

Developing Your Strength

Empathy

The genius of your Empathy talent involves your ability to form high quality, deep, personal understanding and relationships with others. You have an unusual and beautiful ability to feel what it feels like to be another person. You can often feel what someone else feels without them saying a word. As a result, you can form very close, intimate relationships with people. The genius of Empathy has profound effects on others because they feel so deeply understood. Many people feel like they become healthier and more at peace being in your presence because your understanding of people goes beyond the words they can find to express themselves. While it may be hard on you to hear the pain of others, they will feel deeply indebted to you because you can understand them at such profound levels. The genius of Empathy makes you a great lover of other people, and they are fortunate to have you as a friend.

Adapted from "The Genius and Beauty found within The Clifton StrengthsFinder Themes of Talent," by Edward C. Anderson

Applying Empathy Talents in Careers

- Talk to your career counselor about the career planning process. Use that relationship as a sounding board for making decisions.
- Interview people who are currently in jobs that interest you. Talk to them about how they feel in those roles.
- Environments that provide regular social interaction and an opportunity to collaborate with others will allow your Empathy talents to flourish.
- The "emotional tone" of your work environment is important. You might find that surrounding yourself with others who are positive and upbeat is highly rewarding.
- Seek work environments in which emotions are valued and not repressed. The rich emotional economy will be the perfect environment for your Empathy talents.
- Interview teachers, counselors, and clergy members and ask them how they use their talents in their work.

Adapted from StrengthsQuest website: www.strengthsquest.com

Career Plan of Action:

Applying Empathy Talents in Academics

General Academic Life

- When studying a particular author, seek personal experiences and writings that help you identify with his or her thoughts and emotions.
- Whenever possible, write papers about people. This activity will engage your natural ability to pinpoint individual perspectives.
- Keep a journal in which you reflect on what you learned from other people and their passions, fears, joys, and other emotions.
- You will sense when friends are academically frustrated in courses you are taking. Let them know that you realize what they are feeling, and continue to encourage and support them.

Study Techniques

- As soon as you have an idea, write it down, including your feelings about it.
- When you read, identify how you can relate the emotions of the characters to your own or those of people you know. This will make the material come alive for you and help you remember it better.
- Ask yourself what the professor wants you to understand about the material, then try to master those aspects.
- When you're in a study group, be aware of the emotions of the other members. Help bring those feeling into the open so that others in the group can be aware of the feelings of others and you can keep your focus on the task ahead of you.

Relationships

- Discuss issues that are on your mind with your friends. You are usually there for them. Allow them, likewise, to be there for you. Share your feelings with them, because they may not be able to identify feelings as easily as you do.
- Use your Empathy talents when conflicts arise at work and other group settings.
- Be careful not to let those you support overwhelm you. Just as it is important for you to be there for your friends and family whenever they need you, it is crucial that you keep your academic goals a priority.

Class Selection

- Think about a major such as education or psychology, which could provide frequent opportunities to use your Empathy in your future career.
- Choose professors who are known for their empathy as well as for their academic expertise.
- Classes that involve reading novels will provide you with an avenue to immerse yourself in the emotions of the characters and to learn from their approaches to situations.

Extracurricular Activities

- Become involved in activities, clubs, or organizations that will help you feel like you're making a difference with individuals through your Empathy.
- Consider working with children to help them better understand their own feelings and sort through their emotions.
- Position yourself as a confidante for one or two people. Many students feel overwhelmed at school; you'll understand and help them get through the difficulties they're facing.
- Because you're nonjudgmental and understand the feelings of individuals, you'll be a welcome addition to most groups.

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Academic Plan of Action:
