PRO Character Strengths Profile

Introduction and Purpose

This VIA Pro report is intended to be a deep dive into the character strengths of this individual. This report may be used by the individual user or the helping practitioner.

In the case of the helping practitioner (psychologist, coach, consultant, manager, educator) who is working with a client (or employee or student) in the form of a working relationship, be sure to review the Practitioner's Guide which is available in PDF at the time of purchase of the VIA-Pro.

Note that the aim of a consultation based in character strengths is to help the client create an awareness of what's best about themselves and others, and to assist them in embracing and using these strengths. With this heightened awareness they will be better positioned to build positive relationships,

discover deeper happiness, and achieve their life goals.

For some clients, a one-hour meeting is sufficient as a starting point of explaining the details of this report and beginning to explore its contents; for others, it is a several-hour process. To be sure, it is likely to be a resource that is often referred back to throughout the process of working with the person. Some of the pages will be particularly useful to photocopy for your client. We especially recommend the graphs, each of which is accompanied by exploration questions. In addition, your client may benefit from purchasing a VIA-Me report which is a user-friendly, consumer report with tailored graphs and practical exercises to work with their character strengths.



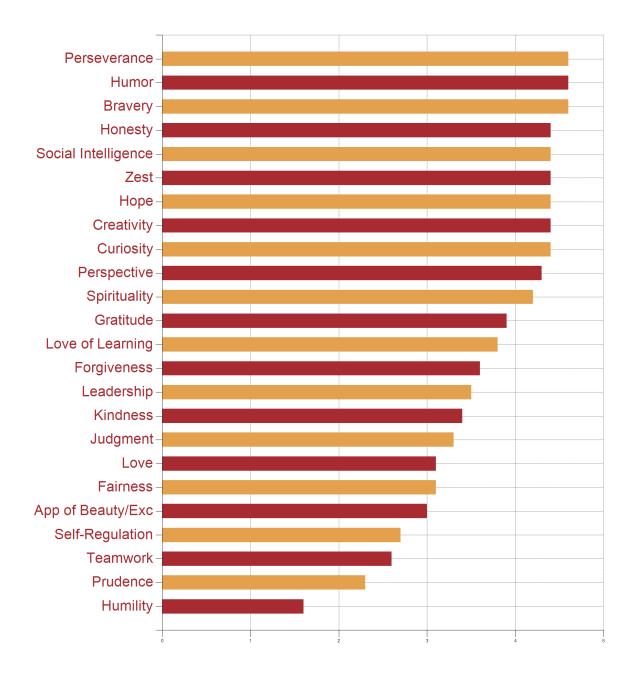
Cherecter Strengths in Renk Order

You will see a top-down rank ordering of this individual's character strengths. The average raw scores that are shown represent the average score over the 5 questions that comprise each of the 24 character scales. The absolute score of a character trait indicates the degree to which that trait is valued and expressed in one's life. It may also reflect a bias in terms of how someone perceives themselves or approached answering the questions in this survey.

Therefore, differences in raw scores between one person and another are not informative. The lower strengths are generally less central to defining one's essence but strengths nonetheless. However, among the middle and lower strengths may be strengths that, when called upon by certain situations can be brought forth strongly. These strengths are referred to as phasic strengths. Low scores do not indicate "weaknesses" of character.

Character Strengths in Rank Order

This graph depicts the character strengths ordered by average raw score: 5 - "Very much like me," 4 - "Like me," 3 - "Not like or unlike me," 2 - "Unlike me," and 1 - "Very much unlike me."



Perseverance (Score: 4.6)

You work hard to finish what you start. No matter the project, you "get it out the door" in timely fashion. You do not get distracted when you work, and you take satisfaction in completing tasks.

Humor (Score: 4.6)

You like to laugh and tease. Making others smile is important to you. You try to see the light side of all situations.

Bravery (Score: 4.6)

You are a courageous person who does not shrink from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain. You speak up for what is right even if there is opposition. You act on your convictions.

Honesty (Score: 4.4)

You are an honest person, not only because you speak the truth but also because you live your life in a genuine and authentic way. You are down to earth and unpretentious; you are a "real" person.

Social Intelligence (Score: 4.4)

You are aware of the motives and feelings of other people. You know what to do to fit in with different social situations, and you know what to do to put others at ease.

Zest (Score: 4.4)

Regardless of what you do, you approach it with excitement and energy. You never do anything halfway or halfheartedly. For you, life is an adventure.

Hope (Score: 4.4)

You expect the best in the future, and you work to achieve it. You believe that the future is something that you can control.

Creativity (Score: 4.4)

Your ability to think of new ways to do things is a crucial part of who you are. You are never content with doing something the conventional way if a better way is possible.

Curiosity (Score: 4.4)

You are curious about everything. You are always asking questions, and you find all subjects fascinating. You like exploration and discovery.

Perspective (Score: 4.3)

Although you may not think of yourself as wise, your friends do. They value your perspective on matters and turn to you for advice. You have a way of looking at the world that makes sense to others and to yourself.

Spirituality (Score: 4.2)

You have strong and coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe. You know where you fit in the larger scheme. Your beliefs shape your actions and are a source of comfort to you.

Gratitude (Score: 3.9)

You are aware of the good things that happen to you, and you never take them for granted. Your friends and family members know that you are a grateful person because you always take the time to express your thanks.

Love of Learning (Score: 3.8)

You love learning new things, whether in a class or on your own. You have always loved school, reading, and museums; anywhere and everywhere you see an opportunity to learn.

Forgiveness (Score: 3.6)

You forgive those who have done you wrong. You always give people a second chance. Your guiding principle is mercy, not revenge.

Leadership (Score: 3.5)

You excel at the tasks of leadership, encouraging a group to get things done and preserving harmony within the group by making everyone feel included. You do a good job organizing activities and seeing that they happen.

Kindness (Score: 3.4)

You are kind and generous to others, and you are never too busy to do a favor. You enjoy doing good deeds for others, even if you do not know them well.

