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Ken Barr

# Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 02-05-2007



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## YOUR TOP 5 THEMES

1. Input
2. Maximizer
3. Arranger
4. Woo
5. Learner

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## What's in This Guide?

### SECTION I: AWARENESS

A brief Shared Theme Description for each of your top five themes

Your Personalized Strengths Insights, which describe what makes you stand out from others with the same theme in their top five

Questions for you to answer to increase your awareness of your talents

### SECTION II: APPLICATION

10 Ideas for Action for each of your top five themes

Questions for you to answer to help you apply your talents

### SECTION III: ACHIEVEMENT

Examples of what each of your top five themes "sounds like" -- real quotes from people who also have the theme in their top five

Steps for you to take to help you leverage your talents for achievement

## Section I: Awareness

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### Input

#### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.

#### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

##### **What makes you stand out?**

Because of your strengths, you are primarily concerned with facts and reality. Usually you reject whatever is impractical or exists only in someone's imagination. Not surprisingly, you are determined to become proficient in the language of your chosen profession, area of study, or field of interest. You frequently introduce these terms in your speech or writing. By nature, you combine your fascination for reading with your ability to figure out what sets individuals apart from everyone else. You are likely to discover things that interest someone. Then you read more about those topics. You aim to collect insights that can inspire the person to take advantage of his or her one-of-a-kind talents, knowledge, and/or skills. Instinctively, you yearn to dedicate sufficient time and energy to all the important parts of your life, such as personal growth, professional responsibilities, family obligations, friends, health, and mental stimulation. Reading about topics that interest you or fiction that spellbinds — that is, fascinates — you is apt to be a factor in your quality-of-life equation. Chances are good that you put yourself in the middle of mentally stimulating conversations. You want to gather new ideas, discover new approaches, hear about new theories, consider new concepts, or apply new technologies. Often you are one of the early discoverers of innovations. Others can lag behind if they wish, but you consistently acquire knowledge. You exhibit little need to know precisely where all this information ultimately will lead you. Driven by your talents, you tend to read several books or publications at the same time. Without confusing yourself, you can peruse — that is, studiously examine — one for a while, then put it down, pick up another, and continue reading where you left off the last time. Your need to gather lots of information probably explains your capacity for juggling a variety of topics, plots, and authors in the same time span.

#### QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?

2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

*Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.*

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# Maximizer

## SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.

## YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

### What makes you stand out?

Instinctively, you are quite determined to enhance your talents rather than waste time worrying about your limitations. You often experience bursts of rapid growth each time you can use your talents, knowledge, and/or skills. It's very likely that you take full advantage of your talents. This is how you move toward your goals. Because of your strengths, you often accommodate the unique talents of people. Characteristically you accept human beings just as they are. You argue that excellent outcomes are produced by people who have ample opportunities each day to do what they do well. By nature, you customarily introduce yourself to newcomers or outsiders. Experience has taught you the importance of building a large network of acquaintances. These individuals often provide you with opportunities to use your talents at an optimal — that is, the most favorable or desirable — level. You probably accomplish more when you continually practice doing what you already do quite well. Driven by your talents, you consciously invest time and energy in understanding how your talents, skills, and knowledge contribute to your overall success and well-being. You have discovered effective ways to remind yourself about the things you do best.

## QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

*Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.*

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# Arranger

## SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

## YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

### What makes you stand out?

Driven by your talents, you periodically show your teammates how people, time, materials, and money converge to create unique sets of circumstances, unexpected problems, novel solutions, or welcome opportunities. It's very likely that you may want some of your teammates to regard you as trustworthy, competent, or accomplished in specific areas. These may include areas such as work, academics, athletics, the arts, community service, volunteerism, conflict resolution, or politics. Because of your strengths, you intentionally expand your pool of potential teammates by starting conversations with newcomers or outsiders. You are typically on a first-name basis with many individuals. You realize people rarely take time to know the strangers in their midst. The talents, knowledge, or skills these individuals possess are apt to remain unknown until you discover them. By nature, you may sense more strongly than others that sometimes it is best to trust your instincts — that is, your gut feelings — when deciding how to resolve issues, complaints, grievances, or puzzles. Instinctively, you may wish to have a broader range of control and accountability on the job or in your personal life.

## QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

*Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.*

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## Woo

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

By nature, you characteristically find the right words to express whatever you are thinking. You offer explanations, discuss ideas, give examples, or share stories. You effectively use the spoken word. It's very likely that you anticipate with glee the chance to socialize with others. You are attracted to situations involving newcomers or outsiders. You enjoy pulling them into discussions. Your big smile and friendly disposition immediately put people at ease. Chances are good that you freely share your ideas or feelings with others. Being tongue-tied — that is, unable to speak freely — is rarely a problem for you. Words quickly come to mind when you are with people. Your ease with language enables you to meet, greet, and treat strangers as if they already were your friends. Instinctively, you automatically engage outsiders or newcomers in small talk. You sense when someone feels left out of a conversation. You hope to make new friends by involving people in various activities. You probably comment favorably about the talents or accomplishments of many individuals. You sincerely want them to know they are worthy of the time and effort you invest in them. Driven by your talents, you are the perfect guest at gatherings where few people know each other. You quite easily engage one individual in conversation. Based on what you hear, you probably involve others who share similar interests or exhibit curiosity about various topics. Once you get a small group chatting, you are apt to excuse yourself to start the process all over again with another newcomer. You often are the catalyst for animated verbal exchanges.

### QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.

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## Learner

### SHARED THEME DESCRIPTION

People who are especially talented in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

### YOUR PERSONALIZED STRENGTHS INSIGHTS

#### What makes you stand out?

Instinctively, you frequently work without much rest. You typically want to pinpoint useful and intriguing facts. You likely have a need to explain why various events unfolded as they did. This information undoubtedly permits you to produce more and better results. By nature, you not only buy books or check them out from the library; you also read them. Your investigative mind is restless until you have collected lots of information about factors that produce various outcomes. You are motivated to read more about topics of personal and professional interest. These can range from history to science, from politics to mathematics, from entertainment to sports, or from art to law. Because of your strengths, you want to acquire additional knowledge. Your desire to study enables you to talk about a variety of topics with newcomers or outsiders. Knowing more increases the likelihood of your having something in common to talk about with a stranger. It's very likely that you have the extra energy to work hard whenever you are acquiring information to broaden your base of knowledge. You desire to deepen your understanding of various topics, opportunities, problems, solutions, situations, events, or people. Chances are good that you may ignore distractions to concentrate on your assignments. Sometimes you keep reading, researching, experimenting, or writing until you know all you need to know about a particular subject. You might not rest until you have mastered certain concepts, committed important information to memory, or completed specific course requirements.

### QUESTIONS

1. As you read your personalized strengths insights, what words, phrases, or lines stand out to you?
2. Out of all the talents in this insight, what would you like for others to see most in you?

Depending on the order of your themes and how you responded to the assessment, some of your themes may share identical insight statements. If this occurs, the lower ranked theme will not display insight statements to avoid duplication on your report.

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## Questions

1. How does this information help you better understand your unique talents?
2. How can you use this understanding to add value to your role?
3. How can you apply this knowledge to add value to your team, workgroup, department, or division?
4. How will this understanding help you add value to your organization?
5. What will you do differently tomorrow as a result of this report?

## Section II: Application

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### Input

#### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Look for jobs in which you are charged with acquiring new information each day, such as teaching, research, or journalism.

Devise a system to store and easily locate information. This can be as simple as a file for all the articles you have clipped or as sophisticated as a computer database.

Partner with someone with dominant Focus or Discipline talents. This person will help you stay on track when your inquisitiveness leads you down intriguing but distracting avenues.

Your mind is open and absorbent. You naturally soak up information in the same way that a sponge soaks up water. But just as the primary purpose of the sponge is not to permanently contain what it absorbs, neither should your mind simply store information. Input without output can lead to stagnation. As you gather and absorb information, be aware of the individuals and groups that can most benefit from your knowledge, and be intentional about sharing with them.

You might naturally be an exceptional repository of facts, data, and ideas. If that's the case, don't be afraid to position yourself as an expert. By simply following your Input talents, you could become known as the authority in your field.

Remember that you must be more than just a collector of information. At some point, you'll need to leverage this knowledge and turn it into action. Make a point of identifying the facts and data that would be most valuable to others, and use this information to their advantage.

