



CURIOSITY

VIA Survey calls this strength Curiosity

Parent virtue: Wisdom and Knowledge. Strengths of wisdom and knowledge are cognitive strengths related to the acquisition and use of information. Strengths comprised in this virtue are creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective.



WHAT DOES CURIOSITY MEAN?

You like exploration and discovery. You ask lots of questions because you want to learn more about anything and everything.

Curiosity is a crucial component of one's character. Our innate urge for discovery and exploration is a key element of our human desire for wisdom and knowledge. It's what keeps us intrigued in the plotlines of movies and books. It's what pushes us to try new activities or travel to different places. All individuals experience curiosity, but differ in their willingness to experience it – behaviorally, intellectually, and emotionally.

Curiosity is associated with novelty-seeking. Novelty-seekers are more willing to endure risks – such as physical risks of skydiving or social risks of meeting new people – in order to gain the benefits of new experiences. Curiosity is also associated with being receptive to exploring new ideas, feelings, or values – which carry their own inherent risks and rewards.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Individuals with the character strength of curiosity are more likely to ask questions and try new things. Curiosity then is a form of courage. Asking questions exposes the fact that we don't know and trying a new activity means we might fail. But, it's only through asking questions and exploring new opportunities that we learn and grow. However, curiosity can be detrimental to our health, if it's associated with illegal substance use or other risky behavior.

On a group level, curiosity is crucial in making discoveries that bring important benefits. For example, exotic plants may yield new medicines and ancient artifacts may illuminate astonishing pieces of human history. Curiosity is what compels astronauts into outer space and submarines to the bottom of the ocean. It is hardwired into the human genome and a defining element of human success.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Interested
- Inquiring
- Investigative
- Exploratory
- Probing
- Adventurous

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- Asking lots of questions is a good thing. It helps us learn.
- Exploration – whether physical, mental, or emotional – is how humanity grows and evolves.
- I get excited when I travel to a new place, try an exotic food, or experience a new sensation.
- When I go home from school or work, I like to discover new routes.
- I'm always curious to see if my expectations match with the new reality that I have discovered.
- I despise monotony and boredom.

QUOTES ON CURIOSITY

"There is always a place I can take someone's curiosity. That's my challenge as an educator. No one is dumb who is curious. The people who don't ask questions remain clueless throughout their lives."

-NEIL deGRASSE TYSON

"We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious...and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."

-WALT DISNEY

"Curiosity is the one thing invincible in nature."

-FREYA STARK

"Be less curious about people and more curious about ideas."

-MARIE CURIE



OPEN-MINDEDNESS

VIA Survey calls this strength Judgment

Parent virtue: Wisdom and Knowledge. Strengths of wisdom and knowledge are cognitive strengths related to the acquisition and use of information. Strengths comprised in this virtue are creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective.



WHAT DOES OPEN-MINDEDNESS MEAN?

You like to consider new ideas and try new things. You examine things from all sides and don't jump to conclusions.

Open-mindedness is the willingness to actively search for evidence that goes against one's favored beliefs, plans, or goals. Open-minded individuals are able to weigh all evidence fairly, when it is available. They see the other side and fight the tendency to have a bias for their own views. And, rather than favoring the socially dominant views, they give attention to those that are less dominant.

This character strength helps individuals build knowledge about specific issues or points of view – and provide sound recommendations and advice. Open-minded people do not jump to conclusions. Instead, they seek out and examine all of the available evidence before forming an opinion.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Individuals with the character strength of open-mindedness are more likely to make accurate decisions – and decisions that they won't regret. This is because they think through all sides of a problem and actively fight "myside bias," which happens when people generate evidence, evaluate evidence, and test hypotheses in a manner biased toward their own prior opinions and attitudes.

Open-minded individuals are often good listeners and called upon to provide a balanced viewpoint. Both listening and the ability to deliver reasonable and practical advice are marks of good friends and confidantes. This strength helps individuals form meaningful and lasting relationships.

On a group level, open-mindedness is crucial in counteracting groupthink. Individuals with this strength help their group identify the correct goals, evidence, possible alternatives, and final decisions to a given problem.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Reasonable
- Critical Thinker
- Sensible
- Rational
- Impartial
- Logical

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I always look at evidence that goes against my beliefs and take it into consideration.
- People should revise their opinion when provided with new evidence.
- Changing your mind is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of character and intelligence.
- I like to understand and consider other people's points of view.
- Evidence, not just intuition, is the best guide for making a decision.

QUOTES ON OPEN-MINDEDNESS

"A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open."

-FRANK ZAPPA

"The measure of intelligence is the ability to change."

-ALBERT EINSTEIN

"Progress is impossible without change; those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

-GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

"If you don't get out of the box you've been raised in, you won't understand how much bigger the world is."

-ANGELINA JOLIE



KINDNESS

VIA Survey calls this strength Kindness

Parent virtue: Humanity. Strengths of humanity involve caring interpersonal relationships with others, particularly in one-to-one relationships. Strengths comprised in this virtue are love, kindness, and social intelligence.



WHAT DOES KINDNESS MEAN?

You are generous to others and you are never too busy to help out. You enjoy doing good deeds for other people.

Kindness has been a foundation of moral and spiritual life across cultures and religions throughout history. This character strength is grounded in the belief of a common humanity in which others are worthy of care, attention, affection, and compassion. Aristotle defined kindness as, "helpfulness towards someone in need, not in return for anything, nor for the advantage of the helper himself, but for that of the person helped."

Kind people think about the needs and feelings of other people, and then act to help those people. Kind people are selfless. That is why a true act of kindness is distinct from helping another person in order to simply gain something for yourself. An individual with the strength of kindness helps others because it's the right thing to do, not because they expect any reciprocal treatment or gain in reputation.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, kindness is correlated with desirable developmental outcomes. It is related to other-oriented emotions, like empathy (the ability to experience the emotional state of another person) and sympathy (the tender emotion of concern for another's difficulty). Psychologists have even traced kindness and generosity as the keys to healthy, happy, and lasting marriages.

On a group level, kindness is very important. In addition to empathy and sympathy, the character strength of kindness is indicative of an individual's moral reasoning capacity and level of social responsibility. That means people who develop kindness possess a strong personal ethical responsibility to care for other people. And, their acts of kindness towards others lead to additional acts of kindness by those who have been helped.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Caring
- Thoughtful
- Considerate
- Selfless
- Compassionate
- Generous

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- All human beings have worth.
- Other people are just as important as me.
- People suffering or in need deserve care and compassion.
- I don't seek recognition for helping others. Helping other people is an end in itself.
- Giving is more important than receiving.
- Giving other people gifts – whether a present, a compliment, or my attention – makes me feel good.

QUOTES ON KINDNESS

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

-AESOP

"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

-MARK TWAIN

"No kind action ever stops with itself. A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up to make new trees. The greatest work that kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves."

-AMELIA EARHART

"You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late."

