

Happen to Your Career LLC

The Ultimate Guide



**TO USING YOUR
STRENGTHS TO GET
HIRED**

The Ultimate Guide to Using Your Strengths to Get Hired

Scott Anthony Barlow

Your Invitation to a Strengths-Based Career

Let's start with a question: Why do you care about your strengths?

Maybe you've spent time looking at job opportunities online, getting depressed at how few jobs you're qualified for, interested in, or willing to do for low pay. Or maybe you've recently had the realization that "this can't be all there is" to work

You might have even taken every assessment, personality test and quiz out there only to find out that you're still in the same place.

You, just like many of the people we work with, found out the hard way that the knowledge that being a "relator" or "achiever" or "learner" is interesting, but you still don't have a raise, a new career, or work that makes you happy.

One thing's for sure:

You know that what you're doing right now isn't where you want to be forever... but you're not even sure where to begin looking for something better!

Worse yet, you might have already tried a few things that put you right back where you started!

I know it sounds crazy, but the key to getting off this roller coaster to nowhere is a deep and thorough understanding of your strengths AND then applying that knowledge in a way that is useful and valuable.

Live a life that is unapologetically, uniquely YOU!

I've been fortunate enough to spend a lot of time with people who are successful

by their own standards and not someone else's.

All of these multi-millionaires, CEOs, company founders, professionals and creatives -- people in every income bracket and every walk of life -- are living a life that is unapologetically themselves. And they all have one thing in common, whether they're real estate moguls or non-profit fundraisers:

They have an incredible understanding of what they enjoy and what they offer to the world.

People who are successful by their own standards are spending most of their time using their Signature Strengths.

And I want you to have that same understanding and experience! It's something we all deserve: To do work that serves the world, and that fulfills us.

But before we get started on identifying what that is for you, we need to get clear about something: When you're doing work that fits you, it's not all sunshine and unicorns. It's often challenging. It's often a harder road. It will push your comfort zone in new and different ways.

Spoiler Alert: It rarely feels like something so new that you've never ever had any experience with it before. Yes, you're expanding, but it's in the ways you're naturally prepared to grow and stretch.

Careers that fit feel much more familiar, like the feeling of coming home after you've been away!

I've been through this very process myself. After spending time in a "good" job that was more misery than joy, I went to my boss to tell him what I was feeling and asking for his help. I thought we were headed in the right direction until... three weeks later...

I got laid off!

I had a family, a mortgage, and very little money in the bank, but in retrospect, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. It gave me the wake-up call to never be in that same situation again. I was determined to do things differently, and I did. I found a new, better position, but more importantly, the experience ignited my passion for learning more about careers and their intersection with personality, strengths, and skills -- and how I and eventually others could live their fullest and best life.

After spending months learning as much as I possibly could about strengths and how they impact career satisfaction, I came up with a process that I've now used with hundreds of one-on-one clients and our Career Change Bootcamp students. My team and I lead them through this very process to help them live a life that's unapologetically, uniquely YOU.

I've learned that one key to creating that kind of life involves working in your strengths.

That might sound touchy-feely, but it's actually ultimately very practical. When you know what your strengths are and design a career based on them, you fulfill several important goals:

- You do what you love.
- You do what you're good at.
- You do what brings value to your clients, customers and organization.

Of course, the obvious next questions:

- What are my strengths?
- What do they look like?
- And -- maybe most importantly -- how do I put them to work to actually make money (and if you do this right, MORE money!)

Follow the process.

In this guide, I've taken the results of hundreds of hours of study, and combined them with real-world road-testing of these principles and exercises. Rest assured that this very process has been used successfully on hundreds of smart professionals, just like you.

We'll start by defining what strengths are. Then we'll lead you through specific exercises to determine your own strengths, and then talk about how these can help you not only define your ideal career, but also help you locate the organizations in which you'll be happiest. And if that weren't enough, we'll show you how knowing your strengths and positioning them correctly can help you stand out as the ideal candidate in the interviewing process.

I know this can be overwhelming, and if you're in the middle of a job search or career transition, it can be frustrating because you just want to jump to the end result already! You don't want to mess around -- you just want a paycheck that's gonna cover the bills.

We'll get there, but sometimes the process is the key to that end result.