Identify your areas of specialization, and actively seek more information about them.

Schedule time to read books and articles that stimulate you.

Deliberately increase your vocabulary. Collect new words, and learn the meaning of each of them.

Identify situations in which you can share the information you have collected with other people. Also make sure to let your friends and colleagues know that you enjoy answering their questions.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in

the next 30 days.

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## Maximizer

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Once you have identified your own greatest talents, stay focused on them. Refine your skills. Acquire new knowledge. Practice. Keep working toward strength in a few areas.

Develop a plan to use your most powerful talents outside of work. In doing so, consider how your talents relate to the mission in your life and how they might benefit your family or the community.

Problem solving might drain your energy and enthusiasm. Look for a restorative partner who can be your chief troubleshooter and problem solver. Let that person know how important your partnership is to your success.

Study success. Deliberately spend time with people who have discovered their strengths. The more you understand how marshaling strengths leads to success, the more likely you will be to create success in your own life.

Explain to others why you spend more time building on great talent rather than fixing weaknesses. Initially, they might confuse what you are doing with complacency.

Don't let your Maximizer talents be stifled by conventional wisdom, which says you should find what is broken and fix it. Identify and invest in the parts of your organization or community that are working. Make sure that most of your resources are spent in the build-up and build-out of these pockets of excellence.

Keep your focus on long-term relationships and goals. Many make a career out of picking the low-hanging fruit of short-term success, but your Maximizer talents will be most energized and effective as you turn top potential into true and lasting greatness.

See if you can make some of your weaknesses irrelevant. For example, find a partner, devise a support system, or use one of your stronger talents to compensate for one of your weaker ones.

Seek roles in which you are helping people succeed. In coaching, managing, mentoring, or teaching roles, your focus on strengths will prove particularly beneficial to others. Because most people find it difficult to describe what they do best, start by arming them with vivid descriptions.

Devise ways to measure your performance and the performance of others. These measures will help you spot strengths, because the best way to identify a strength is to look for sustained levels of excellent performance.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

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## Arranger

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Learn the goals of your coworkers and friends. Let them know that you are aware of their goals, and then help set them up for success.

If a team needs to be created, make sure you are involved. You recognize talents, skills, and knowledge in people, and that awareness will help you get the right people in the right spots.

You intuitively sense how very different people can work together. Take a close look at groups with divergent personalities and opinions, as they may have the greatest need for your Arranger talents.

Be sure to keep track of ongoing deadlines for your many tasks, projects, and obligations. Although you enjoy the chance to juggle lots of activities, others with less powerful Arranger talents may become anxious if they don't see you working on their projects frequently. Inform them of your progress to ease their fears.

Seek complex, dynamic environments in which there are few routines.

Take on the organization of a big event — a convention, a large party, or a company celebration.

Give people time to understand your way of doing things when you present it to them. Your mental juggling is instinctive, but others might find it difficult to break with existing procedures. Take the time to clearly explain why your way can be more effective.

At work, focus your Arranger talents on the most dynamic areas of your organization. Divisions or departments that are static and routine in nature are likely to bore you. You will thrive when your Arranger talents are energized, and you will suffer when you are bored.

Help others see your far-reaching expertise by sharing your “what if” thinking with them. When they know you've identified and carefully considered all possible options and arrangements, they'll feel more confident.

You are flexible in the way you organize people, as well as in how you configure space. Figure out how you can improve workflow by rearranging spaces and/or procedures to maximize efficiency and

to free up time for you and for others.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

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## Woo

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Choose a job in which you can interact with many people over the course of a day.

Deliberately build the network of people who know you. Tend to it by checking in with each person at least once a month.

Join local organizations, volunteer for committees, and find out how to get on the social lists of the influential people where you live.

Learn the names of as many people as you can. Create a file of the people you know, and add names as you become acquainted. Include a snippet of personal information — such as their birthday, favorite color, hobby, or favorite sports team.

In social situations, take responsibility for helping put reserved people at ease.

Find the right words to explain that networking is part of your style. If you don't claim this theme, others might mistake it for insincerity and wonder why you are being so friendly.

Partner with someone with dominant Relator or Empathy talents. This person can solidify the relationships that you begin.

