

**Leading Collaboration**  
**Leadership Self-Reflection Paper (Strengths Finder)**  
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My top CliftonStrength is developer, meaning I see the potential in others and draw it out. I connect with this strength in my deep care for others and instinctively step in when I see someone struggling or missing possibilities. I recently became a people manager for the first time and found this role came naturally to me. I spend a great deal of time mentoring not only on work responsibilities, but also on navigating early career challenges. Despite being their superior, I view us as a single goal-oriented team. I also behave quite protectively towards these employees, attempting to shield them from negative interactions with others to avoid their confidence waning, while still filtering feedback in a constructive manner. My main challenge is spending excessive time preparing for these conversations. As I look to the future, I can continue to practice this skill, gradually making it more effortless.

My second strength is communication, which appears through my passion for the written and spoken word. I choose content and vocabulary very carefully. In elementary and high school, I loved participating in theater, competitive public speaking, and writing. Icebreakers, often the bane of introverts' existence, provide me with a thrilling experience to talk about myself. I am not afraid to speak up in meetings, or to ask questions when I don't fully understand something, without much fear of appearing foolish. When I oversee a project, I set clear expectations and write them out in detail to support everyone's understanding. What I struggle with in this area is that most people do not read the details I provide in their entirety, and that can cause frustration. I need to remember that most people require repetition to absorb a message, and try different delivery methods and techniques to ensure understanding.

The third is positivity, which comes across as an intense desire for others around me to enjoy themselves. I can see how stress affects people and causes them to become unproductive, so I strive to show them the lighter side of things, or the light at the end of a long project. This tends to go hand in hand with my communication skills, as I sometimes inwardly feel very defeatist, but when asked for my opinion, I will say something true about the progress we are making, obscuring the fact that I don't believe things are going well overall. In terms of my approach, I often think of the phrase "you get what you get, and you don't get upset," which, to me, means we don't dwell on the things we can't change, but rather those on which we can make a positive impact. I also love the phrase from TV show Ted Lasso, "Be a goldfish," which simply means that we should learn from our failures, but quickly forget them and move forward. I could use this to greater effect by applying it inwardly as much as I do outwardly. I suffer from anxiety and depression, so while I can exhibit positivity to those around me, I often do not feel the same hope I project. I will work on expanding this strength to my private thoughts.

Next, I love winning others over (Woo). Having often felt like an outsider in my life, I draw people in to make them feel included. I love hosting in my personal life, and if I see someone who appears uncomfortable, I will make it my business to start a conversation with them and turn their attitude around. At work, I tend to look for commonalities that I have with colleagues and lean into them. For example, I struggled to get face time with a former boss. When I learned that we were from the same hometown and he enjoyed sports, I made it a point to follow our hometown teams closely and give him updates on how they were doing, bridging us into a more personal connection. Noticing others' body language and facial expressions and taking the time to have private conversations with them if they don't express their thoughts in group meetings

fosters collaboration. I could be more effective by wooing senior leaders so that our relationship allows me to sway them in a particular direction.

The last of my top five strengths is context, stemming from a desire to see how things have been done effectively in the past and avoid recreating the wheel. Too often I see people struggle to create a new process for something that others have already done successfully. A recent example of this is when I was asked to coordinate the run of show for my company's Executive Conference, a two-day offsite event for 200 senior company leaders. I had no experience with this, so I scheduled time with a colleague in the events department to pick her brain and ensure I understood the expectations and deliverables that were typical of this role. Such research allows me to be thoughtful in my own projects and minimize the time it takes to figure out the task at hand. However, I need to be cautious about getting stuck in a rut and ensure I remain open to changes that will result in improvement. I can leverage this characteristic as a leader by "doing my homework" ahead of time, cutting down on the amount of useless work that trickles down to others on my team, thus building more trust with them.