That's why I'll suggest you give yourself the gift of space and time. It won't necessarily be an overnight deal, or "three easy steps to the career of your dreams." It will require self-reflection and even struggle and discomfort at times as I ask you to dig deep. But the more permission you give yourself to really dig in, the bigger the rewards and the better the results.

Embark on this process with a sense of curiosity and fun rather than seriousness and stress. There isn't only one right answer, so let go of the desire to "get it right." Not only will you enjoy it more along the way, you'll also get much better results.

I look forward to helping you figure out what fits.

Scott Anthony Barlow

Founder and CEO, Happen to Your Career

Part 1: What Are Strengths?

When you hear the word “strengths,” you probably think you have a pretty good idea of what a strength is -- even if you’re not 100 percent clear on what yours are!

After all, we’re a culture that loves to dissect and analyze, whether it’s on your 9th grade English report card, or by the ESPN analysts the day after the big game.

When we talk about “strengths” here at Happen to Your Career, we’re referring to a very specific subset of your personality and character.

It isn’t just things you’re good at, or things you’ve been praised for

-- although that’s part of the equation. Instead, we see it as the intersection of two things:

Your strengths: what you can truly be great at -- maybe even the best in the world if you spent the time and energy developing them!

And

Your passions: what you enjoy and love.

Then add in your skills, experiences, knowledge and predispositions... and voila! You’ve got YOUR “signature strengths.”

Signature strengths go beyond skills like “I’m good at woodworking,” or “I’m really good at grammar.”

Those might be clues to finding your signature strengths, but being a good speller is just the tip of the iceberg. These are the qualities that make you uniquely you, and once developed and truly mastered they allow you to literally change your life and your career.

Now I typically hear two responses when I introduce the idea of “signature strengths:”

1. **“I’m not sure I have signature strengths!”** With over 7 billion people in the world you might be thinking, “Yeah Scott, I don’t have any of those things I can be best at.”

Or

2. **“I’m good at a lot of things, but how can I narrow it down?! Where do I even start?”**

First, let’s debunk the idea that you don’t have any signature strengths.

After working with hundreds of clients and becoming a student of strengths for over 10 years, I can confidently tell you that there is NO ONE on the face of the planet who does not have signature strengths. It’s impossible!

Instead, if you’re thinking you really don’t have anything you’re “great” at, what that tells me is that you either haven’t spent the time and energy to understand your strengths OR (more commonly) you’re going about it the wrong way.

In either of these scenarios investing in developing those strengths becomes impossible if you don’t really know they are (Thank you captain obvious)

I don’t want you to feel bad, though!

Being unsure what your signature strengths is normal.

Sometimes it’s a result of the structure of our education system. Or maybe it’s because you haven’t been in environments in which you could explore and develop your passions and interest. Or maybe you just haven’t asked the right

questions.

Whatever the root cause, the good news is that you can change your trajectory today... and we're going to show you how in the upcoming sections of this guide.

Take a deep breath... we've got you covered!

Now, if you are one of those "overachievers" who says, "I just have so many things I do well," you have the opposite problem! It likely is that you're confusing "skills" with "signature strengths."

When a client comes to me and says, "I really am good at a lot of things," I know they're probably pretty smart, pretty capable, and probably a pretty successful people-pleaser. As a result, they may also be pretty clueless with regard to what they really ENJOY.

For instance, just because you're really good at unjamming the copier when it gets a paper jam doesn't mean that you should make that into your life's work.

With you, I'm going to ask you to set aside all the expectations others have for you about what you "should" be doing or what you've always done, and instead view the future as wide open. Pretend you are a blank slate and every possibility is open to you -- because it is!

Now that we've addressed those two burning questions, let's move on and start figuring out what your personal signature strengths are.

Part 2: How Do I Determine My Signature Strengths?

Most people haven't taken the time to dig down into what they're really great at -- or what they have the potential to be great at.

But not you -- if you're reading this you're not most people. You're already ahead of the game because you're (obviously) interested in finding out!

In this section, we'll dive deep into how to figure out exactly what your signature strengths are.

WHAT THE HECK ARE SIGNATURE STRENGTHS?

We've talked about how your signature strengths aren't just skills like, "I'm really good with Excel."

There's more to it: It's that intersection of things you're really, really good at with things you really, really love -- combined with your experiences, disposition, and a few shakes of both nature and nurture. :)

"Signature Strengths are your unique combination of experiences, skills, knowledge and even the way you're wired. It's the stuff that makes you, you"

Often when you drill down to your signature strengths, these are the things you can't stop doing if you tried, you can't help it. Many times they come easy to you because you *enjoy* them and also you don't recognize them because you don't think that they're that big of a deal.

Right now, you might be thinking:

"Okay, Scott. I get what signature strengths are. But if it's something that's really easy for me and something I enjoy, how can it possibly be valuable? How will anyone pay me for it?"

We'll dive deep into this in Parts 3 and 4, but I want to address it now so you can concentrate. :)

It's natural to think that if something is easy for you, it is easy for everyone else, too... but that's simply not the case.

Think of an athlete like quarterback Tom Brady or Olympic gymnast Simone Biles -- they can do amazing things with their bodies, like throw a football 50 yards with amazing accuracy or do a back handspring dismount off a 4-inch-wide beam set 4 feet off the floor. Why? Because they have the experiences that are natural activities for them. It's so easy they don't even think about it.

But very, very few people can perform those feats. And as a result, they are compensated very well for them.

You may not throw a touchdown pass or win a gold medal, but you still have "natural as breathing" activities that contribute to your signature strengths. And the fact that these ARE so easy for you makes them huge clues to what your signature strengths are!

But don't get too far ahead of yourself. I'm going to ask you to work through a series of exercises looking at your past, present and future, and then we're going to look at patterns and themes among the answers.

This is where you really need to trust the process. Any one exercise in and of itself is not going to generate a neon arrow with letters reading, "Your Signature Strengths Here!"

Instead, you'll start seeing patterns and themes emerge, which will then give you connections between dots that maybe you had before, but you didn't know how to connect. And just like a dot-to-dot worksheet from your childhood, a picture will slowly emerge.

LOOK TO THE PAST

Exercise: Job Inventory

Here's an easy exercise to get you warmed up. Take out a piece of paper or open a Word doc or Google doc on your computer.

Start by listing out all your past jobs and roles on the paper

Then, underneath each one, do three things:

- **First**, list out the things you enjoyed in each of those roles, even if you hated the job. There's always something small like, "I loved goofing around with everyone when we were on our break," or "I really loved learning how to use the CAD/CAM program." Nothing is too small to add!
- **Next**, go through the list of jobs and add a column for which things in each role that you'd consider yourself pretty good at. It could be answering customer complaints, or staying calm while everyone else got more and more stressed as deadlines approached. Again, don't pre-judge which things "matter" and which ones don't. Just list them all.
- **Finally**, go through your lists and circle the skills and elements that contributed to success in other positions or roles in your life. For instance, learning how create a budget in one job may have helped you run a successful program in another position. Look for connections and patterns. They're there.

Review your lists.

Circle any patterns or themes you see recurring.

If nothing jumps out yet, don't worry! It will. :)

LOOK TO THE PRESENT

Exercise: Passions Inventory

So I have some questions for you to answer to get you started!

1. What do I love enough to do for free?
2. What do I do that causes time to feel differently? What causes me to lose track of time?
3. If I had to teach something, what would I teach?
4. What do people typically ask me for help in?
5. What do you get complimented for?

6. What do you find you can't stop doing? (Mentally rearranging the furniture in other people's homes, dissecting Super Bowl commercials to see which ones are most effective and why, organizing the gum and candy in the checkout line at the supermarket, reading books and writing short reviews for your friends...?)

Exercise: Ask for input

The most direct way to get input is to ask for it -- directly!

Reach out to five of your closest colleagues and friends to ask them to weigh in on your strengths and what they see that's unique about you.

If you aren't sure how to phrase your request -- and most of us are really bad at asking for this kind of feedback! -- you can get a copy-and-paste template straight from our Career Change Bootcamp.



Reaching Out

Scripts to Learn Your **STRENGTHS**

GET THE SCRIPTS WE TEACH

With our students in Career Change Bootcamp

[Send Me the Reach Out Scripts](#)

Exercise: Five Whys

Jason was having difficulty defining his signature strengths. He said, "I know I'm good with people, and that people trust me, but I don't know how that relates to my strengths." I led him through an exercise called "The Five Whys," which helps get to the heart of a situation or topic.

