

# BLC Leads Leadership Institute Clifton Strengths Assessment Instructions & Reflections

## Taking Clifton Strengths

Completing the assessment isn't difficult, but it will require about 15 - 20 minutes. Here's how it works.

- **Find the email** sent from Gallup, providers of the CliftonStrengths assessment. Click on a link in the email and create an account.
- **Take the online assessment** of about 100 questions when you're ready. Each question includes a pair of ideas and can be answered in a few seconds—you pick the one that feels more like you. Some of the pairs are apples and oranges, and there will be some redundancy, but that's how it works. Clear your time and close the office door so that you can do it in one sitting.
- **Carefully review the full 31 strengths report**, which you'll receive immediately after you complete the assessment. This report describes your *top 10 strengths* in great detail, suggests how your strengths will appear to others, and proposes how you might best leverage your strengths in your leadership. Look also at your *remaining 21 areas* and the order in which they're ranked. In the CliftonStrengths world, your lowest-ranked themes aren't "bad"—they're just ways to approach a problem that you don't need to use.

## Reflections on Clifton Strengths

We at B.Cognition Labs like the CliftonStrengths assessment because it's different from the common approach to improvement. Generally we're taught to identify and remove *weaknesses* in our personality or skills. This approach isn't all wrong, but it doesn't help you reinforce where you're doing well.

CliftonStrengths takes the opposite approach. Rooted in positive and humanistic psychology, it lets you know what you're *really good at*. It also asserts that you should lead from your *strength*—that whatever challenge you find yourself in, you already have what it takes to work your way through it, in your own way. You don't need to fit someone else's idea of a leader: you only need to lead in a way that reflects your own authenticity.

Most people experience “a-ha” realizations from seeing their top strengths—some they already know, and others they hadn't thought of, but recognize when they see the report. Most also have a kind of “a-ha” from seeing what is at the bottom of their list. In our coaching, we turn to the top strengths to use right away: we like to think with you about how you might approach a problem from the perspective of your *strengths*. This can be a transformative experience: we commonly frame problems in ways that make it harder for us to address them. When we think about how to reshape the problem to fit our gifts, we find that the problem disappears, or, at least becomes a lot more fun.

One of the greatest benefits of the CliftonStrengths assessment is taking it with a team, when you share your results, recognize everyone's differences, and appreciate your team profile. You discover what you as a team are good at, and what you tend to avoid. Many teams have "a-ha" moments after seeing where their strengths lie, and where they have gaps. Often, interpersonal and interdepartmental tension can go down just by letting everyone step back and appreciate how we're all wired. For these reasons we generally advise our clients to use the assessment collectively.

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