that you have a rich vocabulary upon which to draw. The words you choose often expand and challenge your listeners' or readers' thinking. Because of your strengths, you sometimes map out trips, projects, or agendas well ahead of time. Once in a while, your detailed preparation involves reading. Perhaps you devour the printed word and its meaning with the same passion that a gourmand — that is, someone heartily interested in food — savors a delicious meal. Chances are good that you might want to finish reading certain kinds of books, publications, or Internet sites once you have started. Possibly you avoid dawdling — that is, moving slowly — as you amass specific information that may or may not prove useful at a later date. Perhaps you simply enjoy some aspects of reading and collecting ideas.

## QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

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# Analytical

## SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.

## YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

### What makes you stand out?

By nature, you genuinely enjoy activities when just about everything makes sense. You naturally gravitate to tasks where facts, events, processes, or ideas are methodically outlined. Driven by your talents, you typically orchestrate things for people. You identify a reasonable set of steps they need to follow. You instinctively know which plans can withstand rigorous examination. In addition, you figure out which ones are sure to collapse under close scrutiny. Because of your strengths, you are rarely pressured into a decision by emotional pleas. You rely on sound reasoning to make informed choices. You are level-headed, calm, and poised when solving problems. You concentrate on the facts to draw clear and understandable conclusions. It's very likely that you are a good partner for someone who struggles to decide what is most important. With your assistance, people can outline what to do first, second, third, and so on. You probably help individuals narrow down their long lists of tasks and opportunities. Once priorities are finalized, you push, pull, coax, cajole, or urge the person to concentrate on only the targets that deserve full-time attention. Instinctively, you are a rational thinker. That is, you exhibit good judgment and exercise sound reasoning. These thought processes serve you well whenever you set out to acquire true knowledge and/or gain a skill. You school yourself by reading, investigating, examining, experiencing, or receiving instruction in a subject.

## QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

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## Achiever

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you likely are a person whose work ethic is as much a matter of conscience as it is a matter of completing tasks. You undoubtedly need to do what you know is right, honest, true, correct, proper, and accurate. Chances are good that you prefer to work or study by yourself. You probably spend as much time as you need to reach a particular goal and produce quality results. You can lose track of time when you are engrossed in a task. Because of your strengths, you automatically set aside time to map out the coming months, years, or decades. You realize the hard work of thinking must precede the implementation of any long-range plans. You have discovered that your success depends on it. By nature, you often go out of your way to stay informed about newsworthy topics. Numerous people probably count on you to tell them about information updates, due dates, meeting changes, or special assignments. Instinctively, you channel your energy into your work or studies. You seldom count the hours you work. Feeling fully engaged in what you do is a major source of satisfaction. You believe there is always something more challenging you can pursue. Given your ability to withstand hardship, adversity, and stress, it is no surprise you love what you do. You strive to do more and more of it each day.

### QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?



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## Questions

1. How does this information help you better understand your unique talents?
2. How can you use this understanding to add value to your role?
3. How can you apply this knowledge to add value to your team, workgroup, department, or division?
4. How will this understanding help you add value to your organization?
5. What will you do differently tomorrow as a result of this report?

## Section II: Application

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### Learner

#### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Refine how you learn. For example, you might learn best by teaching; if so, seek out opportunities to present to others. You might learn best through quiet reflection; if so, find this quiet time.

Develop ways to track the progress of your learning. If there are distinct levels or stages of learning within a discipline or skill, take a moment to celebrate your progression from one level to the next. If no such levels exist, create them for yourself (e.g., reading five books on the subject or making three presentations on the subject).

Be a catalyst for change. Others might be intimidated by new rules, new skills, or new circumstances. Your willingness to soak up this newness can calm their fears and spur them to action. Take this responsibility seriously.

Seek roles that require some form of technical competence. You will enjoy the process of acquiring and maintaining this expertise.

As far as possible, shift your career toward a field with constantly changing technologies or regulations. You will be energized by the challenge of keeping up.

Because you are not threatened by unfamiliar information, you might excel in a consulting role (either internal or external) in which you are paid to go into new situations and pick up new competencies or languages quickly.

Research supports the link between learning and performance. When people have the opportunity to learn and grow, they are more productive and loyal. Look for ways to measure the degree to which you and others feel that your learning needs are being met, to create individualized learning milestones, and to reward achievements in learning.

At work, take advantage of programs that subsidize your learning. Your organization may be willing to pay for part or all of your instructional coursework or for certifications. Ask your manager for information about scholarships and other educational opportunities.

Honor your desire to learn. Take advantage of adult educational opportunities in your community. Discipline yourself to sign up for at least one new academic or adult learning course each year.

Time disappears and your attention intensifies when you are immersed in studying or learning. Allow yourself to “follow the trail” by scheduling learning sessions during periods of time that will not be interrupted by pressing engagements.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

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## Strategic

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Take the time to fully reflect or muse about a goal that you want to achieve until the related patterns and issues emerge for you. Remember that this musing time is essential to strategic thinking.

You can see repercussions more clearly than others can. Take advantage of this ability by planning your range of responses in detail. There is little point in knowing where events will lead if you are not ready when you get there.

Find a group that you think does important work, and contribute your strategic thinking. You can be a leader with your ideas.

Your strategic thinking will be necessary to keep a vivid vision from deteriorating into an ordinary pipe dream. Fully consider all possible paths toward making the vision a reality. Wise forethought can remove obstacles before they appear.

Make yourself known as a resource for consultation with those who are stumped by a particular problem or hindered by a particular obstacle or barrier. By naturally seeing a way when others are convinced there is no way, you will lead them to success.

You are likely to anticipate potential issues more easily than others. Though your awareness of possible danger might be viewed as negativity by some, you must share your insights if you are going to avoid these pitfalls. To prevent misperception of your intent, point out not only the future obstacle, but also a way to prevent or overcome it. Trust your insights, and use them to ensure the success of your efforts.

Help others understand that your strategic thinking is not an attempt to belittle their ideas, but is instead a natural propensity to consider all the facets of a plan objectively. Rather than being a naysayer, you are actually trying to examine ways to ensure that the goal is accomplished, come what may. Your talents will allow you to consider others' perspectives while keeping your end goal in sight.

Trust your intuitive insights as often as possible. Even though you might not be able to explain them rationally, your intuitions are created by a brain that instinctively anticipates and projects. Have

confidence in these perceptions.

Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. With this person's need for action and your need for anticipation, you can forge a powerful partnership.

Make sure that you are involved in the front end of new initiatives or enterprises. Your innovative yet procedural approach will be critical to the genesis of a new venture because it will keep its creators from developing deadly tunnel vision.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

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## Intellection

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Consider beginning or continuing your studies in philosophy, literature, or psychology. You will always enjoy subjects that stimulate your thinking.

List your ideas in a log or diary. These ideas will serve as grist for your mental mill, and they might yield valuable insights.

Deliberately build relationships with people you consider to be "big thinkers." Their example will inspire you to focus your own thinking.

People may think you are aloof or disengaged when you close your door or spend time alone. Help them understand that this is simply a reflection of your thinking style, and that it results not from a disregard for relationships, but from a desire to bring the most you can to those relationships.

You are at your best when you have the time to follow an intellectual trail and see where it leads. Get involved on the front end of projects and initiatives, rather than jumping in at the execution stage. If you join in the latter stages, you may derail what has already been decided, and your insights may come too late.

Engaging people in intellectual and philosophical debate is one way that you make sense of things. This is not the case for everyone. Be sure to channel your provocative questions to those who

similarly enjoy the give and take of debate.

Schedule time for thinking; it can be energizing for you. Use these occasions to muse and reflect.

Take time to write. Writing might be the best way for you to crystallize and integrate your thoughts.

Find people who like to talk about the same issues you do. Organize a discussion group that addresses your subjects of interest.

Encourage people around you to use their full intellectual capital by reframing questions for them and by engaging them in dialogue. At the same time, realize that there will be some who find this intimidating and who need time to reflect before being put on the spot.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

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## Analytical

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Choose work in which you are paid to analyze data, find patterns, or organize ideas. For example, you might excel in marketing, financial, or medical research or in database management, editing, or risk management.

Whatever your role, identify credible sources on which you can rely. You are at your best when you have well-researched sources of information and numbers to support your logic. For example, determine the most helpful books, websites, or publications that can serve as references.

Your mind is constantly working and producing insightful analysis. Are others aware of that? Find the best way of expressing your thoughts: writing, one-on-one conversations, group discussions, perhaps lectures or presentations. Put value to your thoughts by communicating them.

Make sure that your accumulation and analysis of information always leads to its application and implementation. If you don't do this naturally, find a partner who pushes you from theory to practice, from thinking to doing. This person will help ensure that your analysis doesn't turn into paralysis.

Take an academic course that will expand your Analytical talents. Specifically, study people whose

logic you admire.