-RALPH WALDO EMERSON



FAIRNESS

VIA Survey calls this strength Fairness



Parent virtue: Justice. Strengths of justice refer to the optimal relationship between the individual and the group or community, rather than the more one-to-one relationships in the humanity virtue. These strengths include: teamwork/citizenship, fairness, and leadership.

WHAT DOES FAIRNESS MEAN?

You believe that all people have value. You approach situations with an unbiased mindset and treat everyone with respect.

Fairness is the product of moral judgment – the process by which people determine what is morally right and what is morally wrong. Moral reasoning has been explored and analyzed in two main traditions: the justice reasoning approach and the care reasoning approach.

Justice reasoning emphasizes the use of reason and logic. In justice reasoning, fairness is determined by objectively weighing what is right or wrong, as determined by a group, society, or universal ethical principles. Care reasoning, by contrast, emphasizes care and compassion. This approach uses concepts like empathy – and understanding and accounting for the needs, interests, and well-being of another person – when making moral decisions.

Although the two approaches are different, most people use a blend of justice and care reasoning when making choices related to fairness.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, cultivating the character strength of fairness is correlated with highly desirable developmental outcomes. It helps people to become trustworthy friends, responsible citizens, and generally moral people.

Fairness is also essential for the good of the group. As individuals develop the capacity for moral reason they often find a strengthening of: the aptitude for self-reflection; self-awareness and self-confidence; and perspective taking (i.e. the ability to “put themselves in another’s shoes”). When taken together, these skills significantly enhance a person’s ability to solve interpersonal and group relationship problems.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Respectful
- Empathetic
- Just
- Evenhanded
- Principled
- Moral

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following way:

- I treat people the way that I want to be treated.
- Everyone should get her fair share.
- It’s wrong to use people.
- Everyone deserves respect. No one deserves to be discriminated against because of the color of his skin.
- Even if society says it’s all right to do something, if it doesn’t match my personal sense of what’s right, I wouldn’t do it.

QUOTES ON FAIRNESS

“It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself.”

-ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

-U.S. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

“From the equality of rights springs identity of our highest interests; you cannot subvert your neighbor’s rights without striking a dangerous blow at your own.”

-CARL SHURZ

“I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university.”

-ALBERT EINSTEIN



PERSPECTIVE

VIA Survey calls this strength Perspective

Parent virtue: Wisdom and Knowledge. Strengths of wisdom and knowledge are cognitive strengths related to the acquisition and use of information. Strengths comprised in this virtue are creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective.



WHAT DOES PERSPECTIVE MEAN?

You appreciate that people see things in different ways. You have the ability to understand the world from multiple points of view.

Perspective is also referred to as wisdom. It is distinct from intelligence. People with this strength are sought out for advice. They see the big picture and can make sense of the world's complexity. The strength of perspective gives individuals the ability to see to the heart of difficult questions and achieve clarity. Importantly, they are also honest and behave in an ethically consistent manner.

Perspective is usually gained over time, as one accumulates more knowledge and experiences. However, developing perspective is not simply a matter of time. It comes from truly listening to others when they talk -- and working to understand new points of view when reading books, listening to stories, or watching movies.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Perspective helps an individual make sense of the world. It provides clarity on what matters and what does not. Being able to see things from multiple angles helps individuals remain calm and learn from mistakes. Individuals with this strength are typically highly self-aware. Reflecting on their own feelings, thoughts, and motives helps them understand and empathize with other people. These individuals are strong listeners and ask great questions.

On a group level, perspective helps couples, teams, communities, and societies act wisely and correctly. Individuals with the strength of perspective help their group get through difficult or uncertain circumstances, because they're poised and can identify opportunities for success. Moving into an increasingly complex future, the need for individuals with perspective will only increase.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Wise
- Sage
- Perceptive
- Insightful
- Observant
- Astute

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I am aware of my own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- Self-awareness is important to me. I am able to accurately articulate my strengths and weaknesses.
- I have the ability to identify and analyze larger patterns.
- Friends, family members, or coworkers often seek my advice.
- It is important to consider all sides' needs, thoughts, and opinions before acting.
- I am able to see to the core of important problems.

QUOTES ON PERSPECTIVE

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."
-ARISTOTLE

"The simple things are also the most extraordinary thing, and only the wise can see them."
-PAULO COELHO

"Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens."
-JIMI HENDRIX

"We could never learn to be brave and patient if there were only joy in the world."
-HELEN KELLER

"He who knows all the answers has not been asked all the questions."
-CONFUCIUS



CREATIVITY

VIA Survey calls this strength Creativity

Parent virtue: Wisdom and Knowledge. Strengths of wisdom and knowledge are cognitive strengths related to the acquisition and use of information. Strengths comprised in this virtue are creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective.



WHAT DOES CREATIVITY MEAN?

You come up with new and original ways to think about and do things.

Creative people are able to look at the world in original ways. They are open to new experiences, and have an imaginative and independent thought process. They are able to generate lots of different ideas, and have the capacity to go after certain ideas they've generated with energy and enthusiasm. Creativity is a process that takes courage. Anytime you're putting your original ideas into the world, you risk being criticized or even ostracized.

Positive psychology breaks creativity into two components. First, he/she must produce original ideas or behaviors. Second, the original idea or behavior must make a positive contribution to that person's life or others lives. There are big acts of creativity, exemplified by great artists and scientists. And, there are everyday acts of creativity, such as how people create solutions to deal with problems at work or at home.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Creativity is associated with intrinsic motivation, meaning the process of creation is an end in itself. The work is not accomplished in order to receive an award. Creativity is also correlated with self-actualization, or fulfilling one's talents and potential. Those with the strength of creativity have the urge to create, to build something new and original. The act of creation makes them happy.

On a group level, creativity is vital. It helps us solve seemingly impossible problems, create something we never knew we wanted, or simply see the world in a new way. Technological examples include the printing press, refrigeration, electricity, automobiles and the internet. And think of what we'd be missing without Renaissance art, Enlightenment thinking, Harlem Renaissance jazz, or hip-hop emerging from the South Bronx in the 1970s and 80s.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Original
- Imaginative
- Innovative
- Artistic
- Inventive
- Inspired

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I'm consistently thinking of new ways to do things.
- I have a strong imagination.
- I like to daydream.
- Creativity takes courage. You have to be willing to look stupid.
- It's important to push the boundaries and try new things.
- I love seeing, reading, or listening to something original.
- I often have conflicting urges, thoughts, or feelings. Creating something new helps me understand them.

QUOTES ON CREATIVITY

"Others have seen what is and asked why. I have seen what could be and asked why not."

-PABLO PICASSO

"There is no innovation and creativity without failure."

-BRENE BROWN

"It's not about becoming safe. If anybody wants to keep creating they have to be about change."

-MILES DAVIS

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."

-MAYA ANGELOU

"I never made one of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking."

