



VIA PROSM

Character Strengths Profile

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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.



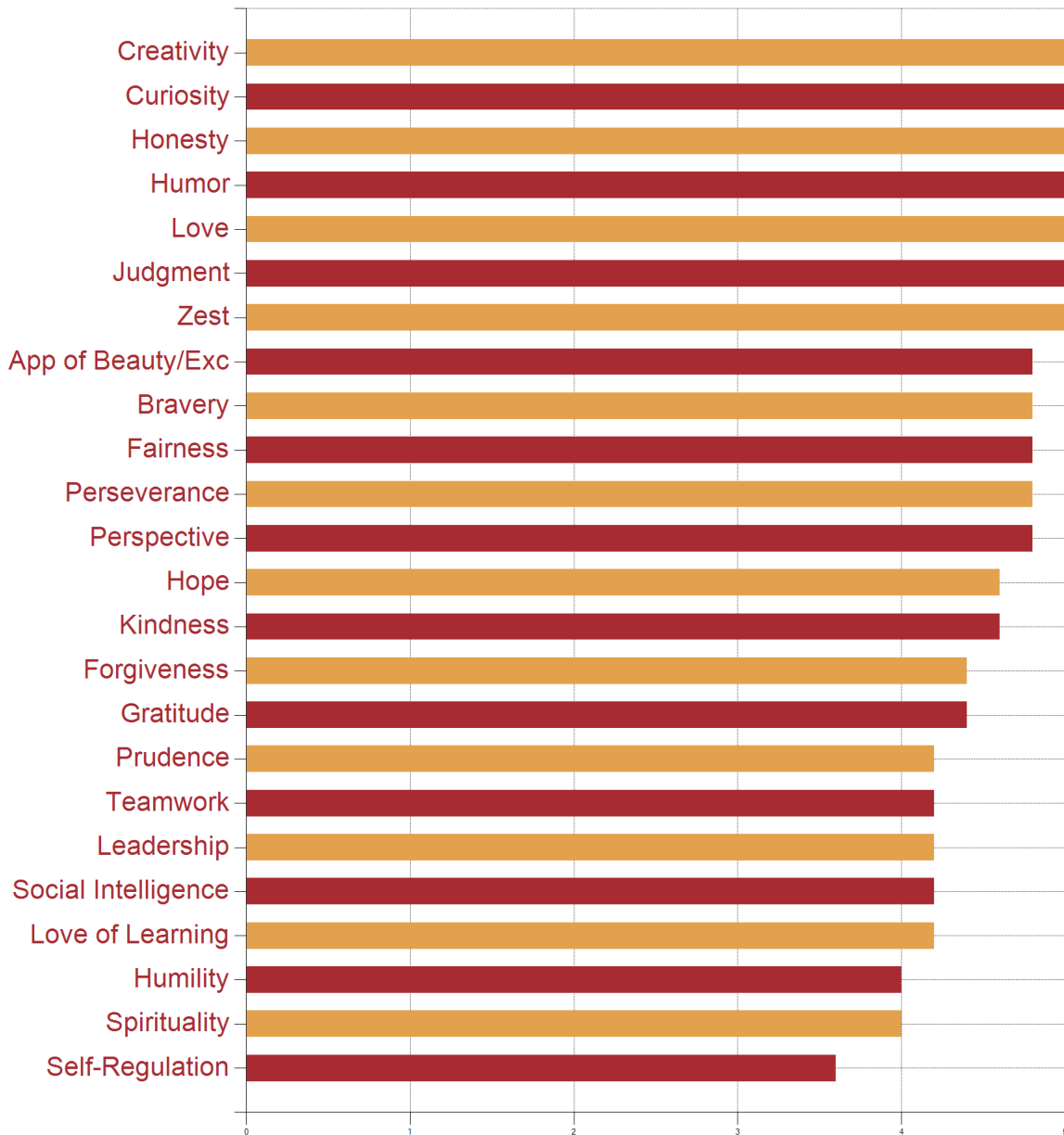
Character Strengths in Rank Order

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."



Creativity (Score: 5)

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: 5)

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

Honesty (Score: 5)

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.