Your Woo talents give you the ability to quicken the pulse of your surroundings. Recognize the power of your presence and how you open doors for an exchange of ideas. By simply starting conversations that engage others and bring talented people together, you will take performance up a notch — or several.

The first moments of any social occasion are crucial to how comfortable people will be and how they will remember the event. Whenever possible, be one of the first people others meet. Your capacity for meeting and greeting new people will help to quickly put them at ease.

Practice ways to charm and engage others. For example, research people before you meet them so you can talk about your common interests.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

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## Learner

### IDEAS FOR ACTION:

Refine how you learn. For example, you might learn best by teaching; if so, seek out opportunities to present to others. You might learn best through quiet reflection; if so, find this quiet time.

Develop ways to track the progress of your learning. If there are distinct levels or stages of learning within a discipline or skill, take a moment to celebrate your progression from one level to the next. If no such levels exist, create them for yourself (e.g., reading five books on the subject or making three presentations on the subject).

Be a catalyst for change. Others might be intimidated by new rules, new skills, or new circumstances. Your willingness to soak up this newness can calm their fears and spur them to action. Take this responsibility seriously.

Seek roles that require some form of technical competence. You will enjoy the process of acquiring and maintaining this expertise.

As far as possible, shift your career toward a field with constantly changing technologies or regulations. You will be energized by the challenge of keeping up.

Because you are not threatened by unfamiliar information, you might excel in a consulting role (either internal or external) in which you are paid to go into new situations and pick up new competencies or languages quickly.

Research supports the link between learning and performance. When people have the opportunity to learn and grow, they are more productive and loyal. Look for ways to measure the degree to which you and others feel that your learning needs are being met, to create individualized learning milestones, and to reward achievements in learning.

At work, take advantage of programs that subsidize your learning. Your organization may be willing to pay for part or all of your instructional coursework or for certifications. Ask your manager for information about scholarships and other educational opportunities.

Honor your desire to learn. Take advantage of adult educational opportunities in your community. Discipline yourself to sign up for at least one new academic or adult learning course each year.

Time disappears and your attention intensifies when you are immersed in studying or learning. Allow yourself to “follow the trail” by scheduling learning sessions during periods of time that will not be interrupted by pressing engagements.

## QUESTIONS

1. Which of these action items speak to you? Highlight the actions that you are most likely to take.
2. How will you commit to taking action? Write your own personalized action item that you will take in the next 30 days.

## Section III: Achievement

Look for signs of achievement as you read these real quotes from people who share your top five themes.

### INPUT SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Ellen K., writer: “Even as a child, I found myself wanting to know everything. I would make a game of my questions. ‘What is my question today?’ I would think up these outrageous questions, and then I would go looking for the books that would answer them. I often got in way over my head, deep into books that I didn’t have a clue about, but I read them because they had my answer someplace. My questions became my tool for leading me from one piece of information to another.”

John F., human resources executive: “I’m one of those people who thinks that the Internet is the greatest thing since sliced bread. I used to feel so frustrated, but now if I want to know what the stock market is doing in a certain area or the rules of a certain game or what the GNP of Spain is or other different things, I just go to the computer, start looking, and eventually find it.”

Kevin F., salesperson: “I am amazed at some of the garbage that collects in my mind, and I love playing Jeopardy and Trivial Pursuit and anything like that. I don’t mind throwing things away as long as they’re material things, but I hate wasting knowledge or accumulated knowledge or not being able to read something fully if I enjoy it.”

### MAXIMIZER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Gavin T., flight attendant: “I taught aerobics for ten years, and I made a point of asking people to focus on what they liked about themselves. We all have parts of our body that we would like to change or that we would like to see differently, but to focus on that can be so destructive. It becomes a vicious cycle. So I would say, ‘Look, you don’t need to be doing that. Instead, let’s focus on the attribute you like about yourself, and then we’ll all feel better about expending all of this energy.’”

Amy T., magazine editor: “There is nothing I hate more than having to fix a poorly written piece. If I have given the writer a clear focus and she comes back with a piece that is completely off the mark, I almost can’t bring myself to write comments on it. I’m more inclined to just hand it back to her and say, ‘Just please start again.’ On the other hand, what I love to do is take a piece that is so close and then refine it to make it perfect. You know, just the right word here, a little cut there, and suddenly it’s a brilliant piece.”

Marshall G., marketing executive: “I am really good at setting a focus for people and then building a sense of team spirit as we all march forward. But I am not so good at strategic thinking. Fortunately, I

have a boss who understands that about me. We have been working together for quite a few years. He has found people who play the strategic role, and at the same time, stretches me to be even better at the focus and team-building role. I'm so lucky to have a boss who thinks this way. It's made me more secure and made me charge ahead much faster, knowing that my boss knows what I am good at and what I'm not good at; he doesn't bother me with the latter."

### ARRANGER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Sarah P., finance executive: "I love really complicated challenges where I have to think on my feet and figure out how all the pieces fit together. Some people look at a situation, see thirty variables, and get hung up trying to balance all thirty. When I look at the same situation, I see about three options. And because I see only three, it's easier for me to make a decision and then put everything into place."

Grant D., operations manager: "I got a message the other day from our manufacturing facility saying that demand for one of our products had greatly exceeded the forecast. I thought about it for a moment, and then an idea popped into my head: Ship the product weekly, not monthly. So I said, 'Let's contact our European subsidiaries, ask them what their demand is, tell them the situation we are in, and then ask what their weekly demand is.' That way we can meet requirements without building up our inventory. Sure, it'll drive shipping costs up, but that's better than having too much inventory in one place and not enough in another."

Jane B., entrepreneur: "Sometimes, for instance, when we are all going to a movie or a football game, this Arranger theme drives me up the wall. My family and friends come to rely on me — 'Jane will get the tickets, Jane will organize the transportation.' Why should I always have to do it? But they just say, 'Because you do it well. For us it would take half an hour. For you, it seems to go much faster. You just call up the ticket place, order the right tickets, and just like that, it's done.'"

### WOO SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Deborah C., publishing executive: "I have made best friends out of people that I have met passing in the doorway. I mean, it's awful, but wooing is part of who I am. All my taxi drivers propose to me."

Marilyn K., college president: "I don't believe I'm looking for friends, but people call me a friend. I call people and say, 'I love you,' and I mean it because I love people easily. But friends? I don't have many friends. I don't think I am looking for friends. I am looking for connections. And I am really good at that because I know how to achieve common ground with people."

Anna G., nurse: "I think I am a little shy sometimes. Usually I won't make the first step out. But I do know how to put people at ease. A lot of my job is just humor. If the patient is not very receptive, my role becomes that of a stand-up comedian. I'll say to an eighty-year-old patient, 'Hi, you handsome

guy. Sit up. Let me get your shirt off. That's good. Take your shirt off. Whoa, what a chest on this man!' With kids, you have to start very slowly and say something like, 'How old are you?' If they say, 'Ten,' then I say, 'Really? When I was your age, I was eleven' — silly stuff like that to break the ice."

### LEARNER SOUNDS LIKE THIS:

Annie M., managing editor: "I get antsy when I am not learning something. Last year, although I was enjoying my work, I didn't feel as though I was learning enough. So I took up tap dancing. It sounds strange, doesn't it? I know I am never going to perform or anything, but I enjoy focusing on the technical skill of tapping, getting a little better each week, and moving up from the beginners' class to the intermediate class. That was a kick."

Miles A., operations manager: "When I was seven years old, my teachers would tell my parents, 'Miles isn't the most intelligent boy in the school, but he's a sponge for learning, and he'll probably go really far because he will push himself and continually be grasping new things.' Right now, I am just starting a course in business-travel Spanish. I know it is probably too ambitious to think I could learn conversational Spanish and become totally proficient in that language, but I at least want to be able to travel there and know the language."

Tim S., coach for executives: "One of my clients is so inquisitive that it drives him crazy because he can't do everything he wants to. I'm different. I am not curious in that broad sense. I prefer to go into greater depth with things so that I can become competent in them and then use them at work. For example, recently one of my clients wanted me to travel with him to Nice, France, for a business engagement. So I started reading up on the region, buying books, and checking the Internet. It was all interesting and I enjoyed the study, but I wouldn't have done any of it if I wasn't going to be traveling there for work."

QUESTIONS

1. Talk to friends or coworkers to hear how they have used their talents to achieve.
2. How will you use your talents to achieve?