Judgment (Score: 3.3)

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides are important aspects of who you are. You do not jump to conclusions, and you rely only on solid evidence to make your decisions. You are able to change your mind.

Love (Score: 3.1)

You value close relationships with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated. The people to whom you feel most close also feel most close to you.

Fairness (Score: 3.1)

Treating all people fairly is one of your abiding principles. You do not let your personal feelings bias your decisions about other people. You give everyone a chance.

Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence (Score: 3)

You notice and appreciate beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life, from nature to art, to mathematics, to science, to everyday experience.

Self-Regulation (Score: 2.7)

You self-consciously regulate what you feel and what you do. You are a disciplined person. You are in control of your appetites and your emotions, not vice versa.

Teamwork (Score: 2.6)

You excel as a member of a group. You are a loyal and dedicated teammate, you always do your share, and you work hard for the success of your group.

Prudence (Score: 2.3)

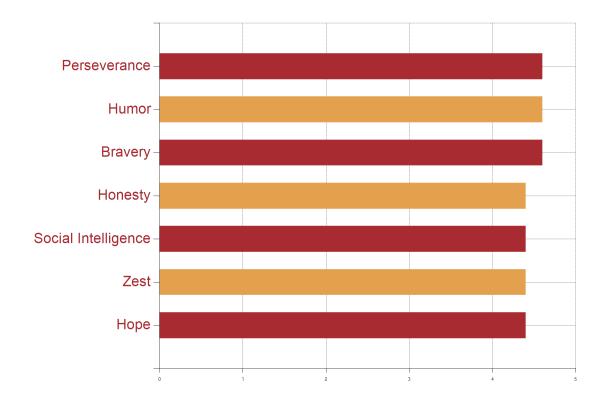
You are a careful person, and your choices are consistently prudent ones. You do not say or do things that you might later regret.

Humility (Score: 1.6)

You do not seek the spotlight, preferring to let your accomplishments speak for themselves. You do not regard yourself as special, and others recognize and value your modesty.

Signature Strengths

This graph displays the individual's highest character strengths — called signature strengths. What is most important about the designation of "signature strengths" is that they are the character traits that are most dominant, the ones that define an important core of this individual — who they are. Expressing signature strengths of character feels comfortable and natural, not requiring substantial effort or significant degree of willpower. The designation of the top character strengths as "signature" is a convenience, and confirmation of these top strengths (or their middle/lower strengths) as signature requires exploration with the individual.





Perseverance (Score: 4.6)

Perseverance is sticking with things. It is finishing what one starts, persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles, taking pleasure in completing tasks. Perseverance involves the mustering of one's will in the face of contrary impulses. It is not fear that threatens action, but boredom, tedium, frustration, and difficulty. Perseverance is not laziness, giving up, losing heart, losing interest, or taking shortcuts. Studies have shown that when people think they will succeed, they persist longer at both easy and difficult tasks. Persistent people are likely to have an internal locus of control and are more likely to attribute failure to lack of effort than to bad luck, creating a greater sense of personal control.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Perseverance helps to improve skills, talents, and resourcefulness as well as build other character strengths.
- Perseverance builds self-confidence, a general sense and belief that things can be accomplished in life and that personal control can be exerted so one performs effectively.
- Persistent people are often seen as dependable people who follow through on commitments. This contributes to one being a valued team member and builds trust that can be a foundation for good relationships.
- Perseverance pushes the focus to task completion, not to perfection, therefore it increases one's flexibility and selfcontrol.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual sees himself or herself as capable of putting forth high effort over a long duration of time to achieve a goal. Others see this person as a hard worker. He or she sets goals and regularly reaches them. This individual resists the temptation to do something easier and perhaps more pleasurable. Perseverance helps this individual fight off obstacles that are frustrating, boring, or difficult. He or she stays focused on goals and does not take shortcuts, digging deep to find internal energy and motivation to work long hours

and stick with a challenging task when necessary. This person takes pleasure in getting the job done and done well.

Exploring the strength of Perseverance

- When does persevering feel engrossing as opposed to a chore?
- What motivates this individual to persevere?
- What causes this individual to stop persevering?
- What role do others play in helping or hindering perseverance?
- When this individual succeeds in persevering, how does that affect how he or she approaches subsequent challenges?

Underuse of Perseverance

Perseverance is often driven by the hope and confidence that one's efforts will be fruitful. Some people feel more confident in certain domains of their lives than others. For example, some may feel that they are more effective at work than in their personal relationships; therefore, they may find that they are persevering more or underusing perseverance in certain relationships. When exploring a person's underuse of perseverance, consider how realistic the person's expectations are with regard to how effective he or she can be. For example, a person may underestimate his or her effectiveness at advising friends and family and therefore may not persevere in trying to be helpful. However, there is wisdom in recognizing what situations to push forward versus letting go. Sometimes diffusion of responsibility can cause a person to not try hard because he or she thinks it is someone else's responsibility. There are times when pushing forward through obstacles and challenges is necessary to succeed.

Novel ways to use Perseverance

- Set small goals weekly. Break them into practical steps, accomplish them on time, and monitor your progress from week to week.
- Reframe setbacks as challenges and start anew.
- Work harder than usual at an important goal.
- Select a role model who exemplifies perseverance and determine how to follow in his or her footsteps.
- Partner with someone who is highly perseverant.

Overuse of Perseverance

An important issue for highly perseverant people is knowing when to give up or let go. When perseverance is too dominant, there can be an unrelenting stubbornness to push forward, in spite of evidence supporting the wisdom of letting go. A symptom of this phenomenon can be viewed in those who "overwork" themselves, especially at the expense of family, relationships, and self-care. Feedback from trusted others should be listened to carefully; this helps in building perspective. In relationships, there may be a vulnerability to persist even when the relationship proves to be unhealthy.

Intimate relationships or friendships may become a project that one works at with great persistence, failing to recognize that the relationship is not a good one.