Humor (Score: 5)

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

Love (Score: 5)

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.

Judgment (Score: 5)

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.

Zest (Score: 5)

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.

Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence (Score: 4.8)

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.

Bravery (Score: 4.8)

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.

Fairness (Score: 4.8)

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.

Perseverance (Score: 4.8)

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.

Perspective (Score: 4.8)

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.

Hope (Score: 4.6)

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

Kindness (Score: 4.6)

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.

Forgiveness (Score: 4.4)

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

Gratitude (Score: 4.4)

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.

Prudence (Score: 4.2)

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

Teamwork (Score: 4.2)

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.

Leadership (Score: 4.2)

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.

Social Intelligence (Score: 4.2)

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.

Love of Learning (Score: 4.2)

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.

Humility (Score: 4)

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.

Spirituality (Score: 4)

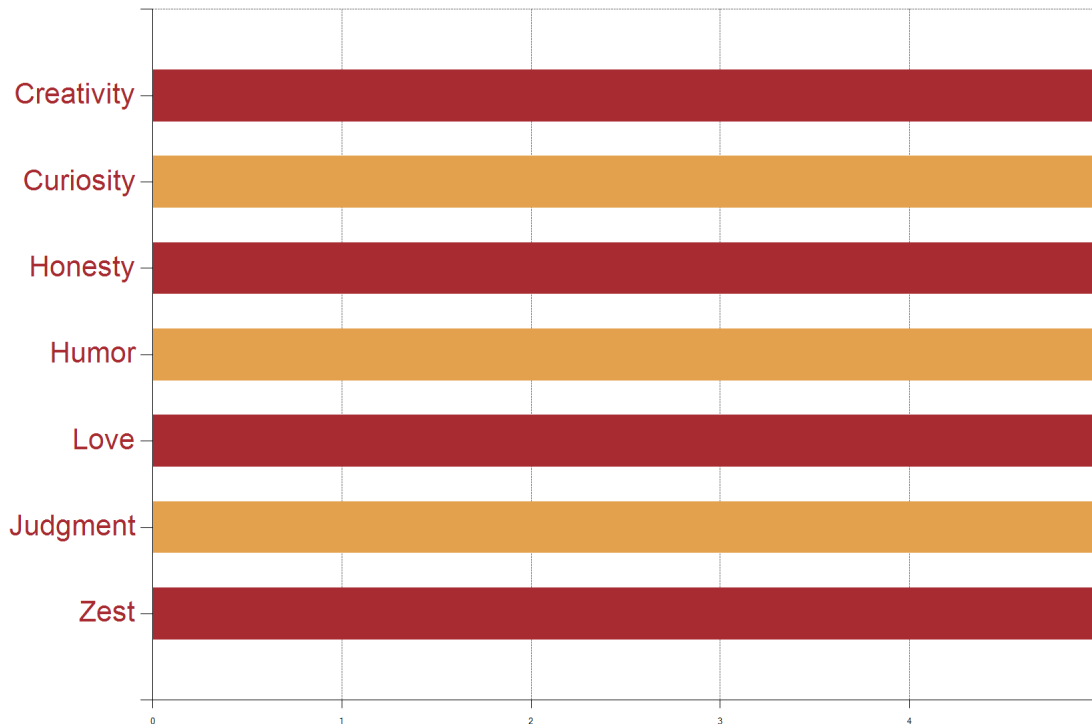
You have strong and coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe. You know where you fit in the larger scheme. Your beliefs shape your actions and are a source of comfort to you.

Self-Regulation (Score: 3.6)

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.

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.



Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Creativity (Score: 5)

Creativity is thinking of new ways to do things. It involves producing ideas or behaviors that are recognizably original. Words like novel, surprising, ingenious, or unusual often are used to describe creative people. Creativity is found in degrees. At one end of the spectrum are those individuals who are highly recognized for their exceptional creativity, such as great scientists, poets, composers, and painters. This is often referred to as “Big C” creativity. “Small c” creativity is everyday creativity and ingenuity; it is at play when people are able to generate creative solutions to a variety of problems. What really distinguishes creative individuals is not intelligence, but their general approach in life to situations and problems.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Creativity sharpens practical intelligence especially when one is exploring the causes and consequences of everyday life events.
- Creativity helps in promoting divergent thinking (thinking about many ways to solve a problem), and it refines holistic thinking to a level of ideas and details that can be implemented.
- Self-confidence and strong self-knowledge, byproducts of creativity, help one feel comfortable in a variety of situations and adapt to challenges and stressors that come up.
- Creativity helps to inspire and motivate followers and oftentimes helps them become leaders themselves.
- Creativity, though fairly stable over time, can be enhanced by environments that are supportive, reinforcing, open, and informal. On the other hand, creativity can be impeded by time pressure, close supervision, or critical examination.
- Creativity helps drive one's interest in activities and helps one generate ideas that others find interesting.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual sees himself or herself as an original thinker,

one who can generate unique ideas and strategies that build knowledge and contribute to innovative applications or solutions. People often come to this person with a problem to solve, or when they are looking for help in creating something new or different (e.g., a program, a design, or a different way of organizing something). When at his or her best with this strength, this individual is making connections and putting ideas together in unique ways that often inspire others and lead to new and interesting ideas.

Exploring the strength of Creativity

- What holds this individual back from trying to be creative?
- What encourages creativity?
- How do real or anticipated reactions of other people affect one's creative efforts?
- How would this individual define creativity?
- How does this individual use creativity to help solve life problems or those of family, friends, and colleagues?

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Underuse of Creativity

Everyone has a process that facilitates creativity and when individuals are in circumstances that don't allow for this process, their creativity can be cut off or interrupted. For example, oftentimes the creative process is one that requires time for ideas to be incubated. When one is in a time-pressured situation, it may interfere with creativity. There are also situations in which creativity is off-putting to others. For example, suggesting a new and better way to do something may implicitly send a message to others that their ideas are not good enough. The social unease can be perceived even subconsciously and result in underuse of creativity in the name of not offending others. As we have come to learn that there are multiple forms of intelligence, creativity too can be expressed in different forms. For example, an artistically creative person can struggle to find creative solutions to interpersonal or emotional problems. It may be that a person can generalize the creative processes to some of these areas in which he or she is not ordinarily creative. For example, an artist who intuitively senses the nuances of different colors, may apply the same intuitive sensing to the nuanced differences in voice tone. Employing creativity in these instances can lead to higher levels of interest and engagement.

Novel ways to use Creativity

- Create and refine at least one original idea weekly in an area of your interest.
- Do at least one assignment weekly in a different and creative manner.
- Write an article, essay, short story, or poem or draw or paint in relation to your passion once a week.
- Offer a creative solution to a challenge posed by a family member or a friend.
- Develop multiple alternative solutions rather than just one when faced with a problem.
- Examine an event from your past when creativity was used for self-benefit or the benefit of others.
- Develop a creativity workbook: set aside time each day to think, learn, and perceive in novel ways.

Overuse of Creativity

Creativity can be energizing but also can be a source of tension for both the creative person and those working with him or her. When someone continues to come up with new ideas and new projects, it can quickly become overwhelming to others involved. In addition, the person with many ideas and not enough perseverance will struggle with completing the projects and leave many loose ends. At the same time, for the creative person, it can be irritating when others don't appreciate a new way of doing things or seem resistant to new ideas. When creativity is a sweet spot, there will be situations in which it is better for the individual to lead with another signature strength or consciously temper creativity with love, kindness, social intelligence, leadership, or teamwork.

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Curiosity (Score: 5)