This is a great exercise to use in combination with some of the

discoveries you've made in the previous questions, to determine the root of the signature strength.

The best way to describe it is to just show you how it works:

For instance, Jason mentioned in one of our sessions that he can't help but get

into deep conversations with people he's just met -- from the person sitting next to him on the airplane to a dad on the sidelines at their daughters' soccer games. "They always say, 'I don't think I ever told anyone this before!' I guess you'd say that I'm good with people."

Jason: "I'm good with people."

Scott: "Why? What does that mean?" ← "Why" #1

Jason: "I think it's because I'm willing to have tough or uncomfortable conversations with them."

Scott: "Why?" ← "Why" #2

Jason: "I think it's because it doesn't make me uncomfortable the way it does with other people."

Scott: "Why?" ← "Why" #3

Jason: "I'd say it's because we have an established level of trust that comes pretty fast."

Scott: "Why?" ← "Why" #4

Jason: "Hmmm... I think it's that I really listen to them, and I'm genuinely interested in them and curious about what they care about."

Scott: "Why?" ← "Why" #5

Jason: "I guess I've always thought that everyone has a story to tell, and I want to hear their story and what matters to them. So I ask those questions that get at the core of who they are."

You can see how we could keep going here. There's no secret about Five Whys versus Six Whys or Seven Whys. Just keep going until you feel like you've gotten to the core. For Jason, five whys was enough for me to see that his signature strength -- something he does better than almost anyone else -- is creating strong connections with others so that there's an immediate connection and feeling of trust.

Note: We'll talk more about how these signature strengths relate to your career, but I bet you can begin to see how creating a feeling of trust would be very valuable in a number of fields, from medicine to hospitality to the financial

world... It's something that Jason can use to set him apart from others in his field, whatever that field is.

To get where you really want to go, you will need to practice pushing beyond these self limitations and self-imposed barriers.

LOOK TO THE FUTURE:

Exercise: Wildest Dreams

When you start thinking about what you want, typically what goes on in your head is your brain automatically filters out possibilities before you even really consider them. Your brain says to you "That's not realistic so don't consider it!" or "That seems unreasonable, don't put that down."

As a result, you are capable of so much more than you let yourself believe, because the really great ideas, the really great careers and the really great life is filtered out as "unrealistic" or "unachievable" almost as quickly as they come in!

You've probably heard the motivational question, "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?" I want you to take a different spin on this. By letting yourself dream your wildest dreams, you can get a hint at what really gets your passion fires burning -- and we've already determined that your signature strengths lie at the intersection of your passions with things you're good at.

So here's your assignment:

List JUST 3 THINGS that you want to do, that seem wildly unrealistic.

Let's define "wildly unrealistic": *Things that you have **no idea** how you'll accomplish them and you know the folks at your job would laugh at if they knew you wanted to do.*

At least three (more if you're so inclined!)...and make sure that they are occupations, jobs, or even gigs that you want to do that seem out of reach. Put them down on paper or write them in the comments here.

Don't filter, Don't qualify, Don't censor... just put your three things down.

Here are some ideas to get you going:

- What you wanted to do as a kid (and are still a little fascinated with)
- Something you read about in an article, blog post, magazine or someplace

else where you thought to yourself “how great would that be”

- What is that one thing you like doing for a hobby that you have previously thought “I could never earn any money doing this”
- You have recently seen something glamorous and had judgemental thoughts about that person and their occupation, but when you thought more you realized there was just a tinge of “I wish I could do that”
- Something you have always had curiosity about

Remember, everything you write down will seem unrealistic until you actually do it...write it down anyway!

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now you’re probably staring at a stack of what seems to be disparate information -- the first job you had as a fast food worker when you were 17, a list of books you love to read and re-read, printouts of emails from your college roommate and your co-worker from three companies ago... And you’re probably wondering what to do with it!

This is the fun part. :)

You get to play detective.

Pretend you don’t know the person that all this information relates to. You are a criminalist with the FBI, and your job is to create a profile of this “unknown subject.” You need to sort through all these clues and develop a sense of who they are and what’s unique about them.

- You’re looking for PATTERNS
- You’re looking for REPETITION
- You’re looking for CONNECTIONS

Do you see that all of your “best days ever” were spent out in nature?

Did you discover that you’ve always been complimented on your ability to remain calm in stressful situations?

Did something in your brain click when you saw that you’ve always been a natural teacher?

Sometimes we’re so close to the subject that we can’t see the forest for the trees.

That's when it can be really helpful to have a supportive colleague or coach sift through the information with you to look for those hidden gems and connections. You might not be able to see that your love of hosting themed dinner parties is connected to the compliments you always receive on being a good listener -- but an objective third party might note that they're both rooted in your ability to connect with others and make them feel comfortable.

Whether you're working on your own or with a "support person," jot down your discoveries... and remember, there is no right or wrong, there are no minimum or maximum numbers of signature strengths. When it comes to self-discovery, often we have to test our findings to see if they are accurate or need more refinement.

You also may want to take some of the assessments mentioned in the Resource section to further your understanding of your unique characteristics and strengths.

Just remember: It's all good as long as you keep moving in the right direction.

Part 3: How Do You Use Them In Your Job Search

Your understanding of your signature strengths can be a huge asset in finding work that fills your soul and makes you feel like you're living "on purpose."

You don't need to have a *firm* list of never-changing signature strengths -- few of us do!

After all, you're always growing and changing, and that's a good thing.

The more you know about what makes you truly happy and satisfied, the more you can bring it into your life.

Once you identify your strengths, you can identify what you want in your life. You can hone in on the types of activities you're best at and that make you happiest. Then you can work backwards from there to figure out the types of jobs where you can find those activities... and what types of companies hire for those jobs!

This is the opposite approach that 99% of the world takes. Most people look at what they think their options are and try to make the best of those. They make their own barriers and limits by not considering what they really want and instead focus on what they think is probable or possible.

Unintentionally limiting yourself in that way will also unintentionally limit your happiness!

This is going to be a sort of career matching game. We are going to take everything you have learned about yourself, your past, your career, etc. and implement that valuable information in identifying opportunities that suit you.

Step One:

Focus on what you already know you might be interested in (or “think” you’re interested in -- absolute certainty is not required here!) in any of these three areas. Take your best guess as to where your signature strengths align:

Area (e.g., HR, operations, finance, teaching, research)

Industry (e.g., alternative energy, travel and tourism, broadcasting)

Sector (e.g., education, manufacturing, government, non-profit, for cause, etc.)

Step Two:

Figure out what is most important to you in your career environment. Is it essential that you work in a small, start-up tech organization? Would you prefer a more structured environment? Would you be happier at a Google or at an IBM? Do you work around creative-types or lawyers and accountants? Is every day “casual Friday?” Are you willing to sacrifice pay for a flexible work arrangement?

Know what your priorities are.

In our [Career Change Bootcamp](#), we lead students through the creation of an entire “Ideal Career Profile,” a description of your ideal opportunity without worrying about what the job title on your business card is.

-- Lisa Lewis

If it seems like it “might” fit, write it down!

Step Three:

Based on your answers in Steps One and Two above, make a list of companies and organizations that might fit the profile and priorities you’ve determined.

For instance, if you would love to be in a high-tech startup in Austin, Texas, you can easily Google “startups Austin” for a list of possibilities.

If you’re looking for a position in finance in a larger company, you can find a list of the Fortune 500 or 1000 and cross-reference by industry, geographic location, etc.

Don’t be too quick to rule out possibilities at this point.

Step Four:

Take the list you created in Step Three and hit up your network. Who knows someone whose cousin works in tech in Austin? Who in your LinkedIn network is connected to University of Phoenix? Start working it, and reach out.

But you're not going for the traditional "informational interview" that's really "hire me" in disguise. You really are just trying to confirm if the work you were born to do (i.e., your signature strengths) exists within these companies.

The conversation might go something like this:

"Hey there. I got your name from my cousin, Sal. He mentioned you've been in the startup scene in Austin for a while. I'm in the early stages of investigating a career shift, and I wanted to know if you had 15 minutes sometime so I could learn a little more about what you do and your company."

Can you see what you're doing here? You're stacking the deck in your favor!

Why?

You're interacting with these potential colleagues, managers, co-workers on YOUR terms. Not only are you taking the lead in reaching out, you're doing so from the foundation of your strengths. In other words, you're interviewing them (but don't let them know that!).

This approach, of course, makes the traditional job search method seem downright ridiculous. If you curtail your job search ONLY to advertised "open positions," then you're focusing on a lot of organizations that are unlikely to be a good fit at all

... of course you could shove yourself into them like Cinderella's stepsisters trying to fit the glass slipper.

This doesn't even touch the idea that what Company A defines as a "business development agent" could be VASTLY different from Company B's definition. You're basically shooting blind!

Instead, if you start with the companies that are most likely to be a fit (or you're best guess), and are most likely to need your particular strengths -- regardless of the job title -- you've got a leg up. You're halfway to "Hired!"

We want you to take charge of the process. Think of it as a reverse recruiting process... you're doing to them what they do to their applicants. If they have a bunch of possible employees, they're going to search through that stack of

resumes pretty fast, looking only for the ones that have a hope of fitting. You're doing the same thing!

Then, by the time you get to the interview stage, you already know your strengths are a great fit for their organization. And it's much easier to position yourself well in the interview, as you'll see in the next section.

Action Step

While I REALLY want you to go through the four steps outlined above, I'll start you out slow.

*Write down three jobs or opportunities that fit your criteria and
DON'T QUALIFY YOUR ANSWERS!!!*

What I mean is, don't start automatically filtering out possibilities before you even really consider them. Your brain says to you, "That's not realistic so don't consider it!" or "That seems unreasonable, don't put that down."

As a result, you are capable of so much more than you let yourself believe, because the really great ideas, the really great careers and the really great life is filtered out as "unrealistic" or "unachievable" almost as quickly as they come in!

Part 4: How Do You Use Your Signature Strengths in Your Interviews?

You know it's coming, but it still freezes you in your tracks like a deer in the headlights.

Maybe it's right after you sit down in the visitor's chair, across the desk from the interviewer.

Or maybe it's ten or fifteen minutes into your conversation- just when you start to think you might escape this time.

But then it hits you. The interviewer flips through your file, folds her hands on top of her desk, looks at you expectantly and says the words that strike fear in the hearts of every job-seeker:

"So...tell me about yourself."

So many options for answers...and so few of them are RIGHT.

How do you answer the "tell me about yourself" question?

Especially in a way that showcases your strengths.

Do you start at childhood? Or do you fast-forward to high school and the time your science fair project won honorable mention in the the all-county finals? Or perhaps she'd like you to fast-forward to today and tell her all about your recent success at achieving a PR in the WOD at the local CrossFit box?

In fact, in my 14 years as a hiring manager and then career coach, I would say there's a 70 to 80 percent chance you'll be asked this question in some format in your next interview. And there's about a 90+ percent chance you'll answer it wrong.

Those aren't great odds!

But never fear. Once you learn how to frame your response, you'll actually look forward to answering this question. It's a huge gift, an opportunity for you to tell them exactly why they should hire you by demonstrating how you already fit what they're looking for.

What ARE they looking for?

When a hiring manager says, "Tell me about yourself," they don't want a ten-minute discourse on your likes, dislikes, and your views on the latest episode of "The Bachelor." Instead, they're looking for information that allows them to intuit whether you'll be a good fit at the company and in the particular role they're interviewing for.

The better you can position yourself, the better your chances of standing out and making the interviewer sit up and say, "Heck YEAH!" (even if only in their head).

How to frame your answer

I advise my clients to use the "Present/Past/Future + a little love" framework. It looks something like this:

Interviewer: "So, tell me about yourself."

You (smiling internally): "Well, currently I _____. (present)
Before that I _____. (past)
In the future I _____. (future)"

Interviewer: "You're hired!"

Okay, okay. It's not quite THAT effective, but it does work amazingly well. The key is knowing EXACTLY what your signature strengths are, and how those strengths are relevant to the position and company you're interested in.

-- Lisa Lewis

Now that you've got a general idea of the framework...

Testing it out...

Let me provide a specific example for you.

Let's say I'm a Human Resources manager interviewing for a position in Training and Development (I only have a little bit of Training and Development experience so this is a career change)

Interviewer: "So, Tell me about yourself?"