Volunteer your Analytical talents. You can be particularly helpful to those who are struggling to organize large quantities of data or having a hard time bringing structure to their ideas.

Partner with someone with strong Activator talents. This person's impatience will move you more quickly through the analytical phase into the action phase.

You may remain skeptical until you see solid proof. Your skepticism ensures validity, but others may take it personally. Help others realize that your skepticism is primarily about data, not people.

Look for patterns in data. See if you can discern a motif, precedent, or relationship in scores or numbers. By connecting the dots in the data and inferring a causal link, you may be able to help others see these patterns.

Help others understand that your analytical approach will often require data and other information to logically back up new ideas that they might suggest.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

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## Achiever

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Select jobs that allow you to have the leeway to work as hard as you want and in which you are encouraged to measure your own productivity. You will feel challenged and alive in these environments.

As an achiever, you relish the feeling of being busy, yet you also need to know when you are “done.” Attach timelines and measurement to goals so that effort leads to defined progress and tangible outcomes.

Remember to build celebration and recognition into your life. Achievers tend to move on to the next challenge without acknowledging their successes. Counter this impulse by creating regular opportunities to enjoy your progress and accomplishments.

Your drive for action might cause you to find meetings a bit boring. If that's the case, appeal to your Achiever talents by learning the objectives of each meeting ahead of time and by taking notes about progress toward those objectives during the meeting. You can help ensure that meetings are productive and efficient.

Continue your education by attaining certifications in your area or specialty in addition to attending conferences and other programs. This will give you even more goals to achieve and will push your existing boundaries of accomplishment.

You do not require much motivation from others. Take advantage of your self-motivation by setting challenging goals. Set a more demanding goal every time you finish a project.

Partner with other hard workers. Share your goals with them so they can help you to get more done.

Count personal achievements in your scoring "system." This will help you direct your Achiever talents toward family and friends as well as toward work.

More work excites you. The prospect of what lies ahead is infinitely more motivating than what has been completed. Launch initiatives and new projects. Your seemingly endless reserve of energy will create enthusiasm and momentum.

Make sure that in your eagerness to do more at work, you do not skimp on quality. Create measurable outcome standards to guarantee that increased productivity is matched by enhanced quality.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

## Section III: Achievement

Look for signs of achievement as you read these real quotes from people who share your top five themes.

### LEARNER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Annie M., managing editor: “I get antsy when I am not learning something. Last year, although I was enjoying my work, I didn’t feel as though I was learning enough. So I took up tap dancing. It sounds strange, doesn’t it? I know I am never going to perform or anything, but I enjoy focusing on the technical skill of tapping, getting a little better each week, and moving up from the beginners’ class to the intermediate class. That was a kick.”

Miles A., operations manager: “When I was seven years old, my teachers would tell my parents, ‘Miles isn’t the most intelligent boy in the school, but he’s a sponge for learning, and he’ll probably go really far because he will push himself and continually be grasping new things.’ Right now, I am just starting a course in business-travel Spanish. I know it is probably too ambitious to think I could learn conversational Spanish and become totally proficient in that language, but I at least want to be able to travel there and know the language.”

Tim S., coach for executives: “One of my clients is so inquisitive that it drives him crazy because he can’t do everything he wants to. I’m different. I am not curious in that broad sense. I prefer to go into greater depth with things so that I can become competent in them and then use them at work. For example, recently one of my clients wanted me to travel with him to Nice, France, for a business engagement. So I started reading up on the region, buying books, and checking the Internet. It was all interesting and I enjoyed the study, but I wouldn’t have done any of it if I wasn’t going to be traveling there for work.”

### STRATEGIC SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Liam C., manufacturing plant manager: “It seems as if I can always see the consequences before anyone else can. I have to say to people, ‘Lift up your eyes; look down the road a ways. Let’s talk about where we are going to be next year so that when we get to this time next year, we don’t have the same problems.’ It seems obvious to me, but some people are just too focused on this month’s numbers, and everything is driven by that.”

Vivian T., television producer: “I used to love logic problems when I was a kid — you know, the ones where ‘if A implies B, and B equals C, does A equal C?’ Still today, I am always playing out repercussions, seeing where things lead. I think it makes me a great interviewer. I know that nothing is an accident; every sign, every word, every tone of voice has significance. So I watch for these clues



and play them out in my head, see where they lead, and then plan my questions to take advantage of what I have seen in my head.”