Curiosity is taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake, and finding new subjects and topics fascinating. It is exploring and discovering. Curiosity, interest, novelty-seeking, and openness to experience represent an intrinsic desire for experience and knowledge. It is fulfilling to find an answer, have a new experience, or learn a new fact. This strength can carry someone beyond openness to new experiences into actions associated with personal growth. Curiosity has a developmental trajectory: curious children tend to become curious adults. Because curiosity can never be satisfied in the same way twice, it is fueled in both positive and negative ways. It may take the form of constantly asking questions, but not all questions are appropriate in all situations.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Curiosity is one of the strengths most robustly linked to satisfaction with life and work.
- Curiosity contributes to happiness, health and longevity, and positive social relationships.
- Curiosity can strengthen a marital relationship by keeping it new and interesting.
- Curiosity helps in seeking and finding greater meaning in life.
- Curiosity helps in embracing uncertain and new situations.
- Curiosity is often the entry point to many lifelong hobbies, passions, and pursuits.
- Curious people are more attracted to activities that offer opportunities for growth, competence, and a higher level of stimulation. Thus, they are likely to report having personal goals aimed at self-improvement.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual sees himself or herself as someone who takes an active interest in ongoing life experiences and finds new subjects and topics fascinating. Anything can be explored further, and there are always new people, places, situations, and work to discover. When this strength is at its best in this

person, his or her mind is on fire with wonder and interest. He or she actively seeks information and asks questions that satisfy driving curiosity while exercising good judgment in not going too far with questioning so as to cause discomfort in others.

Exploring the strength of Curiosity

- With which people or in what circumstances does this individual feel comfort or encouragement in expressing curiosity?
- How has this individual's curiosity been affected growing up?
- When this person starts to wonder about something, what if anything gets in the way of pursuing his or her curiosity?
- How does curiosity play out across the different domains of life?

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Underuse of Curiosity

Sometimes curiosity is conditioned to be expressed in the context of acquiring knowledge and less so in the context of forming relationships. Curiosity about others – about what they think, feel, and have done - goes a long way in getting to know someone better and forming a closer relationship. However, as the saying goes, curiosity killed the cat, meaning that curiosity can lead to negative experiences in life. Those who have had such experiences can become reticent in expressing curiosity in certain contexts. For example, some people have learned to damper their curiosity in authoritarian contexts where it is expected that they follow directions instead of question. Otherwise curious people may find themselves underusing their curiosity in educational settings, with a boss, etc. Curiosity can pull a person in directions that take time and interest away from the immediate task at hand; therefore, it can be helpful for one to explore situations where curiosity is more and less appropriate. It is important to distinguish between wisely choosing to restrain one's curiosity and unwittingly underusing it where it could be useful. Alternatively, disengagement with the task or situation at hand can reflect a lack of curiosity. It may be a function of a person being on auto-pilot, simply going through the motions of life not paying attention to the details and nuances of what is going on all around. It is not uncommon to feel “trapped” or “lost” in the mundane routines of work life and home life. A higher dose of curious seeking, curious exploring, or curious questioning can be an immediate way of lifting oneself back into the moment.

Novel ways to use Curiosity

- Make a list of unknowns about a favorite topic.
- Try one new restaurant or new activity each week.
- Drive a different route home to explore a new area you live nearby.
- Travel on vacation to a new city or country each year.
- Practice being curious about an activity that previously held little interest for you or was distasteful. Pay attention to at least three novel features of this activity while doing it.

Overuse of Curiosity

Curiosity unchecked can lead one to offend others by being overly nosy or intrusive. Incessant curiosity in others' affairs and feelings can cause them to withdraw to protect their own sense of privacy and boundaries. Curiosity can also lead to distraction from a task at hand, leading one to lose sight of the end goal. The saying “curiosity killed the cat” points to the dangers inherent in curiosity overplayed. It might be useful to consider bringing in the strengths of perseverance, prudence, and social intelligence as counterbalances to unrestrained curiosity.

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Honesty (Score: 5)

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.

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

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.

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Humor (Score: 5)

Humor is perceiving what is comical or amusing in situations, 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.

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?

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

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.

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

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

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Love (Score: 5)

