

Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow

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Lead Self – Lead Others – Lead Change

Leaders stay true to who they are and then make sure they have the right people around them. Being a leader requires you to develop other leaders. Perhaps the ultimate test of a leader is not what you are able to do here and now – but instead what continues to grow after you're gone.

What leader has the most positive influence in your daily life? Take a few moments to think about this question if you need to. Once you have someone in mind, please list his or her initials _____.

Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributed to your life:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Based on research for this book as to why people follow leaders the following key themes emerged:

- 1. Trust** (other words cited by followers included: *honest, integrity, and respect*)
- 2. Compassion** (other words cited by followers included: *caring, friendship, happiness, and love*)
- 3. Stability** (other words cited by followers included: *security, strength, support, and peace*)
- 4. Hope** (other words cited by followers included: *direction, faith, and guidance*)

What Makes a Great Leadership Team?

Gallup research has studied thousands of executive teams and four distinct domains of leadership strength have emerged:

The Four Domains of Leadership Strength	
Executing	Influencing
Relationship Building	Strategic Thinking

Instead of one dominant leader who tries to do everything or individuals who all have similar strengths, contributions from all four domains lead to a strong and cohesive team. *Although individuals need not be well-rounded, teams should be.*

This doesn't mean that each person on a team must have strengths exclusively in a single category. In most cases, each team member will possess some strength in multiple domains. A tool like StrengthsFinder can be useful in determining how all team members can maximize their contribution to the group's collective goals. According to the latest Gallup research, the 34 StrengthsFinder themes naturally cluster into these four domains of leadership strength based on a statistical factor analysis and a clinical evaluation by Gallup's top scientists. (See the table below for how the 34 theses sort into the four domains of leadership strength.) As you think about how you can contribute to a team and who you need to surround yourself with, this may be a good starting point.

Executing	Influencing	Relationship Building	Strategic Thinking
Achiever Arranger Belief Consistency Deliberative Discipline Focus Responsibility Restorative	Activator Command Communication Competition Maximizer Self-Assurance Significance Woo	Adaptability Developer Connectedness Empathy Harmony Includer Individualization Positivity Relator	Analytical Context Futuristic Ideation Input Intellection Learner Strategic

Leaders with dominant strength in the **Executing** domain know how to make things happen. When you need someone to implement a solution, these are the people who will work tirelessly to get it done. Leaders with a strength to execute have the ability to “catch” an idea and make it a reality.

For example, one leader may excel at establishing a quality process using themes such as Deliberative or Discipline, while the next leader will use her Achiever theme to work tirelessly toward a goal. Or a leader with strong Arranger may determine the optimal configuration of people needed to complete a task.

Those who lead by **Influencing** help their team reach a much broader audience. People with strength in this domain are always sell the team’s ideas inside and outside the organization. When you need someone to take charge, speak up, and make sure your group is heard, look to someone with the strength to influence.

For example, a leader with a lot of Command or Self-Assurance may use few words, but her confidence will continue to project authority and win followers. In contrast, a leader using Communication or Woo might get people involved by helping individuals feel comfortable and connected to the issue at hand.

Those who lead through **Relationship Building** are the essential glue that holds a team together. Without these strengths on a team, in many cases, the group is simple a composite of individuals. In contrast, leaders with exceptional Relationship Building strength have the unique ability to create groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum of their parts.

Within this domain, a leader with Positivity and Harmony may work hard to minimize distractions and to keep the team’s collective energy high. On the other hand, a leader with Individualization might use a more targeted approach to getting people involved. Or a leader with strong Relator or Developer may be a great mentor and guide as he pushes others toward bigger and better achievement.

Leaders with great **Strategic Thinking** strengths are the ones who keep us all focused on what *could be*. They are constantly absorbing and analyzing information and helping the team make better decisions. People with strength in this domain continually stretch our thinking for the future.

Within this domain, a leader using Context or Strategic might explain how past events influenced present circumstances or navigate the best route for future possibilities. Someone with strong Ideation or Input may see countless opportunities for growth based on all of the information she reviews.

Or a leader drawing from his Analytical theme might help the team drill into the details of cause and effect.

Leadership Strengths in Action:

We have studied leaders who built great schools, created major nonprofit organizations, led big businesses, and transformed entire nations. But we have yet to find two leaders who have the exact same sequence of strengths. While two leaders may have identical expectations, the way they reach their goals is always dependent on the unique arrangement of their strengths.

Do You Want to Know What Your Strengths Are?

You can purchase the book *Strengths Based Leadership* (\$25 or less) and a unique access code will be included in the back of the book which will allow you to take a new leadership version of Gallup's StrengthsFinder program. The new version of this program provides you with specific strategies for leading with your top five strengths and enables you to plot the strengths of your team based on the four domains of leadership strength revealed in the book.