-ALBERT EINSTEIN



TEAMWORK/CITIZENSHIP

VIA Survey calls this strength Teamwork

Parent virtue: Justice. Strengths of justice refer to the optimal relationship between the individual and the group or community, rather than the more one-to-one relationships in the humanity virtue. These strengths include: teamwork/citizenship, fairness, and leadership.



WHAT DOES TEAMWORK/CITIZENSHIP MEAN?

You work well as a member of a group or team. You are loyal and sacrifice your individual desires for the greater good.

Teamwork is the ability and willingness to place overall group success as a higher priority than individual achievement. Citizenship is a willingness to work towards the common good as opposed to one's own self-interest. Those who demonstrate strengths in teamwork and citizenship often work to help all group members find success. These individuals are willing to commit time and resources in order to further group goals and help toward the greater good.

This strength is associated with naturally positive feelings that accompany being a member of a family, team, school, political party, ethnic group, or country. However, those positive feelings can come with bad behavior towards the "out-group" in the form of blind obedience, disparaging words, or prejudice. This is important to guard against by leveraging a person's other positive character strengths.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, teamwork often means deferring or delaying individual accomplishments in order to ensure that the group maintains a high level of success. Their commitment to the larger group effort makes them both good teammates and citizens. The positive feelings associated with being part of a larger whole – can be highly beneficial and combat selfishness and egotism.

Our ability to work effectively within group structures is tied directly to the group's ability to succeed. In schools and workplaces across the world, commitment to teamwork and to the "greater good" helps to further learning and achievement for all group members. Maintaining the idea that "Other People Matter" is essential to any successful team environment.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Loyal
- Dedicated
- Collaborative
- Reliable
- Cooperative
- Inclusive

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- If we work together, we can accomplish major feats.
- You owe it to your country to help make it better.
- I want to help. It feels good to sacrifice for the greater good
- By working together, we will be more successful.
- We would love for you to join us.
- It's more important to me that we are successful than it is that I am successful.

QUOTES ON TEAMWORK

"Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

-HENRY FORD

"I am a member of a team, and I rely on a team. I defer to it and sacrifice for it, because the team, not the individual, is the ultimate champion."

-MIA HAMM

"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For indeed, that's all who ever have."

-MARGARET MEAD

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



BRAVERY

VIA Survey calls this strength Bravery

Parent virtue: Courage. Strengths of courage involve applying will and fortitude in overcoming internal or external resistance to accomplish goals. Strengths comprised in this virtue are bravery, perseverance, integrity, and zest/enthusiasm.



WHAT DOES BRAVERY MEAN?

You act with mental, moral, or physical strength even when you know things are difficult or scary.

Bravery refers to voluntary (not coerced) action in the face of a dangerous circumstance. This strength involves judgment; the brave person must have an understanding of the risks and consequences involved in acting. According to Socrates and Plato, forethought separates acts of valor from acts of rashness. This means that bravery isn't simply fearlessness, but instead the overcoming of fear.

Bravery can take many forms. Physical bravery involves overcoming fear of bodily injury or death. Moral bravery occurs when an individual does what he/she believes is right in the face of social and/or financial consequences. Mental bravery occurs when people overcome their everyday fears and anxieties.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Overcoming fears is critically important in individual development, as it allows the person to do more and become more. A person can be brave every single day. For example, some people with social anxiety are brave just by leaving their house and talking with people. On a physical level, bravery allows us to overcome fears, such as swimming or playing a sport. And, on a moral level, doing what we know to be right, despite the risks, gives us the sense that we are acting on behalf of a larger purpose.

On a group level, bravery is inspiring and contagious. Witnessing an individual's brave act – whether a soldier in battle or standing up for a bullied student – is a form of leadership and often encourages others to take action. Communities and societies throughout time have held bravery in high esteem because they know its inherent importance. This is why Aristotle believed, "Courage is the first of human virtues because it makes all others possible."

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Courageous
- Valorous
- Heroic
- Daring
- Valiant
- Noble

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I would prefer to try and fail, than to never try at all.
- Doing what is right is the most important thing, even if that means I may be personally injured.
- I know what I'm afraid of and take action to overcome my fears.
- Knowing the right thing to do doesn't matter if you don't do what is right.
- When facing a tough decision, it's better to act in good conscience than sit and do nothing.

QUOTES ON BRAVERY

"I learned that courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

-NELSON MANDELA

"It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare."

-MARK TWAIN

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear."

-ROSA PARKS

"It is not the critic who counts...The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena...who at worst, if he fails, at least fails by daring greatly."

-THEODORE ROOSEVELT



GRATITUDE

VIA Survey calls this strength Gratitude

Parent virtue: Transcendence. These strengths allow people to rise above their troubles and find meaning in the larger universe. Strengths of transcendence are appreciation of beauty and excellence, connection/purpose, gratitude, hope/optimism, and humor.



WHAT DOES GRATITUDE MEAN?

You are aware of and thankful for good things that happen.

Gratitude is the quality of feeling and expressing thankfulness and appreciation. It is an affirmation that there is goodness in other people and the world, and that we have received that goodness. People with the strength of gratitude have a readiness to show appreciation for kindness and also to return kindness. A leading expert, Robert Emmons, calls gratitude a “relationship-strengthening emotion because it requires us to see how we’ve been supported and affirmed by other people.”

Gratitude is sometimes resisted, especially in more self-sufficient and independent cultures, due to not wanting to experience a sense of indebtedness. However, gratitude is less about feeling indebted and more about being aware of the consideration, kindness, and generosity of others. It’s also important to note that gratitude is not about ignoring the negative aspects of life; it’s simply being aware of and thankful for what is good.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Out of all 24 character strengths, gratitude is the single best predictor of individual well-being. It is correlated with increased energy, empathy, happiness and optimism. And, the great thing about gratitude is that it can be intentionally cultivated. Numerous studies have concluded that gratitude is like a muscle. The more you practice it, the stronger it gets – and the more you’re able to reap its benefits.

On a group level, gratitude is associated with reciprocity and social stability. Grateful people are more likely than their counterparts to feel a commitment to others – and believe in an interconnectedness of the world and its people. When a person does a favor for you, you tend to feel thankful and be motivated return the favor. Groups that operate with gratitude, then, are usually more cohesive.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Thankful
- Appreciative
- Gratified
- Pleased
- Satisfied
- Grateful

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- It is important to be thankful for each day that we have.
- It is important to say “thank you” as often as possible.
- I am grateful for the people in my life and all the help they’ve given me.
- I wouldn’t be where I am without my family, friends, and teachers.
- Even difficult experiences provide a reason to be grateful. They allow us to learn and grow.
- Being grateful gives me strength and energy.

QUOTES ON GRATITUDE

“Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer.”
-MAYA ANGELOU

“The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness.”
-DALAI LAMA

“For me, every hour is grace. And I feel gratitude in my heart each time I can meet someone and look at his or her smile.”
-ELIE WIESEL

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”
-JOHN F. KENNEDY



HUMILITY/MODESTY

VIA Survey calls this strength Humility

Parent virtue: Temperance. Strengths of temperance protect us from excess. Strengths comprised in this virtue are forgiveness, humility/modesty, prudence, and self-control.