Love is the capacity to love and to be loved. It is valuing close relationships with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; it is being close to people. The strength of love is characterized by a disposition to tend and befriend others. It is reflected in one's thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. Love, as defined by the VIA classification, assumes the capacity for reciprocity. Thus, while unrequited love, a crush, hero worship, or being a fan can feel like love, each falls outside the parameter of this character strength because the feelings are in only one direction. Love is marked by the reciprocal sharing of warmth, comfort, and acceptance. It involves strong positive feelings, commitment, and often, sacrifices. We can experience different types of love: companion love or friendship, familial love, and romantic love. The capacity to experience all of these types of love, scientists believe, is rooted in early attachment. Patterns of secure attachment, established in infancy, show up decades later in romantic relationships.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- Love tends to facilitate tolerance, empathy, and forgiveness in relationships, which contribute to the health and longevity of those relationships.
- Loving and secure relationships are strongly linked with longevity, good health, and enhanced life satisfaction.
- Loving and secure relationships can provide a sense of meaning and purpose in life.
- Love is associated with healthy patterns of communication such as compromising and good conflict.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual sees himself or herself as being able to form close loving relationships with others. He or she finds it easy and natural to experience loving feelings towards others and feels an ease in receiving love and affection expressed by others. It is energizing when this strength is given expression. This is a core strength for this individual and as such is easily recognized by others. While this strength is dominant, it

doesn't mean that it will always be expressed optimally across contexts. When this person is at his or her best in expressing love, there is an easy flow of positive emotions from and towards others that brings closeness and a strong feeling of emotional support. This strength is crucial in developing relationships that nurture and sustain life satisfaction.

Exploring the strength of Love

- Identify the people who matter most to this person across all of the domains of life (friends, family, partners, co-workers).
- What are the ways in which this individual expresses love to others and how is it received?
- How are expressions of love received by this individual? It is often easier to give than to receive, but good relationships are a two-way street.
- Love is often reflected in how we communicate with others, how we express our wants and needs, and how we establish give and take
- in relationships. It is also reflected in how we listen to and respond to good as well as bad news. Does this individual celebrate with others in a genuine way when good news is expressed? Respond with heartfelt compassion when bad news is shared?

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Underuse of Love

Loving relationships appear to be one of the most important factors in promoting health and well-being. The character strength of love is a very powerful tool for developing healthy relationships. When expressed, it creates caring and supportive relationships that improve both parties in the relationship. Although love is a top character strength for this individual, there may be relationships and situations in which he or she could express love more broadly or deeply. It is not uncommon for loving people to discover that they reserve their love mainly for particular family members, friends, and relationship partners or to find that their expression of love is confined to certain people and certain situations. Upon consideration, they would like to extend their love more broadly. For example, some people realize that they have taken their love for parents and family for granted and they decide they would like to strengthen those relationships by being more loving in them. Others recognize that it never crossed their mind to express love in the workplace and that, in fact, there are important and meaningful relationships there that they would like to strengthen through the expression of love. And still others, upon reflection, discover that they tend to overlook the “receiving” aspect of love and focus mostly on the “giving” of love, but this, too, can create an imbalance. Finally, love can be underused in terms of loving oneself – what some consider to be the precursor to loving and being loved by others.

Novel ways to use Love

- Journal about loving relationships and what is most valued in those relationships.
- Develop a lovingkindness meditation practice in which you consciously tap into your inner resources of love through mental focus, imaging, and statements that focus on feeling and expressing love. Lovingkindness meditation is an effective way to experience the strength of love and is associated with a host of mental and physical benefits. Ideally a practitioner should teach you the technique, but at the very least, read a book or two on the topic and practice with CDs that formally teach the practice.

Overuse of Love

Love, as all the signature strengths, can sometimes occur as a strong force that may be expressed “too” intensely or broadly for a particular situation and may actually diminish well-being or inhibit relationship building. Because this strength occurs naturally, it can be expressed automatically without consideration of the impact on oneself or others. This can cause discomfort in those who are less comfortable with overt expressions of emotion or who do not share the same intensity of feelings. This can lead individuals who overexpress love to feel unappreciated or drained from high levels of emotional giving. Additionally, a heavy dose of loving concern for others may make it difficult to set limits or to say “no,” which can also lead one to feeling depleted or used. It is common, in expressing love, to leave ourselves out of the equation, focusing on others and forgetting to turn our love inward. Deploying the strength of fairness may be a way to count oneself in the mix; in other words, it is not fair to yourself or to others if all you do is express love and you deprive others of the opportunity to give it to you.