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Humor (Score: 4.6)

and offering a lighter side. It is expressed through laughter, gentle teasing, and bringing smiles to other people. Playfulness is the foundation of humor. Humor can serve the greater good by making the human condition more bearable. by drawing attention to its contradictions, by sustaining good cheer in the face of despair, by building social bonds, and by lubricating social interaction. It is the antithesis of being grim, boring, literal, or too serious. Humor often buffers against despair. It is noteworthy that the loss of a sense of humor seems to cut across virtually all forms of psychopathology, which implies that a good sense of humor might well be one of the defining features of positive mental health. Humor is rarely mentioned in traditional discussions of virtues, and its moral flavor is not always obvious. Indeed, humor can be good or bad, and may draw people together or put people down. Humor is one of the value-added strengths in the VIA classification, meaning that it becomes a morally praiseworthy strength when coupled with other strengths. For example, social intelligence and self-regulation added to humor can ensure that humor is delivered with sensitivity in the right dose at the right time.

Humor is perceiving what is comical or amusing in situations,

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Humorous people are socially attractive.
- Humor buffers people from life stress and the hassles of daily living.
- People with a sense of humor tend to be healthier (e.g., one of the physiologic benefits of laughter is that it increases oxygenation of the blood).
- Humor helps enhance pleasure in life, which contributes to overall happiness.
- Humor can decrease social anxiety, thereby creating opportunities for social connection.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual views himself or herself as being able to put other people at ease through gentle teasing and playfulness.

He or she often sees the light side of the situation, and when sharing this perspective, it can often lighten the overall mood. Others look to this person to break the solemnity of a moment and give perspective on the relative importance of things. This person is often considered the life of the party and can give voice to what other people are feeling or thinking. Feedback, when given with humor, is often an easier pill to swallow and thus can be an important communication tool. However, humor can also be hurtful to people and needs to be expressed with some prudence.

Exploring the strength of Humor

- How does this individual initiate playfulness, and how does that change from situation to situation?
- How do other people express playfulness? What can be gleaned from observing others?
- Timing is critical in being humorous; it is just as important to recognize when not to be funny as it is to recognize when humor is needed. What happens with well-timed humor and how is that different from poorly timed humor?
- What experiences or situations prompt a humorous response from this person?
- How can an awareness of humor be cultivated in everyday activities of life?
- Does this individual have relationships in which humor is shared? How does that humor impact those relationships?

Underuse of Humor

Humor lightens things up and therefore humorous people can underuse humor when "lightness" is either not what they are feeling or not what they are aiming for. They may not use humor when they are not feeling well or when they assume, rightly or wrongly, that it is socially inappropriate. So, for example, one might rightfully assume that humor has no place at a somber funeral, though wrongfully assume that it has no place in relating to one's boss. Humor, when not expressed with negative energy (e.g., cynicism, ridicule), can also serve to bring people closer; therefore, humorous people may underuse humor in situations where they do not want to feel close with someone.

Novel ways to use Humor

- Bring a smile to someone's face through jokes, gestures, and playful activities.
- Find the fun and lighter side of a difficult situation.
- Watch a sitcom or funny movie with someone who has a strong appreciation of humor.
- Keep a humor diary to write down three funny things that happen each day.

Overuse of Humor

Humor is a complex strength. While it can bring pleasure and levity to others, in certain forms it can be hurtful and demeaning. Humor that leans towards cynicism can be felt by others as negative and dark. So, as endearing as humor can be, it can also be off-putting. One needs to be sensitive to others to find forms of humor that put people at ease as opposed to putting them on guard. While using social intelligence can provide a "read" on how humor is impacting others, it also can be helpful to solicit feedback from friends and family to understand how one's humor affects others. Humor can be viewed by others as one's way of avoiding the serious issues of life or not taking life seriously enough, especially if it is used to throw others off track. It is useful to stay aware of the impact of humor on others and to keep an active awareness of the purpose it is serving personally. Remember, humor, when used at the right time and in the

right amount, can build relationships and contribute to wellbeing. This effect is magnified when humor is coupled with other character strengths, particularly kindness, perspective, and social intelligence.

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Bravery (Score: 4.6)

Bravery involves acting on conviction even if unpopular, not shrinking from fear, and speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition. Bravery has been called corrective because, in some ways, it is used to counteract difficulties everyone faces. We typically think of bravery as physical, such as the bravery demonstrated by soldiers on a battlefield. Bravery is also psychological, such as when we face our problems in a direct way, when we admit our vulnerabilities, and when we seek help. Bravery is moral when we stand up for those who are less fortunate or cannot defend themselves or when we speak up in a group advocating for the rights of others. Bravery is not equivalent to fearlessness because fear is certainly experienced. Rather, bravery is the ability to do what needs to be done in spite of fear. This strength is evident when choosing to do the unpopular but correct thing, or facing a terminal illness with equanimity, or resisting peer pressure regarding a morally questionable shortcut. As a signature strength, bravery emerges regularly, not only in exceptional circumstances.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Bravery lowers anxiety, which in turn enhances the ability to tolerate ambiguous situations.
- Bravery helps people tolerate the vulnerability that is part of growing close to others, thereby helping in the formation and maintenance of close relationships.
- Bravery helps to break the prevailing cycle of abuse or injustice.
- Bravery builds resilience as challenges are overcome and active coping skills are built.
- Bravery involves taking action and risks, two critical ingredients for personal growth and achievement.
- Bravery is speaking up when things are wrong or unfair.
 Ultimately, such actions can lead to significant long-term benefits, often for the greater good of others. This honesty also engenders trust.

This individual views himself or herself as someone who does not typically shrink from fear or personal anxieties. He or she is often willing to face risks and uncertain situations. These situations may be regarded as threatening by others or they may be situations that are internally fearful or threatening and not apparent as such to others. This person may express bravery through physical actions or by speaking up for what he or she believes is right despite opposition. Acting on convictions is important to this person. When at his or her best with this strength, this individual faces fear and takes action but not foolishly in ways that are likely to lead to his or her own demise.