Simon T., human resources executive: “We really needed to take the union on at some stage, and I saw an opportunity — a very good issue to take them on. I could see that they were going in a direction that would lead them into all kinds of trouble if they continued following it. Lo and behold, they did continue following it, and when they arrived, there I was, ready and waiting. I suppose it just comes naturally to me to predict what someone else is going to do. And then when that person reacts, I can respond immediately because I have sat down and said, ‘Okay, if they do this, we’ll do this. If they do that, then we’ll do this other thing.’ It’s like when you tack in a sailboat. You head in one direction, but you jinx one way, then another, planning and reacting, planning and reacting.”

### INTELLECTION SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Lauren H., project manager: “I suppose that most people who meet me in passing presume that I am a flaming extrovert. I do not deny the fact that I love people, but they would be amazed to know how much time alone, how much solitude, I need in order to function in public. I really love my own company. I love solitude because it gives me a chance to allow my diffused focus to simmer with something else. That’s where my best ideas come from. My ideas need to simmer and ‘perk.’ I used this phrase even when I was younger: ‘I have put my ideas in, and now I have to wait for them to perk.’”

Michael P., marketing executive: “It’s strange, but I find that I need to have noise around me or I can’t concentrate. I need to have parts of my brain occupied; otherwise, it goes so fast in so many directions that I don’t get anything done. If I can occupy my brain with the TV or my kids running around, then I find I concentrate even better.”

Jorge H., factory manager and former political prisoner: “We used to get put into solitary confinement as a punishment, but I never hated it as much as the others did. You might think that you would get lonely, but I never did. I used the time to reflect on my life and sort out the kind of man I was and what was really important to me: my family, my values. In a weird way, solitary actually calmed me down and made me stronger.”

### ANALYTICAL SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Jose G., school system administrator: “I have an innate ability to see structures, formats, and patterns before they exist. For instance, when people are talking about writing a grant proposal, while I’m listening to them, my brain instinctively processes the type of grants that are available and how the discussion fits into the eligibility, right down to the format of how the information can fit on the grant form in a clear and convincing way.”

Jack T., human resources executive: “If I make a claim, I need to know that I can back it up with facts and logical thinking. For example, if someone says that our company is not paying as much as other companies, I always ask, ‘Why do you say that?’ If they say, ‘Well, I saw an ad in the paper that offers graduates in mechanical engineering five grand more than we are paying,’ I’ll reply by asking, ‘But where are these graduates going to work? Is their salary based on geography? What types of companies are they going for? Are they manufacturing companies like ours? And how many people are in their sample? Is it three people, and one of them got a really good deal, thus driving the overall average up?’ There are many questions I need to ask to ensure that their claim is indeed a fact and not based on one misleading data point.”

Leslie J., school principal: “Many times, there are inconsistencies in the performance of the same group of students from one year to the next. It’s the same group of kids, but their scores are different year to year. How can this be? Which building are the kids in? How many of the kids have been enrolled for a full academic year? Which teachers were they assigned to, and what teaching styles were used by those teachers? I just love asking questions like these to understand what is truly happening.”

### ACHIEVER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Melanie K., ER nurse: “I have to rack up points every day to feel successful. Today I’ve been here only half an hour, but I’ve probably racked up thirty points already. I ordered equipment for the ER, I had equipment repaired, I had a meeting with my charge nurse, and I brainstormed with my secretary about improving our computerized logbook. So on my list of ninety things, I have thirty done already. I’m feeling pretty good about myself right now.”

Ted S., salesperson: “Last year I was salesperson of the year out of my company’s three hundred salespeople. It felt good for a day, but sure enough, later that week, it was as if it never happened. I was back at zero again. Sometimes I wish I wasn’t an achiever because it can lead me away from a balanced life and toward obsession. I used to think I could change myself, but now I know I am just wired this way. This theme is truly a double-edged sword. It helps me achieve my goals, but on the other hand, I wish I could just turn it off and on at will. But, hey, I can’t. I can manage it and avoid work obsession by focusing on achieving in all parts of my life, not just work.”

Sara L., writer: “This theme is a weird one. First, it’s good because you live in pursuit of the perpetual challenge. But in the second place, you never feel as though you’ve reached your goal. It can keep you running uphill at seventy miles an hour for your whole life. You never rest because there’s always more to do. But, on balance, I think I would rather have it than not. I call it my ‘divine restlessness,’ and if it makes me feel as if I owe the present everything I have, then so be it. I can live with that.”

QUESTIONS

1. Talk to friends or coworkers to hear how they have used their talents to achieve.
2. How will you use your talents to achieve?