WHAT DOES HUMILITY MEAN?

You do not seek the spotlight. You let your actions speak for themselves.

Humble people have an accurate (not underestimated) sense of their abilities and achievements. They hold the capacity to acknowledge their mistakes and limitations, and are open to advice and new ideas. They do not show off their possessions or accomplishments.

Humility and modesty are often characterized as synonymous with shy or meek. This is false. True humility is a sign of strength; it is a quiet confidence in who you are. It requires an honest self-reflection on your strengths and weaknesses, and self-control over ego, arrogance, and vanity. It encapsulates a person's feelings, thoughts, and actions. It includes resistance to false modesty or the "humble brag."

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Developing humility is associated with positive developmental outcomes in individuals. It allows a person to honestly reflect on their abilities and acknowledge how and where they can improve. Humility opens them up to new ideas, advice, and (consequently) abilities that pride, arrogance, or pretentiousness often block. Therefore, humility makes them desired members of a team.

American society has overemphasized individual self-esteem to the point that narcissism is up 30% since the early 1980s. Narcissism, a fragile and defensive variety of self-esteem, is correlated with feelings of entitlement and a belief that all one's failures are a result of external factors. This increased focus on self and decreased focus on others is harmful to group cohesion and success. Humility, then, is vital to team, community, and societal achievement. Humble groups, composed of humble people, do what's necessary without making a big deal of it; always remaining focused on what's next.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Unassuming
- Unpretentious
- Modest
- Down-to-earth
- Pure
- Deferential

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- Actions speak louder than words.
- I prefer to let my actions speak for themselves.
- An unhealthy craving for awards and accolades will make you less likely to obtain them.
- Do what's expected of you and don't tell people you did it.
- Give credit where credit is due. All achievements take a team effort.
- "One-upping" people is sad. If others want to brag, I just let them without needing to talk about myself.

QUOTES ON HUMILITY

"There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self."

-ERNEST HEMINGWAY

"I'm surrounded by nothing but great people. I've been blessed with that, so really, I've got no choice but to be an all-around good person."

-TIM DUNCAN

"It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err."

-MAHATMA GANDHI

"A true genius admits he knows nothing."

-ALBERT EINSTEIN



APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE

VIA Survey calls this strength *Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence*



Parent virtue: Transcendence. *These strengths allow people to rise above their trouble and find meaning in the larger universe. Strengths of transcendence are appreciation, connection/purpose, gratitude, hope, and humor.*

WHAT DOES APPRECIATION MEAN?

You notice and value the world's beauty and people's skills. You don't take things for granted.

Appreciation of beauty and excellence is the ability to identify and enjoy that which is admirable in the world. There are three types of goodness in which positive psychology focuses: physical beauty (e.g. a sunset, song, or building); an exceptional skill or talent; and moral goodness (e.g. a character strength). Appreciation of beauty can generate awe; appreciation of a skill can generate admiration; and appreciation of moral goodness can generate moral elevation. All of these feelings (awe, admiration, and moral elevation) help us forget ourselves and find increased joy and meaning in the world.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Appreciating excellence and beauty helps an individual experience positive emotions and connect to the world around him/her. It's an outward facing strength, meaning the individual is focused on the world outside his/her head. And, not only is the individual outwardly focused, but often deeply absorbed in a sense of awe or admiration, freeing him/her to forget anxieties and troubles. And it is associated with other strengths, such as gratitude, curiosity, love of learning, and connection/purpose.

On a group level, those who appreciate excellence and beauty make our lives more enjoyable. First, it means that they're not looking to criticize the world or its people, but instead take pleasure from their excellence. Second, it is the writers, painters, musicians, and filmmakers who help us better appreciate the world around us. It's due to their admiration for the way the sun hits off a wave or the quiet perseverance of a cross-country runner, that we are able to see the world with fresh eyes.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Enraptured
- Enthralled
- Admiring
- Approving
- Fascinated
- Captivated

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I'm grateful for the beauty of the natural world around me.
- I appreciate the skills and attributes of others, even my opponents.
- Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around, you just might miss it.
- I get goose bumps when I hear a beautiful piece of music.
- Seeing the character strengths of other people inspires me to be a better person.

QUOTES ON APPRECIATION

"Thank God I have seen an orange sky with purple clouds. How easy it is to forget that we have the privilege of living in God's art gallery."

-ERICA GOROS

"If the stars should appear but one night every thousand years how man would marvel and adore."

-RALPH WALDO EMERSON

"Appreciation is a beautiful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well."

-VOLTAIRE

"At some point in life the world's beauty becomes enough. You don't need to photograph, paint or even remember it. It is enough."

-TONI MORRISON



SELF-CONTROL

VIA Survey calls this strength Self-Regulation

Parent virtue: Temperance. Strengths of temperance protect us from excess. Strengths comprised in this virtue are forgiveness, humility/modesty, prudence, and self-control.



WHAT DOES SELF-CONTROL MEAN?

You have the ability to control your emotions and behaviors. You think before you act.

Self-control is the act of managing behavior in a way that positively influences goal attainment and living up to standards. Possessing this strength protects people from destabilizing emotional extremes. Those with self-control are able to limit impulsive behavior. They have the ability to experience and navigate difficulty while remaining poised.

They understand that through discipline and restraint, there are greater, long-term goals that they can accomplish. Self-control is related to prudence, in that people with this strength are able to implement extended planning techniques in pursuit of difficult task completion. Self-control does not mean a lack of thoughts, feelings, or impulses; it just means you have command over them.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, self-control helps them delay the short-term gain in pursuit of a greater, long-term success. This strength is associated with having an “internal locus of control;” of being in control of (and responsible for) your own personal choices – and the outcomes of those choices. It gives people the power to diet, study for an exam, or practice a musical instrument. Some psychologists have likened self-control to a muscle: it gets stronger the more it’s used.

A group’s ability to demonstrate self-control often appears in the form of “self-monitoring.” This means that individuals demonstrate honesty with one another about successful group practices. When things are unsuccessful, group members have the ability to adjust roles in the interest of overall group success. It’s a crucial strength in our modern society and its mentality of impulsivity and consumption.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Disciplined
- Poised
- Composed
- Cool
- Measured
- Restrained

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I can wait.
- If I do this now, I will benefit from it later.
- I’m going to do this, even though I would rather not.
- I can control my anger and emotions.
- I am disciplined.
- The more I practice self-control, the better I get at it.
- I have the ability to consider the situation before responding.
- I know that my actions now have an impact on my success later.

QUOTES ON SELF-CONTROL

“Temperance is a disposition of the mind which binds the passions.”

-THOMAS AQUINAS

“You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.”

-MARCUS AURELIUS

“Today I will do what others won’t, so tomorrow I can accomplish what others can’t.”

-JERRY RICE

“The first and best victory is to conquer self.”

-PLATO

“The best fighter is never angry.”

-LAO TZU



PERSEVERANCE

VIA Survey calls this strength Perseverance

Parent virtue: Courage. Strengths of courage involve applying will and fortitude in overcoming internal or external resistance to accomplish goals. Strengths comprised in this virtue are bravery, perseverance, integrity, and zest/enthusiasm.



WHAT DOES PERSEVERANCE MEAN?

You complete what you start despite obstacles. You never give up.

The concept of perseverance can most often be found in one's active pursuit in overcoming obstacles.

Perseverance is a uniquely human characteristic that identifies an individual's ability to spend long periods of time devoted to a single goal or set of goals. Those who persevere are able to set goals for themselves and then take active, calculated steps toward those goals. People demonstrating high levels of perseverance are able to handle significant, sometimes repeated, setbacks in pursuit of goals.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, persistence can be directly connected to an individual's ability to be successful throughout their life. Those who persevere through setbacks often reap the benefits of the success gained by refusing to give up. Sometimes, this comes with the added benefit of increased knowledge and skill as a result of the work needed to achieve. Perseverance is also connected with bravery. Persisting in a task and failing, can result in depleted self-esteem. Therefore, it takes bravery to persist in a task despite the fear of failure.

On a group level, perseverance can be contagious. A single group member's ability or willingness to persevere can have a substantial impact on those working with him/her and the team. Groups that show high levels of perseverance are able to achieve goals they may not have believed possible. The results benefit both individuals and the group. They will be more likely to: enjoy the victory; persist in the future when facing challenges; improve their skills and abilities; and have a greater belief in their capacity to overcome obstacles and achieve goals.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Persistent
- Hardworking
- Gritty
- Devoted
- Committed
- Industrious

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I can do this.
- I am not going to give up.
- If I work harder, I will succeed.
- I am not so worried about how much time this takes, I am going to finish because it's important to me.
- Hard work pays off.
- I am willing to try things many times without success.
- It is important to keep pushing, especially when things seem difficult.
- There is no growth without pain and suffering.

QUOTES ON PERSEVERANCE

"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'"

-MARY ANNE RADMACHER

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts."

-WINSTON CHURCHILL

"Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do."

-PELE



HOPE/OPTIMISM

VIA Survey calls this strength Hope

Parent virtue: Transcendence. These strengths allow people to rise above their troubles and find meaning in the larger universe. Strengths of transcendence are appreciation of beauty and excellence, connection/purpose, gratitude, hope/optimism, and humor.



WHAT DOES HOPE MEAN?

You expect the best from the future and work to achieve it.

Hope and optimism represent a state of hopefulness and confidence about the future (both short and long term). People with this strength are future oriented. They have a positive vision of what the future holds and maintain confidence that they will get there. They keep a positive attitude despite setbacks – and often find ways to convert what seems like an obstacle into a stepping-stone to achieve their goals.

Optimistic people are sometimes regarded as naïve or even delusional. And, yes, there are some people who are illogically optimistic, which can be detrimental. However, optimism is not about wearing rose-colored glasses and rolling over when the going gets tough. It's about staying focused on the good in any situation – allowing you to be aware of opportunities and accountable for your emotions.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, optimism is correlated with success in work and play, mental and physical health, and strong social relationships. Optimistic people are planners and goal setters. Due to their future oriented mindset, they are often hard working, conscientious, and able to overcome obstacles. And, according to academic studies on POWs, optimism is the most important predictor of resilience.

On a group level, optimism is crucial to group success. Optimists are strong leaders. They find meaning in hardship and can create a vision for the future. They look at potential obstacles as opportunities, rather than threats. Without hope and optimism, we would not be able to overcome hardships. We would be stuck where we are. Optimists are inspiring; their example is contagious. And, by sharing and achieving their vision – despite setbacks – they help us all achieve more.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Positive
- Confident
- Encouraging
- Cheerful
- Heartening
- Inspiring

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- Today will be a good day.
- I have a clear picture in my head of what my future will look like.
- I set goals for the future.
- I have faith that I will succeed in the goals that I've set.
- Despite setbacks, I maintain the conviction that the future will be good.
- It is important to be hopeful towards the future.
- I like to help other people see a positive vision for their future.

QUOTES ON HOPE

"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear any hardship today."

-THICH NHAT HANH

"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."

-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"Hope is the thing with feathers / That perches in the soul / And sings the tune without words / And never stops at all."

-EMILY DICKINSON

"Hope is like peace. It is not a gift from God. It is a gift only we can give one another."

-ELIE WIESEL



PRUDENCE

VIA Survey calls this strength Prudence

Parent virtue: Temperance. Strengths of temperance protect us from excess. Strengths comprised in this virtue are forgiveness, humility/modesty, prudence, and self-control.



WHAT DOES PRUDENCE MEAN?

You plan for the future and achieve your goals by making careful everyday choices.

Prudence is the ability to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason. It's a future-oriented way of thinking that helps a person set goals, make plans, and have the discipline to accomplish them. It is cognitive – more a strength of the head than of the heart.

Prudence is not simply being excessively cautious or self-restrained. And, while it is often exemplified through individual financial savings, prudence applies to all parts of life. Philosophers have discussed the strength for millennia. Aristotle wrote about *phronesis* or “practical wisdom” which allows us to properly use other character strengths. And, According to Dr. Chris Peterson, the Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas “named prudence as the principle wisdom, with bravery subordinate to it. It is prudence that provides the wisdom to assess danger; bravery then allows reason to prevail despite fear.”

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Prudence supports effective individual self-management. Whether aspiring for an athletic record, academic grade, or purchasing a car, foresight and planning are necessary. However, long-term goals – even with a plan – can only be obtained by overcoming those impulses and desires that steer you away from your goals. Prudence provides the wisdom to know which character strength to leverage, at which time, to achieve your desired end state.

On a group level, prudence is crucial – especially today, as shortsightedness has crept into many parts of life. Prudent individuals will produce a prudent society. And, as always, we need leaders who can think long-term and create the world we want our descendants to inherit. This is why the Roman senator and historian Tacitus said, “Forethought and prudence are the proper qualities of a leader.”

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Farsighted
- Judicious
- Sensible
- Practical
- Careful
- Discerning

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I have goals that I will achieve.
- I think long term and plan for the future.
- To have success in the future, I must prepare and act now.
- I can overcome impulses that take me away from my larger goals.
- It's important to have balance and moderation in life.
- When faced with an obstacle, I have confidence that I will overcome it.
- It is critical to have a plan – but also to remain flexible.

“ QUOTES ON PRUDENCE

“Prudence is the knowledge of things to be sought, and those to be shunned.”

-CICERO

“If we continue to develop our technology without wisdom or prudence, our servant may prove to be our executioner.”

-GEN OMAR N. BRADLEY

“A man exercising no forethought will soon experience present sorrow.”

-CONFUCIOUS

“Discipline is what gives you freedom in life.”