Exploring the strength of Bravery

- How is bravery expressed, e.g., by taking physical risks, supporting unpopular positions, being emotionally vulnerable, thinking unconventionally?
- How does bravery lead this person in directions that have a positive impact on his or her life?
- How does bravery lead this person in directions that have a negative impact?
- How does bravery cause people to admire this person?
- How does bravery cause people to worry about this individual?
- How does bravery exclude this person from certain experiences or opportunities?
- How is bravery tempered so as not to put this person at undue risk?
- How important is bravery to this individual's self- image?
- What motivates this individual to act bravely?

What does this mean about the individual?

Underuse of Bravery

Bravery comes in various forms and some people may have more of one form than another. For example, someone who is brave in the face of physical danger may not be as brave in taking unpopular stances that risk the disapproval of others. Sometimes bravery can be evoked by attenuating the intensity of the fear by realistically evaluating the risk and by diligent preparation to minimize risk. So, for example, if one is interested in increasing the use of bravery in making a decision whether to go skydiving, one could obtain data about the prevalence and types of skydiving accidents and take care in finding a reputable vendor and in preparing one's equipment. Also, quieting one's autonomic nervous system (heart and breathing rates) can help make it conducive for bravery to be expressed.

In many cases, bravery is blocked by elevated fear or anxiety. Fear is an emotion that narrows one's vantage point and limits one's ability to see the bigger picture. Even those high in bravery will at times take a backseat to personal fears, thus there is always room to grow with this strength.

Novel ways to use Bravery

- Resist social or peer pressure for noble values and causes in meaningful ways (write, speak out, participate in a protest, join an activist organization).
- Speak up for or write about an unpopular idea in a group.
- Report to appropriate authorities an injustice, abuse, blatant unethical practice, or abuse of power or resources.
- Focus on brave role models for inspiration and a sense that change is possible.

Overuse of Bravery

Bravery can sometimes lead to foolhardiness or an overconfidence in measuring risks. This may be especially true when risks have been taken so often that a laxness develops in surveying the potential risks in new situations. In relationships, the other person can feel unsafe with extremely high risk-takers and may withdraw. Societal pressures and gender stereotypes play a role in the overuse of bravery as

well. In the extreme, brave people can become "adrenaline junkies" looking for increased levels of risk in order to experience the rush that comes with such activities. Prudence and self-regulation can be used to modulate this overuse of bravery. It may also be useful to tap into love as a way of balancing risks relative to close relationships.

Honesty (Score: 4.4)

Honesty is speaking the truth, but more broadly, it is presenting oneself in a genuine and sincere way, being without pretense, taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions. This sometimes involves the courage to exercise one's will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, either external or internal. Honesty is a complex, rich human strength. While it involves accurately presenting information that can be verified - statements that are either true or false it goes far beyond that. It is the defining character strength of those who make authentic statements. Honest people are consistently true to themselves and publicly represent their internal state, intentions, and commitments. Because honesty is a corrective virtue (protects us against errors in judgment), it shows up best in situations where the decision must be made between an easy thing and a right thing to do. Honesty is universally valued, but especially valued in close relationships. The complexity of this character strength is often revealed when we consider the multiple roles we play in society and how difficult it is to consistently stick to one's values. Honesty is more likely to be found among adults than adolescents. That said, very few people are completely honest all of the time - to others or even to themselves.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Honest people are typically viewed as trustworthy, which contributes to healthy, positive relationships.
- Taking personal responsibility for one's actions can lead to a greater sense of control of one's life.
- Honesty allows for more accurate self-assessment of intentions and commitment — to others and to oneself.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual views himself or herself as being down to earth and authentic. There is little pretense and others know that he or she is genuine. This person's authenticity creates a sense of trust; what he or she says is meant sincerely. Being "real" is effortless; it is as easy as breathing. However, it is important to use social intelligence when sharing "truths" with others. Honesty without sensitivity can come across as being

blunt or offensive.

Exploring the strength of Honesty

- How are commitments and agreements made and honored in personal as well as professional relationships?
- When this person makes mistakes, how easy is it for him or her to take responsibility for those mistakes?
- How often does this individual neutralize guilt by making excuses, blaming, minimizing, or rationalizing the truth away?
- How is feedback given to others? Is it constructive, direct, or challenging?
- Spiritual practices that entail meditation, reflection, and enlightenment are thought to benefit honesty and authenticity.
- Honesty can be nurtured by modeling and through programs that encourage self-awareness such as youth development programs.

Underuse of Honesty

The truth can sometimes be difficult to face and therefore truthful people may find themselves underusing this strength when they do not want to be hurtful and cannot find a soft way to express the truth. There are also particular relationships in which the rules of the relationship do not include truthfulness. For example, some parent-child relationships develop around the rule of avoiding the truth since telling the truth would create conflict. Those historical "rules" can persist in relationships such that honest people can find it difficult to express themselves authentically in those relationships. Furthermore, some people high in honesty may have difficulty with the sense of vulnerability that comes with being truthful about their own feelings and therefore may underuse this strength in sharing feelings with others.

Novel ways to use Honesty

- Write about an issue about which moral obligation is felt.
 It helps to crystallize and integrate thinking.
- Provide honest feedback when asked to provide critical input.
- Identify an area of strong moral conviction.
- Set priorities according to these convictions.

Overuse of Honesty

We all know that there are times when telling the complete truth can cause problems. Honesty can be blunt and hurtful. It can also violate personal trust when "truths" are told about another that were shared in confidence. Some situations call for the truth, and in other situations it may be prudent to soften the bluntness of the truth. To maintain a balance for honesty, other character strengths offer alternative ways of being/doing good. Sometimes the strength of kindness or prudence must take precedence.

Social Intelligence (Score: 4.4)

Social intelligence is knowing what makes other people tick. It is being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself, and knowing what to do to fit into different social situations. Social intelligence facilitates social connection. Individuals who strongly possess social intelligence have the ability to process information or signals concerning motives, feelings, and others' psychological states directly relevant to their own well-being and that of others. They exhibit capacities in regard to experiencing and strategizing about emotion and are adept at perceiving emotions in relationships — of self and others'. They can use this information in reasoning: thinking abstractly to understand similarities and differences among things and recognizing patterns. Social intelligence is complex, comprising different skills including empathy and, in particular, the ability to take another's perspective.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Social and emotional intelligence help in negotiating successful transactions with other people, whether social or business.
- Social intelligence contributes to one having a high level of comfort across a variety of social situations, opening up opportunities for meeting new people and participating in new experiences.
- Noticing differences among others especially with respect to their moods, temperament, motivations, and intentions — and then acting upon these distinctions establishes trust and helps in building relationships.

What does this mean about the individual?

This person sees himself or herself as being able to "read" other people and situations well. He or she seems to "take it all in" and react accordingly and with flexibility. Using social intelligence is energizing to this person and feels like being "in the zone." There is an easy discourse that occurs between this individual and others. Others easily recognize this person's strong social intelligence and find comfort in their ability to read and gauge the situation. This individual

may also have more self-awareness and be able to better understand his or her own reactions across social situations. Self-awareness and self-care are important in exercising this dominant strength.

Exploring the strength of Social Intelligence

- It is important to understand how social intelligence works across different situations. What are the situations that have had the most positive outcomes for this individual?
- It is important to double-check the "read" on situations, to be mindful of differences in beliefs, attitudes, needs, and wants so that faulty assumptions are not being made.
- It is important to stay aware of personal feelings.

Underuse of Social Intelligence

Social intelligence emerges from insight and perspective as to what makes other people be the way they are. Such insight can be impeded when strong negative emotions are present and when psychological motivation to understand is conflicted, as in the following examples. When one is angry at someone for being mistreated, one's ability to understand the offending party can become compromised. There may be relationships in which one has historically been hurt and misunderstood and therefore, at some level, one does not want to generously extend understanding to the offending party. And lastly, there are some relationships formed in childhood in which one finds oneself, even as an adult, thrown back into a childlike role in the relationships. Thus it may be difficult for such individuals to apply their social intelligence to parents, siblings, teachers, and extended family members.

Novel ways to use Social Intelligence

- Attend an uncomfortable social situation as an active observer and describe this without any judgments.
- Withhold a powerful and decisive argument that would win a discussion but might hurt someone's feelings.
- Attempt to find at least one positive element in someone's seemingly negative motives.
- Note and appreciate others in light of their positive attributes.
- An awareness of personal feelings might be enhanced by consciously focusing on the feeling, labeling it, and addressing it or consciously letting it go.

Overuse of Social Intelligence

A keen awareness of what motivates others may lead a person to a point of becoming overly cautious or inhibited. It can also lead the person to misinterpret situations and "read" too much into passing comments or the suggestions of others. This may come across as being "too sensitive." It is important to balance this strength out with those of judgment and perspective — to keep the bigger picture in mind. Also, those who are exquisitely empathic may take on the pain and

suffering of others, which can lead to depression or feeling overwhelmed. Practicing mindfulness can be a very effective method of staying balanced emotionally. Interestingly, there is tendency for people high in emotional intelligence to choose helping occupations that are often emotionally difficult. It is critically important to practice self-compassion, exercise good judgment, and maintain perspective to stay balanced.

Zest (Score: 4.4)

Zest is approaching life with excitement and energy, not doing things halfway or halfheartedly, and living life as an adventure. It is strongly associated with happiness and life satisfaction, and it is the strength that most characterizes people who love their work and regard it as a "calling" in their life. Zest is as much a property of the body as it is of the mind. It refers to a feeling of being alive, full of energy, and displaying enthusiasm for any and all activities. Zest is not nervous energy or hyperactivity. Zest at its deepest level refers to feeling alive. Vitality, one of the synonyms of zest, is derived from the Latin word vita, meaning life. Independent of health status, people with zest feel physically well and psychologically content. They experience meaning and purpose rather than feeling lost, disconnected, or aimless.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- People with zest are likely to view their work as a "calling" in life, in that work is deeply fulfilling, meaningful, and purposeful.
- Zest is strongly connected with happiness and well-being through heightened pleasure, engagement, and meaning across life domains.
- Zest draws other people in, providing opportunities for developing fun and meaningful relationships.
- Zest allows for a fuller expression of abilities, skills, and talents.
- Zest can activate inspiration, motivating people to undertake and complete new projects.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual sees himself or herself approaching life with excitement and energy. He or she looks forward to each new day and can't wait to get started. This person fully participates in life and does not view it from the sidelines. His or her enthusiasm is contagious and people want to be around this individual. Life is lived courageously as an adventure, and never halfway or halfheartedly. When at his or her best using zest, this individual's enthusiasm for living is

expressed in a balanced way that creates happiness with others and builds meaningful relationships.

Exploring the strength of Zest

- What conditions (people, places, activities) bring out this individual's zest?
- What conditions put a damper on enthusiasm or zest?
- How does zest cause positive things to happen in this person's life?
- How does zest lead this person, if at all, in directions that he or she later regrets?
- Good health habits (e.g., healthy nutrition, exercise, and sleep) set the stage for zest but are not themselves sufficient. How do these health habits influence zest?
- How does the energy level of others influence the expression of this person's enthusiasm or zest?
- Zest is well described as a value-added strength, meaning that its moral nature is best revealed when it is combined with other signature strengths. Which strengths might combine best with zest?

Underuse of Zest

One's zest can wane under certain circumstances, some more controllable than others. For example, when fatigued or sick one's zest can be diminished, and anything one can do to stay healthy and rested can improve zest when it otherwise would be compromised. Scheduling activities when one is more energetic and feeling well can elevate zest. Also, certain people and circumstances can interfere with the feeling of zest — e.g., being around negative and critical people. Minimizing one's exposure to energy-sapping experiences and people can be one solution, while staying focused internally on one's own interests, values, and motivations can keep zest alive in the face of opposing forces.

Underusing zest refers to situations in which expressing zest would likely result in positive outcomes for the individual or group and for some reason the individual is missing the opportunity. Individuals can examine their days and ascertain how much they activated themselves in their work, play, and interactions and whether they felt that it was optimal considering the context. Note that zest can be expressed when sedentary as well, e.g., the typing of an enthusiastic email.