Me: "**Currently**, I'm an HR manager with _____. I'm responsible for the labor budget of around \$7 million and all things people related. One of my favorite things is working on training and development projects. **For example**, I got to create a training program from the ground up to teach our leadership teams how to coach with a growth mindset. After we put it into practice, we saw an average increase in productivity by 9% with the departments of all the leaders that went through the program."

"**Before that**, I worked with other companies in other types of HR management, specifically in global retention, and I got to _____."

"**In the Future**, I would love to work with a company helping them improve their business by making Learning, Training and Development a real living part of their organization and culture. I've discovered that my favorite things I have done in the last 10 years are all in this area!

Why it works

You probably picked up on a few things I did in this example:

- 1. I answered the question only with relevant information.** I didn't add extraneous information, no matter how impressive.
- 2. I focused on what positions me as an expert.** I talked specific metrics, such as reducing turnover 10 percent and managing a \$7 million budget.
- 3. I shared my passion.** I didn't say, "I'm really strong in blah blah blah." I said, "What I love to do is this." People assume when you love something, you're good at it. So when I say, "I love getting buy-in on company-wide initiatives," I'm actually helping them see me in the role.

Also, managers want to hire not just for competency, but for energy and engagement as well. Telling them what makes me excited shows them that I'd

bring that motivation and energy to the position.

Now it's your turn:

Write out your script in the "Present/Past/Future + a little love" framework, focusing on your strengths and the relevant portions of your story (as you interview with different companies and for different positions, you will need to customize this every time to what's relevant for them).

Practice sharing your answer verbally until it sounds natural. Test it out live in your next interview.

Part 5: Now What?

Now you've got a great idea of:

- What Signature Strengths are and how they're important to your life satisfaction
- How to determine your unique Signature Strengths
- How to use them to position yourself for your next interview

As you might guess, there's so many other ways you can apply this new knowledge to your life and your career... (and we'll dive into that in some future Master Guides and other resources, so make sure you sign up for the HTYC email list to keep up on the latest releases!).

Don't wait until you have "total understanding." Don't wait until you feel like you have a "perfect plan."

Right now, we want to encourage you to put your new knowledge to work.

Most people find success in ANY area of their lives -- from career to health to relationships -- by taking IMPERFECT action BEFORE you think you're ready, and then continue to make adjustments.

But what most people do instead is to wait. They think they're not ready. They make the challenge in front of them SO HUGE in their brains that it's nearly impossible to move forward!

Maybe you can relate.

"What if I make the wrong decision, it might all be a big waste of time."

Have you ever blown a decision way out of proportion?

You feel like it's so big. That if you screw it up then everything else hinges on this.

You deliberate and analyze it to death. Then it becomes so difficult that you put it off for a while. You know you should decide but you find other things to occupy your time.

Finally when you've reached the last possible second you finally give in and order the Turkey Club Sandwich from the menu!

If that seemed at all ridiculous for ordering food, you should see when we're trying to make decisions about our career.

It feels like the entire rest of your life will depend on this!

And it does but not in the way that you think it does. When you don't make a decision, that's still deciding not to decide, which does nothing for you. But when you do make a decision, even an imperfect one, it allows you make adjustments and move forward.

One of my favorite quotes is from Ralph Waldo Emerson and he says,

"When you make a decision the universe conspires to make it happen."

This is very much how it feels because when you make a decision about what you want to do. It doesn't lock you into something; What instead it actually can free you up.

By now you know a lot more about your past, your strengths, what you want out of life and some viable options for your next step.

You have learned a lot about yourself, and a lot about what you really want in your career. Don't let all that hard work and knowledge go to waste!

It is time to begin shaping your destiny! Make a decision. Don't decide the rest of your life, decide the very next step. Decide what you will do this week, this month.

Some ideas:

- Take one of the assessment tests listed in the [resource section](#) at the end of this guide
- Sign up for our next [online training](#) to learn more about applying your

strengths to your career change

- Learn your strengths and use them to get your job offer with one-on-one help with one of our insightful and supportive [career coaches](#)
- Join the next session of our [Career Change Bootcamp](#) to pull together your career change plan
- Share your findings with a trusted colleague or friend

When you've made your decision, I would love to hear about it. You can find my email at the very end of this guide.