-JOCKO WILLINK, NAVY SEAL



LOVE

VIA Survey calls this strength Love

Parent virtue: Humanity. Strengths of humanity involve caring interpersonal relationships with others, particularly in one-to-one relationships. Strengths comprised in this virtue are love, kindness, and social intelligence.



WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN?

You value close relationships with others and being close to people.

The character strength of love represents the way we think, feel, and behave towards the people with whom we have close relationships. When one person loves another person, that person: comforts and makes the other feel safe; sacrifices on the other's behalf; supports the other during struggles; and places the other's needs ahead of his/her own. If you love a person, that person makes you feel safe and secure. You can be yourself with that person. You miss that person when he/she is not around.

Positive psychology looks at love as reciprocal, not one-sided. That means crushes, stalking, and celebrity worship do not fall into this strength. What is contained in this strength are: romantic love and friendship; love between parents and children; and emotional bonds between family members, friends, mentors, teammates, or coworkers.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Love is imperative to an individual's happiness and fulfillment in life. Love allows us to be intimate with another person. It allows us to open up to another person and be vulnerable. That openness gives us the ability to learn and grow. Loving another person and sacrificing on his/her behalf produces positive emotions. And, it helps you access strengths – and feelings – you never knew you had.

On a group level, love is vital for the well being of society. The world is endlessly interconnected. We are all dependent upon each other for survival and happiness. Love produces positive feelings, which help negate loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Without love, we cannot find intimacy nor form strong relationships with our families, friends, or communities. A world without love and connection is a dangerous world.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Devoted
- Dedicated
- Committed
- Loyal
- Steadfast
- Supportive

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- There is someone I trust to support me when I struggle.
- There is someone that I would do or sacrifice almost anything for.
- There is someone with whom I can be myself.
- There is someone whose happiness matters to me just as much, or more, than my own.
- There is someone whom I hate to be away from for a long time.
- Being very close to one or more people is highly important me.

QUOTES ON LOVE

"Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get – only what you are expecting to give – which is everything."

-KATHARINE HEPBRUN

"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope."

-MAYA ANGELOU

"Think of love as a state of grace; not the means to anything but the alpha and omega, an end in itself."

-GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

"7x7 + love = An amount Infinitely above 7x7 - love."

-LANGSTON HUGHES



INTEGRITY

VIA Survey calls this strength Honesty

Parent virtue: Courage. Strengths of courage involve applying will and fortitude in overcoming internal or external resistance to accomplish goals. Strengths comprised in this virtue are bravery, perseverance, integrity, and zest/enthusiasm.



WHAT DOES INTEGRITY MEAN?

You are honest and speak the truth. You present yourself genuinely and sincerely.

Integrity is doing the right thing when nobody is watching. People with integrity practice what they preach and maintain a consistent pattern of behavior aligned with their values. They have the courage not to follow the crowd if it means going against their beliefs. Integrity is closely aligned with the terms of honesty and authenticity. People with integrity tell the truth and have alignment in their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

A person who lacks integrity could be described as pretentious, hypocritical, or insincere. They are pretending to be something that they're not or they're saying one thing and then doing another. It is important to be able to change your mind (and be open-minded), as you learn and grow. However, the main distinction comes in the intention. Is the person intending to manipulate another? A second important facet is self-awareness. It's tough to be true to yourself, if you don't know who you are.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Integrity is vital to individual growth. It is correlated with a multitude of psychological well-being measures. Harmony in your feelings, thoughts, and actions makes you better able to personally grow and achieve goals. Authenticity, and a lack of pretense, also makes you more likable and trusted by others, meaning your relationships will benefit.

On a group level, integrity is a cornerstone of high-functioning and sustainable teams, organizations, and societies. If you're constantly wondering about your coworkers' intentions, you will have a hard time working with them. This is why we look for politicians and leaders with integrity. We need to believe that they'll keep their word – or at the very least, readily admit it when they must break a promise. If they don't, trust and performance fail.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Honest
- Authentic
- Genuine
- Trustworthy
- Sincere
- Real

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- It is important to tell the truth.
- I practice what I preach.
- The most important thing is having a code of values being true to them.
- I care more about being true to myself than being popular.
- I hate hypocrisy; when people say one thing and do another.
- I don't lie or manipulate other people to get what I want.
- Eventually, inauthenticity and duplicity comes back to haunt people.

QUOTES ON INTEGRITY

"You're looking for three things, generally, in a person: intelligence, energy, and integrity. And if they don't have the last one, don't even bother with the first two."

-WARREN BUFFET

"The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively."

-BOB MARLEY

"To believe in something and not live it, is dishonest."

-MAHATMA GANDHI

"Whoever is careless about the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters."

-ALBERT EINSTEIN



FORGIVENESS

VIA Survey calls this strength Forgiveness

Parent virtue: Temperance. Strengths of temperance protect us from excess. Strengths comprised in this virtue are forgiveness, humility/modesty, prudence, and self-control.



WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS MEAN?

You forgive those who have done wrong. You accept that people make mistakes.

Forgiveness is the ability to move past being injured, and allow yourself to reconcile with the person who hurt you. Forgiveness can often be seen as a selfless act, but it also carries many benefits for those who practice it. Those who demonstrate forgiveness have the ability to move forward after someone has hurt them. Forgiveness is often rooted in the idea that all people are valuable and worthy of a second chance. Many who forgive have the ability to consider things from another's perspective.

Forgiveness does not mean rolling over and allowing yourself to be harmed. It does not mean that you forget the transgression. By forgiving someone, you don't have to say that what he/she did was okay. And, forgiveness is not contingent on the other person apologizing.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, forgiveness has benefits that range from increased health to developing positive relationships to coming to an understanding that no one is without fault. Remaining bitter and angry increases your stress levels, and forgiveness helps an individual release that resentment, and repair or strengthen his/her relationships.

The ability to reconcile differences and move forward positively is a trait of any effective group. When people work together, conflict is inevitable. However, when people value each other's contribution and believe in the group's goal, they become more capable of moving past conflict toward genuinely positive behavior. A group member's willingness to forgive imperfections of both other members and the group as a whole contribute to overall success.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Compassionate
- Well-wishing
- Merciful
- Gracious
- Kindhearted
- Understanding

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I can let it go.
- I forgive you.
- I don't hold grudges for long periods of time.
- It's ok. Let's move on.
- I can understand why you did that.
- Although what you did hurt me, I am ready to move on.
- Forgiving others for their transgressions releases a burden in my own heart.
- Forgiveness shows that you're a strong person.

QUOTES ON FORGIVENESS

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

-MAHATMA GANDHI

"True forgiveness is when you can say, 'Thank you for that experience.'"

-OPRAH WINFREY

"Let us forgive each other—only then will we live in peace."

-LEO TOLSTOY

"Life becomes easier when you learn to accept the apology you never got."

-ROBERT BRAULT



ZEST/ENTHUSIASM

VIA Survey calls this strength Zest

Parent virtue: Courage. Strengths of courage involve applying will and fortitude in overcoming internal or external resistance to accomplish goals. Strengths comprised in this virtue are bravery, perseverance, integrity, and zest/enthusiasm.



WHAT DOES ZEST/ENTHUSIASM MEAN?

You approach life with excitement and energy. You energize people around you.

Zest/Enthusiasm is the ability to bring life and excitement to different situations. It often leads to a higher level of involvement and engagement both for individuals and for groups. Those who demonstrate zest and enthusiasm bring an energy and level of intensity to individual and group work. These people are often identified as early leaders and innovators as a result of their outward excitement about a task or project. Look for these people to recruit new group members and generate ideas.

People with enthusiasm and zest are happy, but this strength goes beyond happiness or pleasure. It is an activated positive energy, and associated with self-realization and autonomy. Zest is a strength that has strong connotations with both physical and mental vitality and well-being. It can be fortified through diet, exercise, mindset, and social connection.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, zest and enthusiasm are easily identifiable and highly desirable personality traits. We feel good when we are energized by an activity or opportunity – and we like to spend time with people who are excited about life. Those who demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm are more likely to complete tasks and exceed minimum requirements as a result of their passion.

For groups, enthusiasm and zest are can be directly tied to high levels of success, happiness, and achievement. Enthusiasm is contagious. One person’s enthusiasm can spark others to think, speak, and act with more energy and conviction. Groups that are enthusiastic about tasks are much more likely to spend longer periods of time in service to the group’s overall goals.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Energetic
- Excited
- Spirited
- Animated
- Passionate
- Upbeat

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I’m really excited to get started.
- It’s vital to live with passion.
- A life without passion is boring.
- You must bring enthusiasm to everything that you do.
- I’m rarely tired – and when I am, I have ways to reenergize myself.
- Let’s keep going.
- I’m very interested in working on this.
- I am energized by this opportunity.
- I love life!

QUOTES ON ZEST

“If you have zest and enthusiasm, you attract zest and enthusiasm. Life does give back in kind.”
-NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

“Each one of us has a fire in our heart for something. It’s our goal in life to find it and keep it lit.”
-MARY LOU RETTON

“Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.”
-OPRAH WINFREY

“Success consists of going from failure to failure without the loss of enthusiasm.”
-WINSTON CHURCHILL

“You can’t start a fire without a spark.”
-BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

“Wherever you go, go with all your heart.”
-CONFUCIOUS



SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

VIA Survey calls this strength Social Intelligence

Parent virtue: Humanity. Strengths of humanity involve caring interpersonal relationships with others, particularly in one-to-one relationships. Strengths comprised in this virtue are love, kindness, and social intelligence.



WHAT DOES SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE MEAN?

You are aware of other people's thoughts and feelings. You understand why they do things.

Social intelligence refers to a person's ability to understand and manage interpersonal relationships. It is distinct from a person's IQ or "book smarts." It includes an individual's ability to understand, and act on, the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of other people. This type of intelligence can take place "in the moment" of face-to-face conversations but also appears during times of deliberate thinking. It involves emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

Examples of social intelligence include knowing when to talk or listen, what to say, and what to do. Timing is a big part of social intelligence. For example, someone who is imperceptive, may tell a funny joke – but at the wrong time, or not show enough interest when meeting someone new.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Social intelligence helps individuals build relationships – and is important to numerous aspects of a person's life. It allows an individual to form friendships and alliances. And, it assists a person against being taken advantage of. People with social intelligence can "read" other people's faces and know what motivates them. Social intelligence builds over time and as a person ages. In this sense, it is similar to the character strength of perspective.

On a group level, social intelligence is what allows us to function as humans. We are social beings and rely on each other's cooperation. By understanding ourselves and other people, we can find ways to collaborate for mutual benefit. Strong leaders often possess social intelligence in abundance. In order to motivate people, leaders must form relationships and inspire others to want to do what needs to be done.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Attuned
- Understanding
- Insightful
- Aware
- Empathetic
- Discerning

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I understand other people and their emotions.
- I intuitively grasp what people want and why they want it.
- I understand my own thoughts, feelings, and motivations.
- I am skilled at getting people to cooperate with each other.
- I am able to understand power dynamics in social situations.
- I can always tell when someone is uncomfortable at a party.

QUOTES ON SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

"The single most important lesson I learned in 25 years of talking every single day to people, was that there's a common denominator in our human experience. The common denominator I found in every single interview is we want to be validated. We want to be understood."

-OPRAH WINFREY

"When I get ready to talk to people, I spend two thirds of the time thinking what they want to hear and one third thinking about what I want to say."

-ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen."

-ERNEST HEMINGWAY



HUMOR

VIA Survey calls this strength Humor

Parent virtue: Transcendence. These strengths allow people to rise above their troubles and find meaning in the larger universe. Strengths of transcendence are appreciation of beauty and excellence, connection/purpose, gratitude, hope/optimism, and humor.



WHAT DOES HUMOR MEAN?

You like to laugh and bring smiles to other people.

Humor is a sense of playfulness and lightness. It is a way of looking at and describing the world that brings laughter to people. A person with the strength of humor is skilled at seeing at the funny side of things, bringing smiles and laughter to others, and identifying and communicating the absurdities in life. People with this strength don't specifically need to be joke tellers, although many are.

Humor can have a dark side, depending on how it's used. Some humor is mean spirited and bullying. The strength of humor that the character strength focuses on is that which raises the spirits of other people.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, humor has important health benefits, both mental and physical. Humor stretches the mind to look at things from different perspectives, keeping people mentally agile and alert. Making people laugh also produces positive emotions and happiness for the initiator. And, when people are on the receiving end of humor, they also receive many benefits. Scientists have shown that laughter reduces stress, promotes connection with other people, and can even improve focus. Laughter is contagious and bonds us to other people.

Humor plays an important role in helping groups of people rise above difficult circumstances and boost moral. It removes us from our present difficulties by easing tension and making life more fun. This is why athletic teams often need a jokester to help them get through tough losses and early morning fitness sessions. On a larger societal level, humor often helps downtrodden groups find cohesion and strength. This is why Simon Wiesenthal said, "Humor is the weapon of unarmed people: it helps people who are oppressed smile at the situation that pains them."

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Funny
- Amusing
- Hilarious
- Witty
- Lighthearted
- Playful

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- It makes me feel good to make people laugh and smile.
- People like to spend time with me because I'm fun to be with.
- Even in trying situations, I can still find the humor.
- It's especially important to be able to laugh in difficult circumstances.
- In every situation, I always try to add a sense of humor
- I have a unique way of looking at the world. When I describe it to people, they laugh.