Novel ways to use Zest

- Do something that you already do, but with more energy and vigor.
- Exercise at least two times a week and notice how it affects your energy level. Or, get a pedometer and increase the number of steps you take each week.
- Think of ways to make an assignment or task exciting and engaging before you undertake it.

Overuse of Zest

While many people are drawn towards individuals high in this strength, the energy, when constant and strong, can become overbearing to people. It may lead individuals to shut down when around the highly zestful individual or to avoid the person. It is important to be tolerant and accepting of others who are not as excited and energetic. Self-regulation can be

helpful in reining in excessive energy, and social intelligence will assist one in keeping a good read on the context and impact on others.

Hope (Score: 4.4)

Hope is expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it. Hope, optimism, and future-mindedness or future-orientation all represent an all-encompassing cognitive, emotional, and motivational stance towards the future characterized by sustained good cheer and goal-directed efforts. Individuals high in hope and optimism can experience hopeful expectations about everyday things as well as optimism about global concerns. They are anchored in the present but tethered to the future, constantly setting goals and planning strategies. Hope and optimism have significant positive consequences.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- People who are hopeful are unlikely to be anxious or depressed.
- Hopeful students do better in school.
- Hopeful people persevere, especially when challenged.
 They are more resilient.
- Hope and optimism correlate with active problem-solving.
 Hope is associated with conscientiousness, diligence, and the ability to delay gratification.
- Hopeful people tend to be healthier, happier, and more successful.
- Hopeful people tend to establish positive and healthy relationships.
- Hope is correlated with lower performance anxiety.
- People high in hope retain more positive emotions after a failure.
- Hope leads to greater life longevity.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual believes that the future has good things in store and see himself or herself as regularly looking on the bright side of life. This person sees and appreciates positives when others focus on negatives and is able to look bravely beyond obstacles to set and reach goals. When at his or her best, hope is expressed as realistic optimism as opposed to unrealistic Pollyannaism in which only the rosy side of the

picture is seen.

Exploring the strength of Hope

- What are the conditions that lead this individual to be hopeful?
- What are the conditions that get in the way of feeling hopeful?
- What role does hope play during challenging times in life?
- To what extent does a fear of disappointment or failure temper the degree to which this individual allows himself or herself to feel hopeful?
- What personal impact does it have to perceive hopefulness in others?
- What are the dangers associated with feeling hopeful?

Underuse of Hope

To be hopeful about positive things happening in the future opens a person up to disappointment when those hoped for events do not occur. Thus, generally hopeful people may find that there are certain aspects of life in which their fear of disappointment interferes with their hope. For example, a parent may be reticent to be hopeful about a wayward child's future because he or she would experience the disappointment so intensely. However, that very same person may be hopeful about business opportunities or the success of less intimate relationships, since disappointment in those contexts may be guite tolerable. At other times, hope may be hard to find when one is missing knowledge and perspective of what factors may exist that could provide reason for hope. For example, parents may not know of friends of their child who may be offering good advice and support during times of trouble. If an individual is holding hope in check, it can be a marker of suffering. Context is critical for every character strength, thus there will be situations in which it might be useful to underplay hope, but at the same time, one must monitor that this "underplaying" does not become a detrimental habit in and of itself.

Novel ways to use Hope

- Set a new goal and brainstorm ways to reach that goal.
- Watch a movie that promotes a message of hope and think about how the message applies to your life.
- List bad things that have happened, then find at least two positive aspects or insights gained from each.
- Document three past accomplishments in detail and let them inspire the future.
- Schedule at least 15 minutes twice a week for generating optimistic ideas.
- Write about your best possible self: take some time to imagine a future in which you are bringing your best possible self forward.

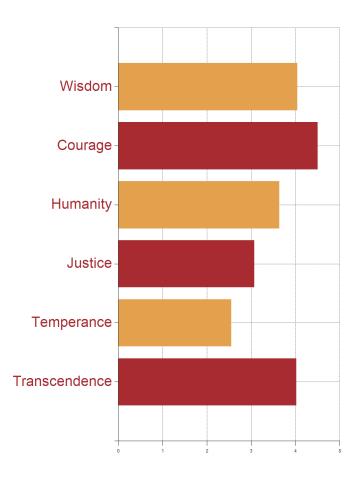
Overuse of Hope

Hope is one of the most powerful character strengths because its positive effects are so wide-ranging and its effect on

others can be so contagious. It is important, though, to simultaneously stay grounded. Real obstacles or warning signs may be overlooked for fear of losing hope. These obstacles and worries can be faced, however, while maintaining hope for goodness in the future. When one expresses hope with too much force, others may express a more pessimistic viewpoint as a counterbalance. Another overplay of hope occurs when individuals set too many goals and plans that cannot possibly all be met, so they end up feeling disappointed or discouraged. In some situations, the strengths of judgment/critical thinking, prudence, and social intelligence will be useful to balance the expression of hope.

Core Virtues

When scientists reviewed the classic works of virtue and human goodness across religions, philosophies, and classifications, they found strong parallels across all of the great works. They noted there are six broad categories of virtue: Wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence. These virtues are part of the VIA Classification and have been found to be universal across cultures and nations. This graph offers a perspective of this individual's strengths across these six virtue categories. It is important to note that the VIA Inventory does not measure the virtues directly; what you see is the average of the individual scores on the strengths that make up each virtue.



The Key to the Virtues:







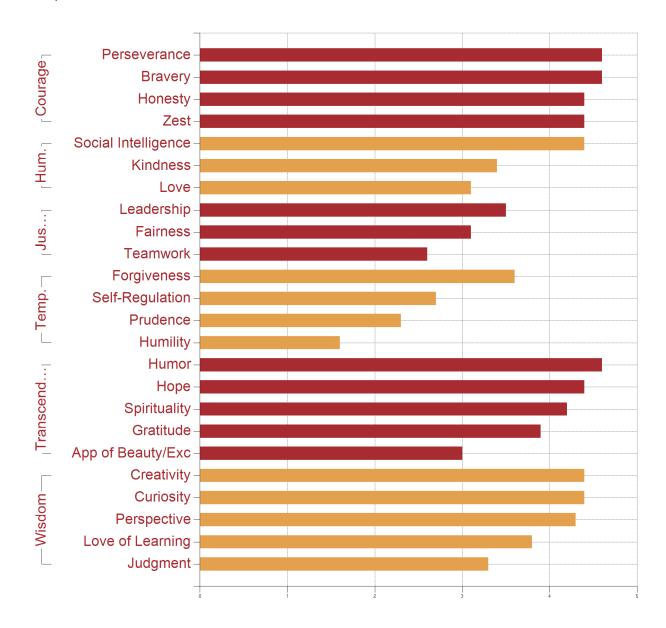
- Wisdom and Knowledge cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge. These are creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, and perspective.
- <u>Courage</u> emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition that is external or internal. These are bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest.
- <u>Humanity</u> interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others. These are love, kindness, and social intelligence.
- <u>Justice</u> civic strengths that underlie healthy community life. These are teamwork, fairness, and leadership.
- <u>Temperance</u> strengths that protect against excess. These are forgiveness, modesty/humility, prudence, and self-regulation.
- <u>Transcendence</u> strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning. These are appreciation of beauty & excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, and religiousness/spirituality.

Questions for exploring the virtues:

- What does knowing one's highest virtue tell someone about themselves?
- What is it like be considered strong in a characteristic that has been valued by the best thinkers throughout time?
- How might an individual tap into this virtue to reach their goals?

Character Strengths by Virtue Categories

This strengths profile shows this individual's character strengths grouped within the virtue categories. The numbers 1 - 5 correspond to raw data scores.



Questions for exploring this graph:

- Which character strengths jump out in each virtue category?
- How might the character strengths that are highest in each virtue category be viewed as a unique pathway or route to expressing that virtue?
- How might a character strength that is high in a virtue category be used to help build a strength that is lower in that category?

Two Factor Balance Graph

This report offers another view of the character strengths. Scientific studies have found the 24 VIA character strengths cluster in particular ways. One way to conceptualize them is across two primary dimensions. One dimension is Heart-Mind, which describes the degree to which a given character strength is based in mental activities (e.g., thinking, logic, analysis) or in matters of the heart (e.g., feelings, intuitions). Strengths that are closer to the left are the highest mind strengths (e.g., judgment, prudence) while those closest to the right are the highest heart strengths (e.g., gratitude, love). The other dimension is the continuum of Intrapersonal-Interpersonal, which describes the degree to which a character trait focuses attention on oneself or on others; "Intrapersonal" strengths generally only require oneself in order to express the strength (e.g., creativity), while "Interpersonal" strengths generally require other people in order to use the strength (e.g., team-work).

Interpersonal Humility Teamwork Kindness Forgiveness Honesty Leadership Love Gratitude Hear Perseverand Spirituality Self-Regulation Social Inte lligence Perspective App of Beauty/Exc Judgment Bravery Curiosity Creativity Love of Learning Intrapersonal

Important points to remember about this graph:

- The dots are in the exact same position for everyone as this is the result of scientific findings.
- The individual's highest strengths are shown in red.
- The circles are a way to orient visually to the graph.
- There is no "ideal" profile in that one should have signature strengths in each quadrant or all in one quadrant.
- Two strengths close together on the graph are more likely to comfortably co-occur, while strengths that are far apart are more likely to be traded off in that it is less likely this person habitually shows both at the same time.

Questions for exploring this graph:



- How might this graph inform this individual as they think about the balance of strength expression in their life?
- Does this individual approach life more from a "heart" or from a "mind" perspective, as noted in this graph?
- How might strengths be turned inward towards oneself, e.g., practice more self-kindness or self-forgiveness?

Appendix A **Exercises for Strength-Building**

Below you will find one exercise or strategy for boosting or working with each of the 24 character strengths. Many of these are based in good research and for those which research is not available, the best practice from expert opinion is shared. This is a small sample of strategies and it will always behoove the individual to stay current on the latest research around applying strategies and positive psychology interventions.

Creativity:

Practicing divergent thinking is one of the most important research-based interventions to boost creativity. When facing a problem, brainstorm multiple alternatives rather than one solution to the problem

Curiosity:

Curiosity can be built by consciously paying attention to and tracking things in one's daily environment that have not been noticed before or things about familiar people that have gone unnoticed. The key is to encourage being "actively curious," asking lots of questions, and making new, mini discoveries. In a more formal way, an individual may take an approach of naming three novel features of any activity that they are doing.

Judgment/Open-mindedness:

Seeking and considering other viewpoints is the cornerstone of open-mindedness. When one is having a discussion with a person with an opposing viewpoint, take an approach of asking at least one clarifying question. The approach should be one that involves "collecting information" rather than "evaluating information."

Love of Learning:

To build love of learning, it's important to identify where the highest interests in learning are and then work to discover the preferred ways of learning about that subject; whether self initiated, by reading, searching the internet, through a class, via hands-on experiences, peer learning groups, or by viewing video clips or documentaries. Pursue the learning of interst, systematically digging deeply into the material.

Perspective:

An intervention that has been shown to boost wisdom-related knowledge is to imagine having a conversation with a wise person about a problem. Imagine the full dialogue in terms of questions asked, responses given, the nuances of the discussion, and any advice that would be offered.

Bravery:

Research is finding that one of the most common ways people can increase their bravery is to focus on the outcome of the courageous act. In other words, focusing on the beneficial outcome of a brave act rather than focusing on fears can increase the likelihood of acting bravely.

Perseverance:

Reframing setbacks or failures as learning opportunities and ideas for growth can boost the strength of perseverance. Setbacks can be viewed as providing useful information so that the individual can overcome obstacles, be less inclined to "give up," and persist toward their goal.

Appendix A **Exercises for Strength-Building**

Honesty:

Recognize the degree to which the individual alters or modifies one's own opinions, feelings and behavior based on what they think other people's expectations are. Work to develop relationships in which they can be authentic.

Zest:

Building zest involves increasing energy. While being mindful of what is manageable per one's physical health status, find ways to increase daily movement, exercise, or activities to engage in. Wearing a pedometer is one way to measure activity and self-motivate toward increases in activity level. The first step is to get a baseline of the average amount of steps taken daily and then slowly work on incremental increases each week.

Love:

Lovingkindness meditation is an effective way to experience and boost the strength of love. This form of meditation provides a way to consciously tap into one's inner resources of love through imagery and affirmative statements of one's capacity for love and of the power and beneficial effects of love in the world. There are books and CD's that can lead an individual through this meditative practice.

Kindness:

Some research notes there are benefits of practicing several random acts of kindness all in one day. Look for opportunities to conduct random acts of kindness and consider how you might set a plan to mix up the variety of kind acts committed each week.

Social Intelligence:

Social intelligence can be cultivated through the practice of mindfulness, increasing awareness of the thoughts and feelings of one's self and others. After one becomes aware of an emotion, the next step is to label it, and if appropriate, express it to another. It may be useful to consider how this has an impact on the social context.

Teamwork:

In order to become a better team member, it is important to notice and express positive emotions (e.g., gratitude, joy, humor, hope) to other team members. In addition, it's important to take an open-minded and curious stance in understanding others' points of view as opposed to just advocating for one's own.

Fairness:

Imagining the experiences and appreciating the differences of others can boost the strength of fairness. Perspective-taking, cultural awareness and sensitivity training, and role-playing are ways to develop a more "other-focused" perspective, particularly when facing complex moral dilemmas.

Leadership:

In addition to competently using one's strengths, leadership requires highly developed organizational skills. This takes planning and goal setting. Consider ideas and opportunities in which the individual can practice taking a leadership role in activities, groups, or organizations, even if the task seems minor or trivial.

Appendix A **Exercises for Strength-Building**

Forgiveness/mercy:

There are many ways to boost forgiveness. The following is one example of a five step process: Recall the hurt; empathize as best you can - see the situation from the other person's point of view; consider forgiveness as an act of altruism by recalling the gratitude felt over being forgiven; commit to forgive over the long-run; hold on to forgiveness. Forgiveness is a process that takes time and needs to be repeated and practiced.

Modesty/Humility:

One intervention experts recommend is to look for humility/modesty exemplars among family, friends, philosophical lore, movies, or spiritual readings. Then create a "Hall of Humility" that is a listing of all of these findings and discuss how these learnings might be applied into daily life.

Prudence:

Practice conducting cost-benefit analyses of problems. Write out the costs and benefits of taking a particular action and the costs and benefits of not doing that action (resulting in four quadrants).

Self-Regulation:

Research has found that the best way to build this character strength is to exercise some area of discipline on a regular basis. Self-monitoring is one pathway. Consider a behavior one wishes to change (e.g., eating more healthy, exercising more, managing finances better) and begin to track it with honest detail (e.g., keeping a food diary or an exercise log). Continue to closely monitor the behavior while slowly making changes.

Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence:

Research has shown that keeping a beauty log can enhance an individual's engagement with beauty around them. The key is raising one's consciousness. When something beautiful is seen or felt, whether it is from nature, is human-made (e.g., artwork), or is the virtuous behavior of others (i.e., moral beauty), writing down thoughts and feeling in a log or journal can increase awareness and deepen experiences.

Gratitude:

Counting one's blessings is one of the most widely researched interventions to boost gratitude. It involves re- flecting on one's day and tracking the good things that happened throughout the day. Often the approach is to write down three of these good things that occurred, why one is grateful for them, and what role one played in the experience.

Hope:

One research-based strategy that has been shown to boost hope is the — "best possible self" exercise. Take a moment to imagine a future in which one is bringing one's best self forward and everything is happening as one wishes. This should be visualized in a way that is pleasing and realistic. Then, consider the character strengths needed in order to make that image a reality.



Appendix A **Exercises for Strength-Building**

Humor:

Some research has found that keeping track of the humorous and funny things that happen each day is a way to boost this strength. Writing down three funny things that occurred throughout the course of the day can build awareness and increase the use of humor.

Spirituality/Religiousness:

Consider who might be "a wise, spiritual role model." Researchers describe this as taking an approach of "observational spiritual learning." The model could be someone from a book or movie, someone in the public eye, or a person in one's life. Reflect on how this person has conducted their life in a way that is spiritually-driven and meaning-filled.



Appendix B

The VIA Classification of Character Strengths

- 1. **Wisdom and Knowledge** Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge
 - **Creativity** [originality, ingenuity]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it
 - **Curiosity** [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering
 - **Judgment & Open-Mindedness** [critical thinking]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly
 - Love of Learning: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows
 - **Perspective** [wisdom]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people
- 2. **Courage** Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal
 - **Bravery** [valor]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it
 - **Perseverance** [persistence, industriousness]: Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; "getting it out the door"; taking pleasure in completing tasks
 - **Honesty** [authenticity, integrity]: Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions
 - **Zest** [vitality, enthusiasm, vigor, energy]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and Activated
- 3. **Humanity** Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others
 - Capacity to Love and Be Loved: Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people
 - **Kindness** [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "niceness"]: Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
 - Social Intelligence [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of
 other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other
 people tick



Appendix B

The VIA Classification of Character Strengths

- 4. **Justice** Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life
 - **Teamwork** [citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share
 - **Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
 - **Leadership:** Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the time maintain time good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.
- 5. **Temperance** Strengths that protect against excess
 - Forgiveness & Mercy: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful
 - Modesty & Humility: Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is
 - **Prudence:** Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
 - **Self-Regulation** [self-control]: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions
- 6. **Transcendence** Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning
 - Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence [awe, wonder, elevation]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience
 - **Gratitude:** Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks
 - **Hope** [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about
 - **Humor** [playfulness]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes
 - Religiousness & Spirituality [faith, purpose]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning
 of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that
 shape conduct and provide comfort

Let us Know What You Think

Take our survey online to let us know what you think of the VIA PRO report.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VRQCMN2