Click on it and let me know what your NEXT RIGHT STEP is.

I can't wait to help you Happen to Your Career.

Part 6: Resources & Assessment Tests

Assessments of any kind can help speed up your understanding of your strengths and your self-awareness, if used properly. The problem is without any action and application you won't be able to get anything useful out of it.

Remember learning is comfortable (and enjoyable) for most people. Taking the steps you need to so you can apply that learning, not so much!

Alright now that, that is out of the way, let's talk about some of the assessments we use.

Assessments Disclaimer: Action beats assessment every time!

Strengths Finder 2.0 – This is a book paired with an assessment that very accurately shares your top 5 strengths categories. It uses the mantra that you succeed because of your strengths NOT because of making weak areas better. I purchase a copy of this book for all my coaching clients if they haven't taken this recently! Note*** if you decide to purchase Strengths Finder 2.0 to make sure you purchase a new copy because the key code that allows you to take the online assessment can only be used once.

DiSC Profile – **DiSC** is a personal assessment tool used to improve work productivity, teamwork and communication. DiSC is non-judgmental and helps people discuss their behavioral differences. If you participate in a DiSC program, you'll be asked to complete a series of questions that produce a detailed report about your personality and behavior. There are A LOT of places that sell DiSC Profiles, this is the one we recommend. Many times this is used in teams, but we choose to use it with individuals, because it helps you understand why you behave and communicate the way you do.

A really interesting sub component of the DiSC is that it will typically give you two sets of results; One that is really what you want everyone else to think on a day-to-day basis and one that is what you revert to in stressful situations (your normal state). This can be exactly the same or vastly different for you. In coaching, this helps me quickly understand why people have the barriers or challenges that they do.

These are the two assessments that we work with all the time but there are many others that I have taken that can add value when trying to identify your strengths and expand your self awareness.

Some others in no particular order:

The Passion Test - identifies the passions you should prominently work with. We often work with this one too!

MBTI - Myers Briggs Type Indicator

True Colors

All of these assessments can help provide insight but without application and reflection they are simply entertainment. And we all know entertainment is great (and a must) but it doesn't typically help you get where you want to go.

Resources from Happen to Your Career

One-on-One Coaching -- Work with one of our highly skilled and trained career coaches to get one-on-one support in defining your signature strengths and mapping out your career change strategy.

Learn more about one on one coaching here

Figure It Out -- If you wanted a guided process to determine your "signature strengths," please check out the [free course](#) I've put together specifically for this purpose. I'll walk you through exactly how to define your core strengths. It's an essential first step in your job search so you can make sure you're interviewing ONLY for positions in which you can apply your unique abilities and skills and really shine. It's very similar to this guide, but divided into eight bite-sized chunks for easy digestion. :)

Career Change Bootcamp -- The premier online class intended to help you identify your ideal career and make the career change while getting paid what

you're worth. PERIOD. This eight-week, guided, step-by-step system has **helped hundreds of people** move from pain to passion and create fulfilling work lives.

Learn more about Career Change Bootcamp [here](#).

Side Biz MBA -- Wondering if a traditional career is the wrong path for you, and instead you'd like to consider "starting your own thing?" Side Biz MBA is our step-by-step process that you can use to create a business and grow it to profit on the side of the work you do currently... Even if you have never run your own business before... Even if you feel like you don't have the time or money to start a business... Even if you're not sure where to start or don't even have a business idea!

Learn more about Side Biz MBA [here](#).

HTYC Podcast -- A free web-based audio show where we bring people that have successfully moved to working with passion and purpose into your life to help provide both inspiration and direction for you to transition to work you love using your strengths and talents. 150 episodes -- and counting!

one of the things that was incredible for me was just realizing, 'Oh! Those are strengths! I didn't realize that being able to relate to people is a strength. I just thought that was a thing.' And I think that being able to give verbiage to that helps for you to be able to own it and then be able to take that and look for it in future roles. And be able to speak powerfully to it in an interview."

- [Lisa Lewis](#), HTYC Career Coach

Want our Help?



We provide one on one coaching and programs for nearly every situation.

If you want to find out more about how we can help visit <http://happentoyourcareer.com/help> or

Apply for Coaching