QUOTES ON HUMOR

"Humor is laughing at what you haven't got when you ought to have it."
-LANGSTON HUGHES

"I love people who make me laugh. I honestly think it's the thing I like most, to laugh. It cures a multitude of ills."
-AUDREY HEPBURN

"Humor is one of the best ingredients of survival."
-AUNG SAN SUU KYI

"Comedy can be a cathartic way to deal with personal trauma."
-ROBIN WILLIAMS

"Humor is mankind's greatest blessing."
-MARK TWAIN



LOVE OF LEARNING

VIA Survey calls this strength Love of Learning

Parent virtue: Wisdom and Knowledge. Strengths of wisdom and knowledge are cognitive strengths related to the acquisition and use of information. Strengths comprised in this virtue are creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective.



WHAT DOES LOVE OF LEARNING MEAN?

You master new topics on your own or in school.

Those with a love of learning are intrinsically motivated and engaged in a topic regardless of achieving an external standard. They enjoy learning simply for the sake of learning. They don't need a prize or a high grade as a reward. Their reward is the process of doing the work and improving.

People who love learning experience positive feelings in the process of acquiring skills, building on existing knowledge, or learning something completely new. Over time, individuals with this strength may develop deep and wide knowledge. Their knowledge enables them to make significant contributions to others' understanding.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Developing a love of learning is highly beneficial for an individual. It means that they are intrinsically motivated to deepen their existing skills and abilities, or learn something completely new. Since intrinsically motivated action is correlated with positive emotions, those who act on their love of learning may also have enhanced mental and physical health. Additionally, individuals who love learning have the desire and ability to overcome challenges, due to a sense of autonomy and control over their environment.

On a group level, love of learning is crucial. The best leaders have an insatiable desire to learn. It's love of learning that compelled Benjamin Franklin to fly a kite and make significant advances in electricity. It's love of learning that led Nelson Mandela to study Afrikaans (the language of his oppressors) and read a smuggled copy of Shakespeare, while locked in Robben Prison. And it's only by learning and experimenting that we continue to grow.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Studious
- Knowledgeable
- Immersed
- Interested
- Engaged
- Absorbed

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I love learning new things and broadening my knowledge.
- I love diving deeply into the subjects in which I'm interested.
- I know a lot about my subject area
- Working on my area(s) of expertise never feels like "work" to me.
- I spend as much time in my area(s) of expertise as possible.
- I care more about doing a good job than gaining recognition.

QUOTES ON LOVE OF LEARNING

"I just learned things gradually, figuring out how to put electronic devices together without so much as cracking a book."

-STEVE WOZNIAK

"For me, I am driven by two main philosophies: know more today about the world than I knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others. You'd be surprised how far that gets you."

-NEIL deGRASSE TYSON

"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

-DR. SUESS

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

-MAHATMA GANDHI



CONNECTION/PURPOSE

VIA Survey calls this strength Spirituality

Parent virtue: Transcendence. These strengths allow people to rise above their troubles and find meaning in the larger universe. Strengths of transcendence are appreciation of beauty and excellence, connection/purpose, gratitude, hope/optimism, and humor.



WHAT DOES CONNECTION/PURPOSE MEAN?

You have beliefs about the meaning of life and your life's purpose. You seek to be part of something greater than yourself.

Connection/purpose gives individuals the sense that they are put on this earth for a reason and that they are somehow connected with humanity or the universe. People who possess a sense of purpose believe that they were put on earth for a reason. That reason can have all kinds of variety. It could be to create a unique invention, to bring joy through art or music, or to raise their children to become good people. These people have a true calling.

One of the most insightful and impactful researchers of this strength was Viktor Frankl, the author of *Man's Search for Meaning*. Frankl analyzed and wrote about his experiences in Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II. Frankl's experiences taught him that purpose provides strength and that "Those who have a 'why' to life, can bear with almost any 'how'."

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Having a clear sense of purpose in life, and a belief that you're connected to a larger meaning, gives individuals strength. It allows them to persevere and find courage in trying circumstances, or lead with kindness and love even when it's not reciprocated. Those with a sense of purpose have more meaning in their life – and are more fulfilled.

On a group level, purpose can be a powerful aligning element. It gives people a reason to continue on in hope and optimism, despite difficult circumstances. The sense of connection between people further strengthens their individual resolve and focus, which fortifies the group. When a group of individuals believe in something higher than themselves, their work can be exponentially greater.

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Believing
- Trusting
- Purposeful
- Determined
- Resolute
- Devoted

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I have a definite purpose in life.
- I feel connected to the world at a larger level.
- Even in difficult situations, I am able to cope because I know *why* I'm persevering.
- It's vital to know why you're doing something.
- I know why I'm here.
- My life has meaning and what I do matters.
- Life expects something from each and every person.

QUOTES ON CONNECTION/PURPOSE

"Your purpose in life is to find your purpose and give your whole heart and soul to it."
-GUATAMA BUDDHA

"Align your personality with your purpose and no one can touch you."
-OPRAH WINFREY

"Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose."
-VIKTOR FRANKL

"Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction."
-JOHN F. KENNEDY



LEADERSHIP

VIA Survey calls this strength Leadership



Parent virtue: Justice. Strengths of justice refer to the optimal relationship between the individual and the group or community, rather than the more one-to-one relationships in the humanity virtue. These strengths include: teamwork/citizenship, fairness, and leadership.

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP MEAN?

You value each member of your group and inspire people to do their best.

Leadership can be both formal and informal. It is concerned with getting others to do what needs to be done while maintaining group morale to ensure readiness to act in the future. This character strength's focus is on the *personal qualities* of leaders, rather than the *practice* of leadership. These qualities include the ability to understand others and inspire them toward a common goal, the capacity to mitigate conflict and mold consensus, and the desire to lead other people.

Positive psychology focuses on transformational leaders. This type of leadership is a process where "leaders and their followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation." These leaders are able to create a vision, communicate the vision, develop a coherent strategy to achieve that vision, and lead the charge towards its attainment. Through their words and actions, these leaders develop an inspirational relationship with their followers. That is, they fill others with the spirit to attain the vision.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, leadership is a way to achieve what you know is important, as groups of people invariably achieve more than individuals. If you want to achieve your vision for the future, you need to inspire others to join you. As an individual's ability to lead develops, so does that person's confidence and sense of self-efficacy. However, common dangers to guard against are egotism and arrogance.

A group's effectiveness and sense of inspiration is tied directly to the leader. Study after study shows that leaders (and managers) have the biggest influence on group success and morale. Leaders can be developed and it starts with character. As General Schwarzkopf said, "Leadership is potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy."

Individuals with this strength might be described as:

- Inspirational
- Persuasive
- Encouraging
- Motivational
- Trailblazer
- Organizer

Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following ways:

- I am able to envision the future and communicate my vision.
- I have the capacity to motivate others to think or behave in a certain way.
- I like to be a leader in my groups, both formal and informal.
- I am skilled at organizing others towards a common goal.
- People look to me to lead.
- Leaders have an important role to play in all aspects of the world.

QUOTES ON LEADERSHIP

"Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done, because he wants to do it."
-DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."
-RONALD REAGAN

"A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus."
-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful...Let us remember: one book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world."
-MALALA YOUSAFZAI