

# A LIFETIME OF STRENGTHS

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY

**ANNA THOMAS, ED.D.**

*GALLUP CERTIFIED STRENGTHS COACH*

RELATOR – EMPATHY – RESPONSIBILITY – ARRANGER – DISCIPLINE

# AGENDA-WEEK 4



- I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT
- II. BALCONIES AND BASEMENTS
- III. PEAK PERFORMANCE/AIMING YOUR TALENTS
- IV. DEEP DIVE INTO NEXT 6 THEMES

# PURPOSE OF CLIFTON STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT



“The CliftonStrengths assessment is an online assessment of personal talent that identifies areas where an individual’s greatest potential for building strengths exists.”

Start



Finish

Strongly  
Describes Me

Neutral

Strongly  
Describes Me



**I can get other people excited.**

**I can calm others down.**



Next >

Start Finish

Strongly Describes Me      Neutral      Strongly Describes Me

**I am good at figuring out how people who are very different can work together.**      **I have a gift for treating different people equally.**

**Next**

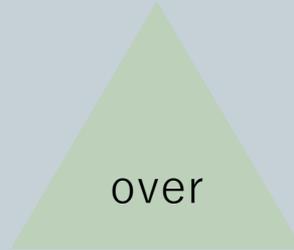
# DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION



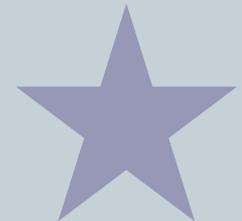
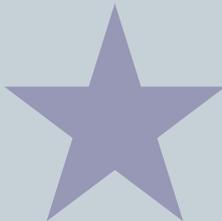
1,000  
,000

TWO  
MILLION  
INTERVIEWS

1,000  
,000



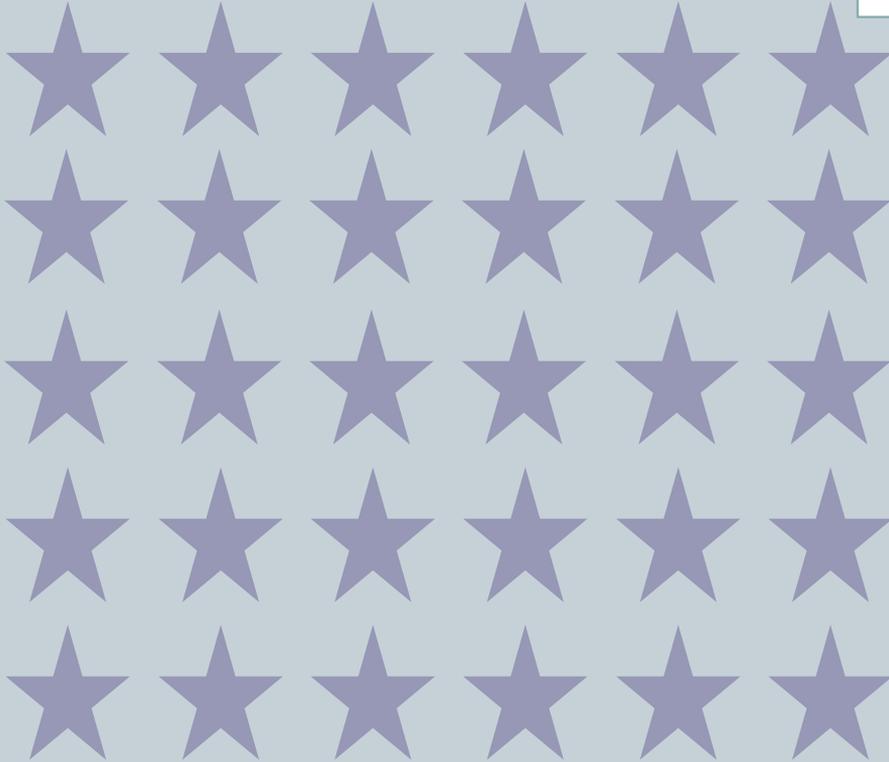
THREE DECADES



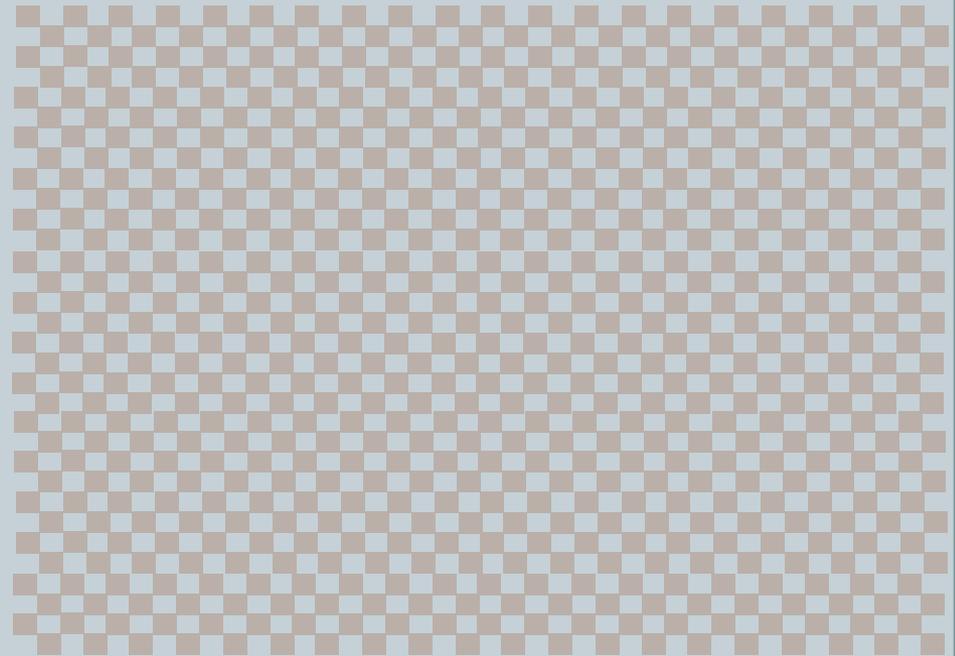
**Table 1: Number of Statements Associated With Each Theme**

CSF Theme	Total Number of Items	CSF Theme	Total Number of Items
Achiever	6	Futuristic	8
Activator	7	Harmony	5
Adaptability	8	Ideation	7
Analytical	11	Includer	7
Arranger	13	Individualization	6
Belief	11	Input	5
Command	9	Intellection	10
Communication	9	Learner	8
Competition	7	Maximizer	7
Connectedness	8	Positivity	12
Consistency	8	Relator	8
Context	4	Responsibility	11
Deliberative	8	Restorative	6
Developer	10	Self-Assurance	13
Discipline	14	Significance	12
Empathy	6	Strategic	4
Focus	12	Woo	9

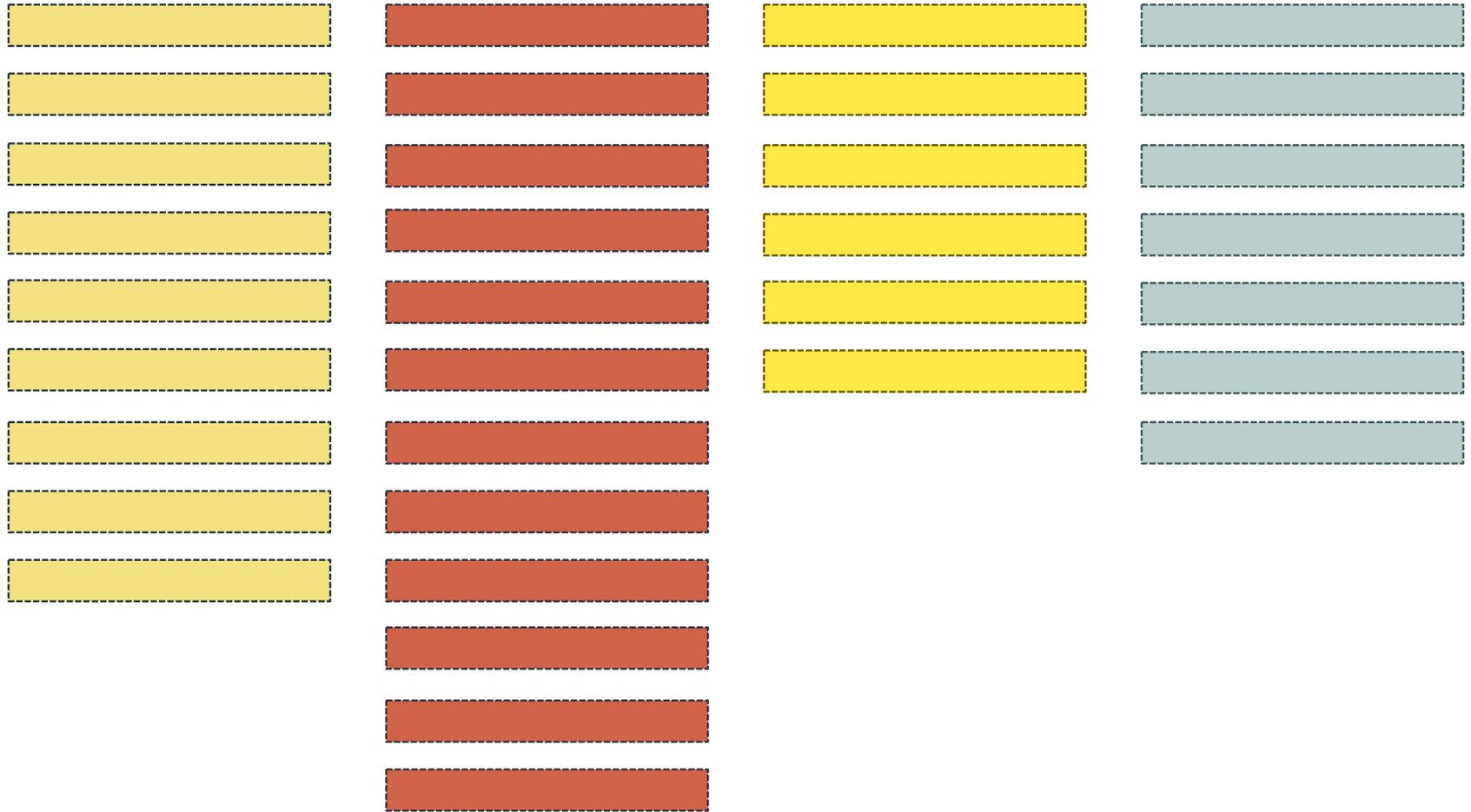
# DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION



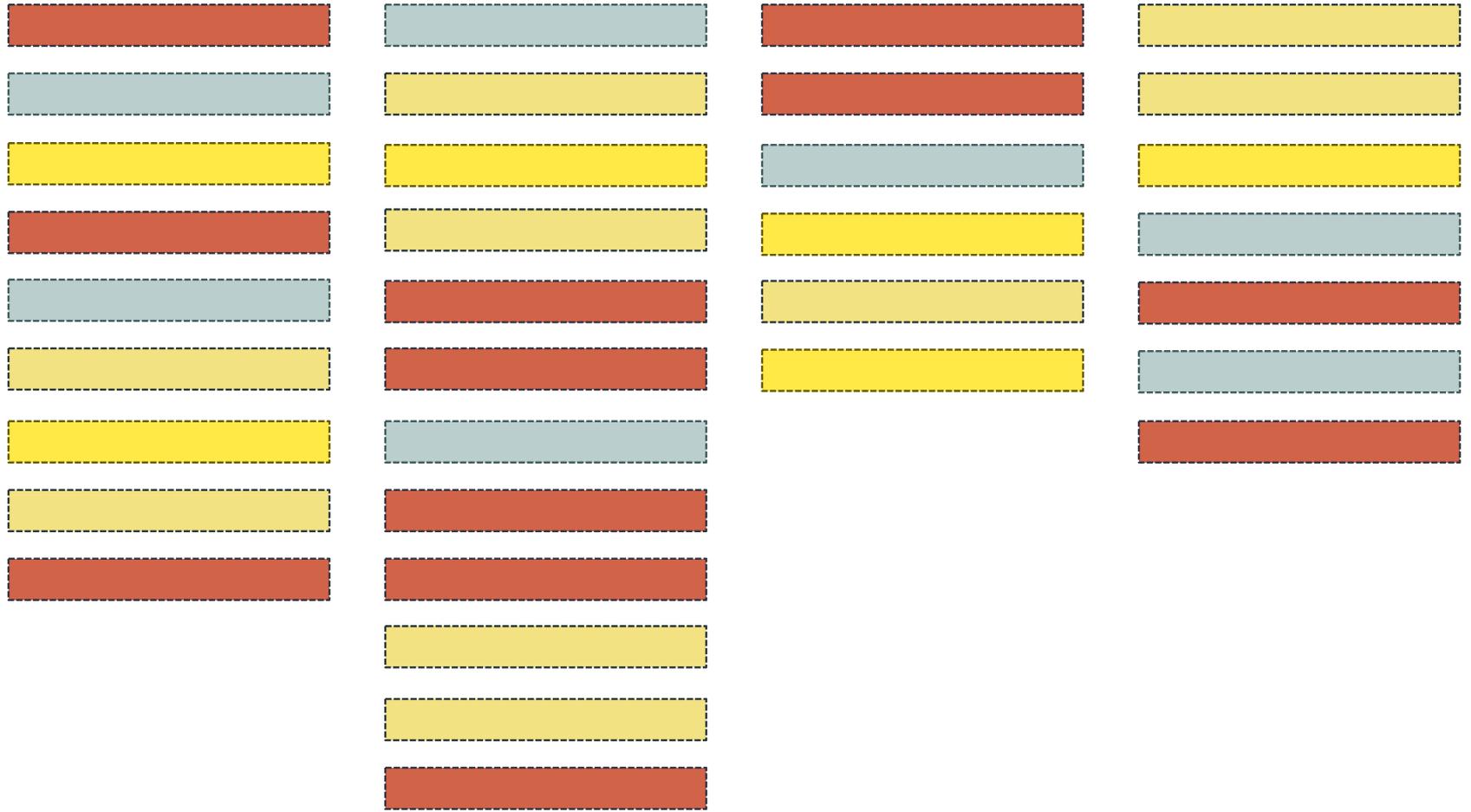
Spanning 30+ unique  
cultures



Leading to 430+ themes



Which were condensed to 34 Themes  
and 4 Domains



There are 278, 256 possible combinations of the Top 5 themes.

# RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY



- Researchers both inside and outside Gallup have investigated the reliability, validity, and applicability to the general population
- Studies have looked at internal structure, utility, reliability, and validity
- Validity evaluated in respect to the assessment's intended purpose—to initiate a strength-based development process
- Reliability evaluated in respect to the instrument's stability
- Technical Report available for more detailed information

# TEST-RETEST RELIABILITY



- Sits around alpha of .70.
- Issue of rank ordered themes.
- Chi-Squares completed to compare “top 5 at pre vs. post”
- Found “significant Chi-Square results, indicating that their presence in the top five on the pretest was significantly related to their presence in the top five in the post-test.” (stable over time)
- “For most respondents, any new Signature Themes in the post-test were in the respondent’s top 10 themes on the pretest, indicating that some of the apparent lack of temporal consistency is an **artifact of how the results are reported.**”

# IS THERE A SHADOW SIDE?



**Talent is always positive. It enables us to do things well and holds potential for positive results, better quality of life!**

**At the same time, talents place demands on the people who have them.**

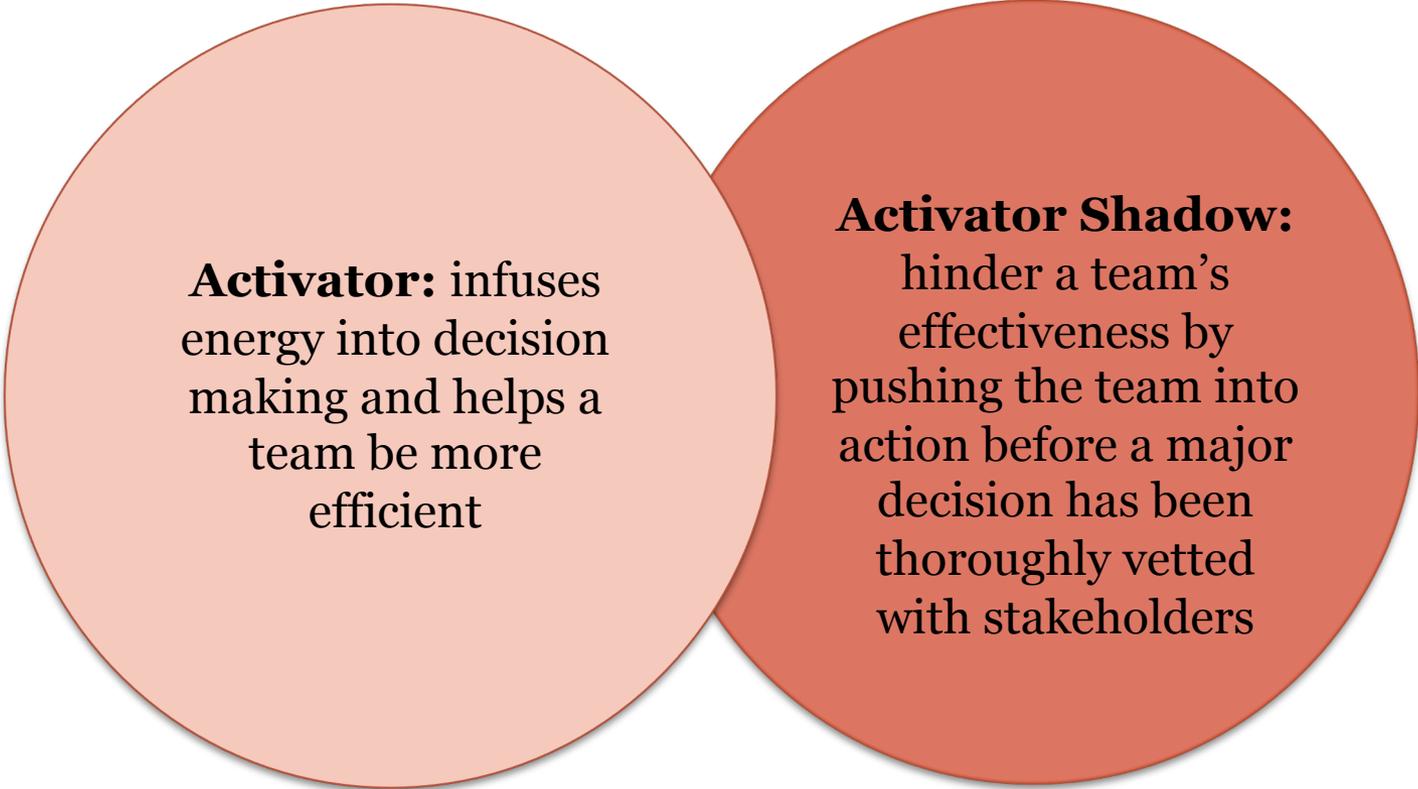
# LESSER STRENGTHS



*“A focus on strengths doesn't mean we should ignore **weaknesses.**”*

- **Clues to lesser strengths:**
  - ...things that are frustrating
  - ...things that deplete us
  - ...things that make us defensive or lack confidence
  - ...areas of slow learning

# EXPLORING THE SHADOW SIDE



**Activator:** infuses energy into decision making and helps a team be more efficient

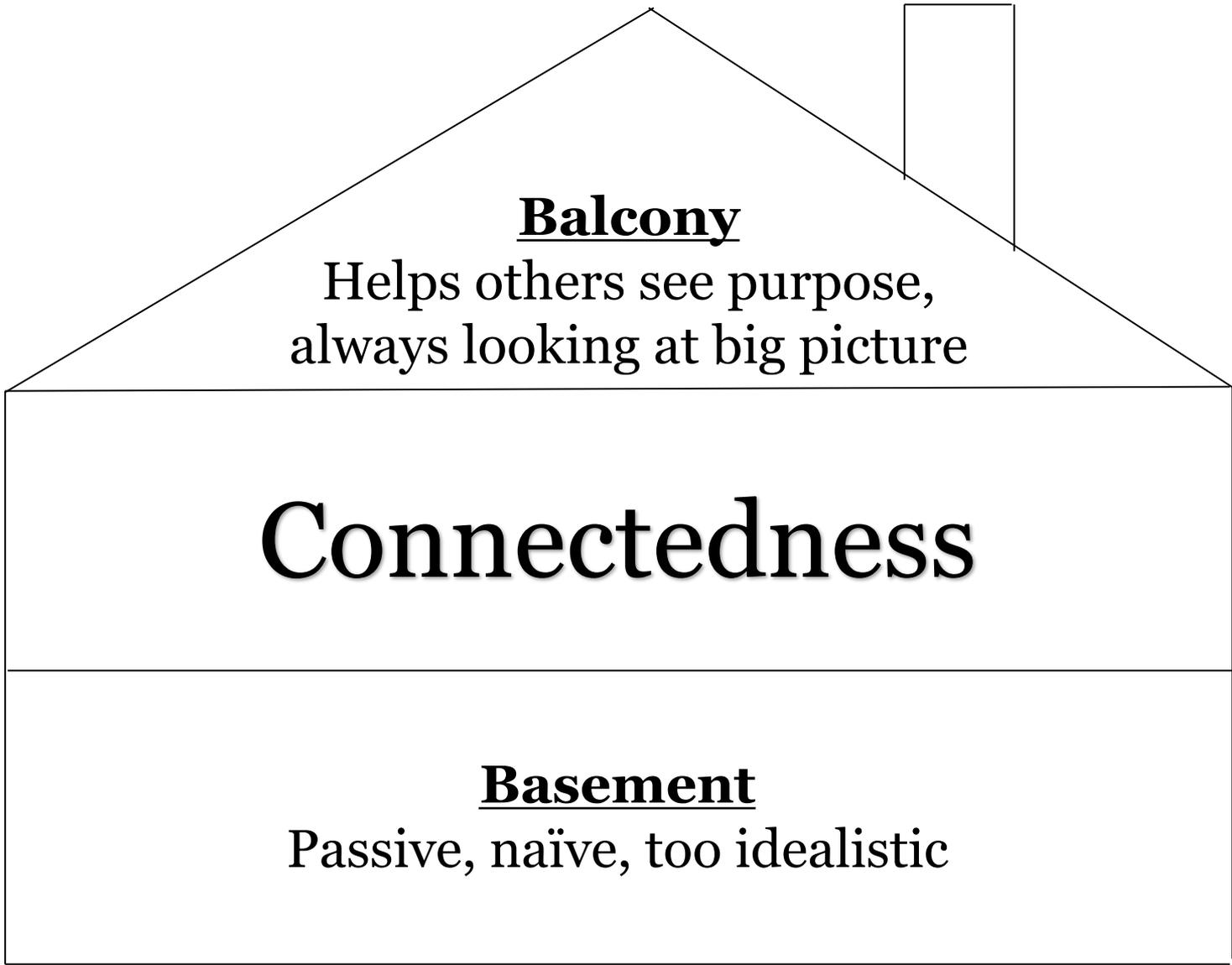
**Activator Shadow:** hinder a team's effectiveness by pushing the team into action before a major decision has been thoroughly vetted with stakeholders

# THEMES IN ISOLATION



Powerful talents from in every theme can have a shadow when they operate in **isolation**.

- Command becomes....
- Significance becomes...
- Maximizer becomes...
- Belief becomes....
- Futuristic becomes....
- Self-assurance becomes...
- Bossiness
- Egotism
- Relentless perfectionism
- Judgmental attitude
- Inability to enjoy the present
- Insensitivity to others



**Balcony**

Helps others see purpose,  
always looking at big picture

**Connectedness**

**Basement**

Passive, naïve, too idealistic

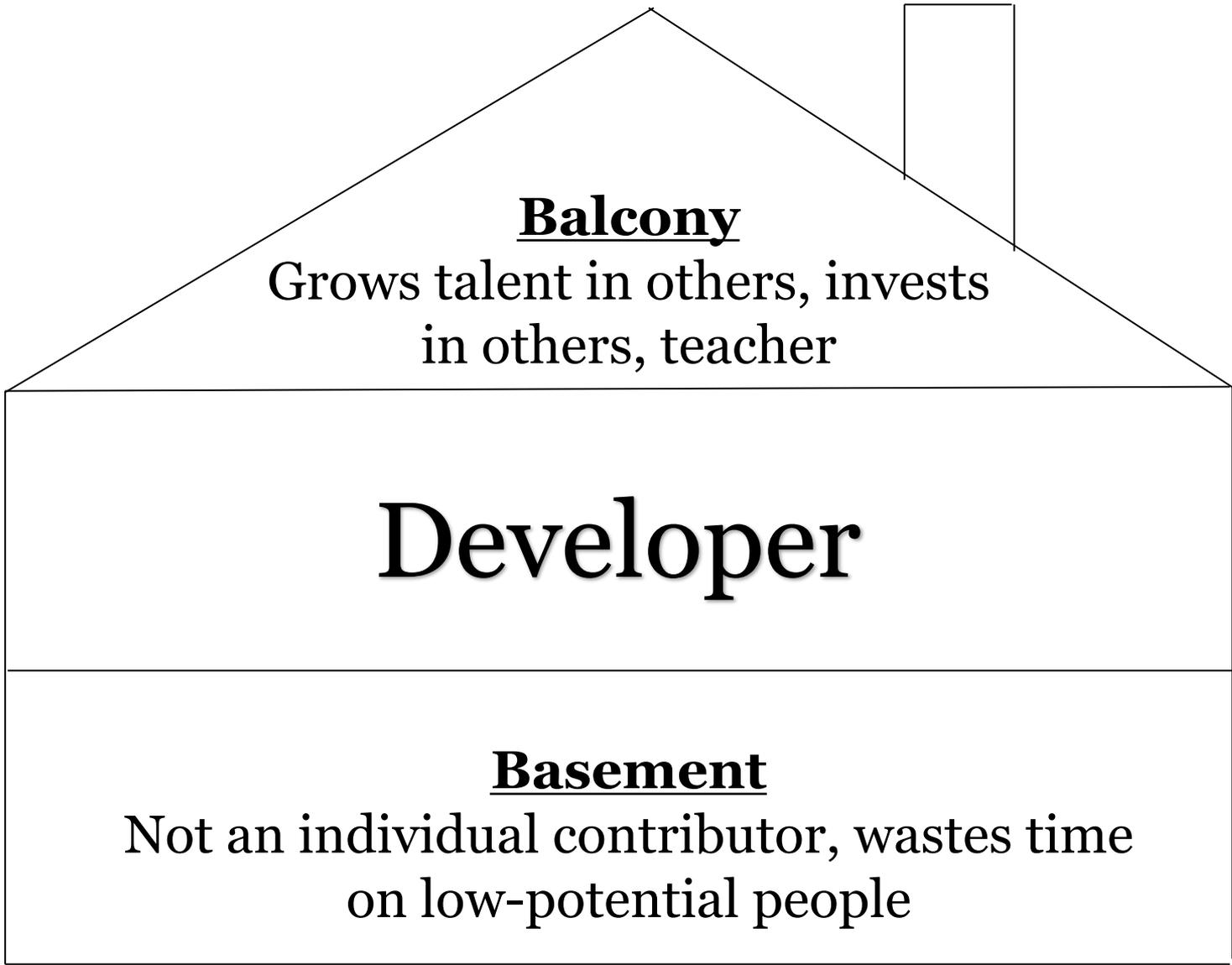
**Balcony**

Excellent thinker, capable of  
deep philosophical thought

**Intellection**

**Basement**

A loner, isolated, doesn't work well with  
others



**Balcony**

Grows talent in others, invests  
in others, teacher

**Developer**

**Basement**

Not an individual contributor, wastes time  
on low-potential people

# MANAGING THE SHADOW SIDE



- Stop doing it!
- Determine if it is a skills, knowledge, or talent weakness
- Get good enough; reach a baseline of acceptable performance
- Get a support system or partner
- Maximize a strength to compensate and overshadow

# DEEP DIVE: POWER AND EDGE OF STRENGTHS



- I. FOCUS
- II. FUTURISTIC
- III. HARMONY
- IV. IDEATION
- V. INCLUDER
- VI. INDIVIDUALIZATION

# FOCUS



- Know staying on track is the best value, can avoid distraction, has an inherent concentration, efficient
- “**Clarity of vision,**” prioritization comes easily. “Plan your work and work your plan”
- Productivity/goal focused; focus begins with the end in mind; sees progress
- See the “track” and can help guide others; know that not everyone can do what you do/have your focus
- More than getting work done. Shows up in family, community, health.
- Can be seen as inflexible or perceived as unapproachable

# FUTURISTIC



- Loves to dream about, imagine, explore and visualize the future. Sometimes it's the deep future, sometimes it's tomorrow
- Constant consideration of what may be, think about this in great detail
- Others may see you as a sounding board for advice
- Talent can be a source of optimism and hope, focus on opportunities—connecting today to tomorrow
- **Legacy building mindset**, sees tomorrow in vivid detail, anticipates or imagines what could be, and inspires others with that vision.
- Recognize times that there are out of the box expectations lead us to do something better

# HARMONY



- Harmony can find the agreement between differences and has the ability to set the differences in a way that **mesh** together.
- Often provide a sense of calmness others can feel. Can diffuse conflict with practicality and agreement, encourage others to work together
- **Predict and avoid emotional turbulence**, can see conflict where others do not. Harmony is not timid or meek, but believes in the importance of togetherness
- Offer to summarize tone in a way for others to comprehend, can unlock opposition—negotiation
- Worry less about winning the debate, you probably don't enjoy it or learn from listening to others argue. Look closely for areas of agreement in a debate and share when appropriate.

# IDEATION



- Value you bring is the **intersection of novel and noteworthy**, creative quickness, fast to offer new perspectives
- 3 aspects to Ideation: Creativity, Complexity, and Connectivity
- About noticing connections that build on something AND that lead somewhere, see what ideas stick
- Seek out the “what if” space and/or put your own spin on things
- Needs appreciation and invitation to “riff” and play without commitment
- Differentiate between ideas and opinions
- May need help communicating their ideas to others, but good at brainstorming--catch ideas that resonate and tell them why (helps them build connections with what is relevant)

# INCLUDER



- “Teamwork makes the dreamwork,” need to be where the people are
- Ensuring that everyone in a group feels valued and respected, all voices are heard (but not for the sake of consensus), foster collaboration.
- **Socially adjustable.** Quick to invite, know others who can bring their voice to an idea, expect different perspectives, awareness and honor of diversity.
- Look for outsiders and seek to make them insiders
- Can encourage others to speak up and have their voice heard
- Because they hate feeling out of the loop, they ensure that others are up to speed and in the know. Hyper vigilant to exclusion.
- Desire not to leave others out can lead you to cast the net too wide -- not everyone needs to have input on every decision.

# INDIVIDUALIZATION



- Brings freshness, the ability to stay relevant and present because every situation is difference.
- Individualization can customize the approach we have outwardly; how we sell, communicate, offer insights to others in the community.
- Natural spotter of individual potential in others.
- Relationship piece of this talent is probably strongest aspect.
- Strongly believe that the **best way to treat people fairly is to treat them differently.**
- Make others feel special, like you understand and care about them.
- Need to **customize** approach to each person can slow you down.
- Dark side of individualization is manipulation (because you are attune to others, you know which buttons to push)

# REFERENCES



- Asplund, J., Agrawal, S., Hodges, T., Harter, J., and Lopez, S.J. (2014). *The Clifton Strengthsfinder 2.0 Technical Report: Development and Validation*. Gallup Press, Gallup, Inc.
- Clifton, D.O., Anderson, E., and Schreiner, L.A. (2006). *StrengthsQuest: Discover and Develop Your Strengths in Academics, Career, and Beyond*. Gallup Press, Gallup, Inc.

THANK YOU!  
QUESTIONS?



DR. ANNA THOMAS  
ANNA.THOMAS@VANDERBILT.EDU