

Developing Your Strength

Context

The genius of your Context talent is found in the way you think about the past and use that form of thinking to learn, plan and solve problems. The present is important to you, but in your mind, the present is best understood by seeking to understand what has led up to the present. Thus, your mind often goes backwards and looks for what has caused what we are experiencing today. This look to the past gives great wisdom for understanding the present and forms a basis for making informed decisions and plans in the present and for the future. The genius of your Context way of thinking provides you with a basis for making high quality decisions and plans and for problem solving. In addition, as you apply the genius of your Context way of thinking when you learn, you will learn with great understanding which results in high achievement.

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

Applying Context Talents in Careers

- Talk to those in jobs that interest you. Ask them to tell you about their job searches. What led them to choose their particular careers?
- Read as much as you can about career planning, so you'll understand the process from beginning to end. That understanding of the total experience will give you the security to consider a variety of options.
- You recognize that past behavior is often the best predictor of future behavior. Spend some time thinking about your own past choices and how they might be connected to good possibilities for your future.
- Your Context talents are likely to flourish in environments that allow you to explore how things came to be the way they are.
- Collegial environments with strong traditions, rituals, and a sense of organizational history will often bring out your best efforts.
- Interview archeologists, historians, museum curators, humanities professors, or antique appraisers about their talents and what they love about their work.

Adapted from StrengthsQuest website: www.strengthsquest.com

Career Plan of Action:

Applying Context Talents in Academics

General Academic Life

- Associate with individuals/groups that specialize in the study of specific events, personalities, and periods in history.
- Create a historical frame of reference for whatever you study. Research political, natural, military, and religious events of that period. Delve into the lives of contemporary leaders, scientists, artists, explorers, and philosophers.
- Supplement required reading for classes by locating other credible sources of information. Don't let your thinking be limited to the professor's syllabus.
- Understand that you are attracted to institutions of learning with a rich history and a long tradition.
- Seek opportunities to study with reputable, recognized, and knowledgeable historians who also are master teachers.
- Attend lecture series in which leading figures of your time speak about their experiences in global leadership, diplomacy, military affairs, business, science, or the arts. Prepare questions to pose during the Q&A sessions.

Study Techniques

- Hypothesize your own theories for specific historic events. Rely on public records, surveys, correspondence, and legislation to develop a study brief.
- Consider your own history of test taking. Identify your best performances. Spot patterns. Prepare for today's examinations by replicating study techniques that have worked for you in the past.
- Complement your reading and research assignments with additional sources of information, such as recorded speeches, transcripts of court proceedings, or vintage interviews with key figures and their contemporaries.

Relationships

- Help people understand that knowing about their past experiences — personal and academic — will help you feel comfortable working with them on projects and in study groups.
- Decipher your methods for building a historical basis for your relationships with specific family members, friends, teammates, classmates, instructors, and coworkers.
- Attend class reunions. Reminisce about your school days with former classmates, faculty, and administrators. Pose questions to discover what individuals have done with their lives since graduation.

Class Selection

- Choose classes taught by professors who examine cause-and-effect relationships between the actions of historic figures and the consequences they produce. Avoid history courses that require nothing beyond rote memorization of facts, names, and dates.
- Enroll in classes that allow students to study original documents and artifacts. Review the syllabus for information about field trips to museums, battlefields, archives, and theatrical productions based on historic events.
- Register for courses such as comparative religion, geography, economics, science, philosophy, and the arts to better understand the root causes of today's wars, alliances, financial policies, treaties, and trade agreements.
- Opt for classes in which you can write papers, make presentations, re-create past events, or impersonate historic figures to fulfill course requirements.

Extracurricular Activities

- Join a genealogy society or club. Trace your own or someone else's family tree.
- Serve as the historian of your honor society, or campus organizations.
- Form a book club whose members read and then discuss autobiographies, biographies, history books, or even historic fiction.

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Academic Plan of Action:
