

HIGH5 STRENGTHS TEST METHODOLOGY & APPROACH

Over the years, the HIGH5 test has been built through a greater commitment to our mission: changing the world by helping people understand and appreciate themselves and each other. The sections below outline core principles and key steps of the strengths test development.

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INTRODUCTION

HIGH5 is on a mission: Changing the world by helping people understand and appreciate themselves and each other.

The HIGH5 strengths test represents a major step towards reaching this mission. It enables people to discover

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their strengths and, thus, to become the best version of themselves and to start living the best version of their lives.

In the sections below, we deep dive into our approach and methodology for you to understand how this test was developed and how it functions.

THEORETICAL VS. APPLIED APPROACH

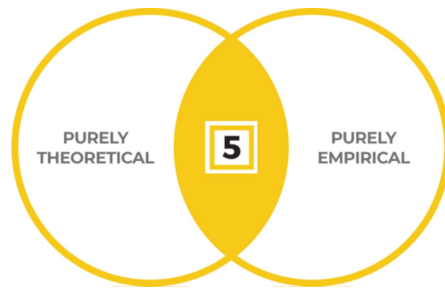
Despite the field of positive psychology being relatively young – [you can read the historical deep dive here](#) – the quest to understand the factors that drive human behavior, decisions, and feelings is eternal. Conceptually, there are two major research approaches that one can take to develop a model to develop the latter.

First – the fundamental or “theoretical” approach. The main focus of a theoretical approach, serving as a base for assessments such as the “[VIA Survey](#)” by Martin Seligman, is to advance our scientific knowledge for a more thorough understanding of a topic or certain phenomenon. It deals with the formulation of a theory about human behavior, which can then be generalized across populations. This also constitutes the main advantage of this approach: once a theory is developed, it is universally applicable.

Second – the applied approach. The main focus of such an approach, underlying such assessments as the “StrengthsFinder” by [Don Clifton](#), is to understand and solve a specific real-life, empirical problem. Unlike the theoretical one, the applied approach starts with collecting as much real-life data as possible and then trying to structure it into a framework to achieve a specific objective. The main advantage of this approach lies in the practical applicability of its results.

Simplifying the discussion, the main difference between applied and fundamental research is that findings of applied research can be applied to resolve specific issues, whereas fundamental studies are used to explore overarching principles. While both have their own advantages, both have their cons. Purely theoretical models lack concrete applicability of their results, while purely empirical models lack applicability across populations.

Conscious of this, our HIGH5 approach & methodology aimed to combine the best of these two perspectives. You can find it outlined in the next section.



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STRENGTHS TEST DEVELOPMENT STAGES

To help grasping the methodology & complex development of HIGH5 model, we have simplified this lustrum-long process into 3 main steps.

1. THEORETICAL BACKBONE

The first step of the methodology focused on the fundamental research of the strengths-based approach and the positive psychology at large. The goal was to identify both established and emerging perspectives in the field and to consolidate, what we call, the universal human strengths. As discussed above, despite the abstract nature of such universal concepts, this step ensured the conceptual validity of any future assessment we intended to build back then. Our initial research made sure that, regardless of any real-life data we would receive afterwards, its interpretation would be grounded on the well-studied concepts underlying human psychology.

2. APPLIED IMPLICATIONS

The second methodology step focused on translating the concepts, perspectives, basic principles, models and philosophies, consolidated in Step 1, into strengths that are applicable in a real-life context. To achieve that, we have heard from +12 000 practitioners – from coaches to managers, from psychologists to people like you and

us – on what the universal human strengths enabled them to do in practice. The result of this year-long input collection process was an exhaustive list of applicable strengths that suited the criteria that we outline in the next section. This step ensured that, once you take the strengths test, the results would not only be conceptually valid, but also would be applicable in reality.

3. BIG DATA MODEL REFINEMENT

The third step focused on ensuring statistical validity and reliability of the model created in Steps 1 & 2. It started with an all-inclusive list of applicable strengths according to our conceptual model. The big data application of test taker scores enabled us to refine the model for it to measure what it was designed for. In the process of continuous iterations, we have arrived to the current specification of the HIGH5 model measuring 20 applicable strengths across 4 strength domains. Unlike the first and the second, the third step of our methodology is not meant to be ever finished completely. The new test taker scores help keeping the model precise and reliable, yet remaining dynamic and flexible to adapt over time and test taker populations.

STRENGTHS THAT WE MEASURE

Luckily, it is in the name what our strengths test is meant to measure – the personal strengths. You would expect that any organization behind every major strengths assessment would agree with this. Yet, this is not always the case.

Let's take an example. The result of the "StrengthsFinder" assessment, a well-known test in the strengths area, helps finding your talents, not your strengths. All the famous names in the industry – from Don Clifton, Marcus Buckingham to Martin Seligman, from StandOut to the VIA Survey – all have different definitions of what they actually measure. You can be in the same room with another Analyst, yet your interpretations of each other's strengths would be different.

Therefore, it is important for us to clarify what your HIGH5 strengths results mean:

HIGH5 strengths are recurring patterns of thoughts, decisions, actions, and feelings that satisfy 5 major criteria:

1. You feel natural at using and developing your ability;
2. You get positive energy when using your strengths;
3. Others also perceive it as your strength;

4. *It goes along with your values and understanding of a strength;*

5. *It satisfies your inner needs.*

Many strengths assessments include only the first two in their definition of personal strengths. By extending the concept, we at HIGH5 focus a more precise definition of “strengths”.

First, human beings are social creatures that do not live on a deserted island. Therefore, strengths cannot be measured without taking into account social interactions and perceptions.

Second, strengths depend heavily on the cultural context. What is seen as a strength in one society might not be aligned with the values of the other.

Third, strengths cannot manifest themselves in an environment that does not meet their needs. When they are met – this is what we call “the strengths zone”. This represents the perfect condition where an individual can flourish both personally and professionally.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

For any assessments – from GMATs to IQs – the key challenge is to ensure the reliability and validity of its results. This is particularly important for any tests related to human personality, which is inherently and infinitely complex in its nature.

There are two distinct ways an assessment organization can address reliability and validity, and signal it to the world.

On one hand, the organization can imply the high value of its assessment by charging a high price for it. The only way for the test taker to check what is inside the black box is to pay for it and believe (or assume) that price equals quality. It does not mean all paid assessment are necessarily bad. In fact, these personality tests can bring truly life-changing revelations; however, you will never know if the test suits your needs unless you part with your money first.

On the other hand, the organization can choose to let the test takers determine themselves whether this strengths assessment behind it can help the individual to grow or not.

This is exactly the reason why HIGH5 is available free of charge. No one forces you to hire any external consultants or to buy any books to access our strengths test. This also helps us achieve two major objectives.

First, it goes in line with our mission to change the world by helping people understand and appreciate themselves and each other. We strongly believe that accessibility of self-awareness tools positively contributes to a common positive language among people. Moreover, it moves the society from competition to genuine collaboration. Even more importantly, we believe that people who are in need of a strengths test might not be always in the best position to pay a high price for it. For those who want to dig deeper and who have sufficient financial means, we offer additional premium resources. But we won't charge anyone to discover their top strengths.

Second, it helps us achieve statistical validity and reliability at levels that are normally not achievable by expensive personality tests. You can take a deeper look into the [statistical validity and reliability](#) of HIGH5 at the corresponding section. In short, the more people take the HIGH5 test, the more precise we are able to make it. The large number of test takers is what enables us to improve and expand our framework & methodology on an ongoing basis. The current HIGH5 version is not the first and it is definitely will not be the last one. If you have any suggestions on how to improve it further, we are always [happy to hear from you](#).

It is a myth that a strengths test can't be free, reliable, and valid; and the HIGH5 test is the proof of that.

READY TO TRY HIGH5 FREE STRENGTHS TEST?

TAKE THE TEST NOW

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