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Judgment (Score: 5)

Judgment involves looking at things from all angles. It is critical thinking: weighing all evidence fairly, thinking things through, and examining the evidence from all sides rather than jumping to conclusions. It also involves being open-minded and able to change one's mind in the light of evidence. Judgment and open-mindedness make the examined life possible. This type of logical and rational thinking is considered a corrective virtue; it corrects for a tendency to think in ways that favor one's current views and to seek out information consistent with them. Judgment and open-mindedness are the ingredients for stepping back and taking perspective. Open-mindedness does not mean indecision, and it does not mean uncritical tolerance of any and all points of view. Someone with this strength makes decisions and can feel strongly about certain courses of action. What marks good judgment is the consideration of other points of view, the gathering of relevant information, and the willingness to change one's mind.

What does research reveal about the benefits of this strength?

- People who can see things from more than one perspective are particularly skilled in times of change and transition.
- Judgment counteracts biased thinking, contributing to more accurate decision-making.
- Open-mindedness contributes to the search for meaning in life, by helping one to develop pathways to happiness that uncover a sense of what brings deeper meaning and purpose in one's life.
- Individuals with this strength are less swayed by singular events and are more resistant to suggestion and manipulation.

What does this mean about the individual?

This individual sees himself or herself as someone who evaluates all sides of an issue equally, and he or she is less likely to be biased in decision-making. This person thinks through problems and challenges that arise and is not quick

to jump to conclusions. When at his or her best using this strength, this individual weighs issues fairly, is empathic, and is flexible in that his or her mind can be changed in light of new, solidly grounded evidence. This strength can help in avoiding negative thinking traps.

Exploring the strength of Judgment

- How is judgment or critical thinking expressed by this person?
- How do emotions get in the way of the ability to be objective?
- What people and circumstances seem to bring out logical fact-based thinking in this individual?
- When this individual is thinking most rationally, does it ever cause loss of perspective of the big picture?
- How does this individual integrate his or her emotions and the emotions of others into a rational thinking process?
- With what people and in what circumstances is it difficult for this person to think rationally without being unduly confused by strong emotions?

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Underuse of Judgment

In some situations, it is easy to get caught up in emotion, passion, or ideas, and critical thinking then wanes. At these times, one's rational side is less present, and depending on the circumstance, this may or may not be optimal. These so called "hot emotions" that interfere with rational and critical thinking need to be "cooled off" in order to allow judgment and critical thinking to be expressed fully. There are numbers of ways to cool off one's own emotional state and that of another (e.g., counting, relaxation, exercise, mindfulness, getting distance, etc.).

There are also substances (medicines and illegal drugs) that may impair one's critical thinking, as can excessive fatigue related to inadequate sleep. Furthermore, there can be relationships that for any number of reasons do not encourage one to express critical thinking. For example, in some parental relationships, regardless of the fact that the child has grown to be an adult, the relationship pattern of the parent being the instructive and logical one persists. Boosting judgment can be a way to approach situations from both the head and the heart and may lead to wise choices.

Novel ways to use Judgment

- Choose an area of your life and briefly live "as if" you have different opinions.
- Order a meal you would never ordinarily contemplate ordering, or see a movie that you wouldn't typically choose to see.
- If you feel you might be biased about a particular topic, take an investigative approach and examine all the opposing views clearly and constructively.

Overuse of Judgment

Oftentimes, the judgment strength works well in tasks that require critical thinking and the consideration of many points of view. However, in personal relationships, a fact-based approach can be quickly overused and lead to interpersonal conflicts. In these situations, judgment must be accompanied by a heavy dose of listening, empathy, and self-regulation.

The use of curiosity can also help in exploring the other person's opinions and ideas.

Judgment can also take on the form of indecisiveness in an endless quest for all the necessary information and points of view to make a good decision. The truth is that most decisions must be made with a limited amount of information. A highly reasoned approach can become overly rational at times, not giving enough consideration to emotions. This can be frustrating when one is interacting with those who make more intuitive or emotional decisions. It is important to not get too logical and lost in the head, overthinking and analyzing everything. The role of feelings and "heart strengths," such as gratitude, love, and kindness, can achieve a comfortable balance. It is helpful to recognize that many decisions in life are not irreversible and to distinguish between decisions that are greatest in importance and require more information gathering and those that are less important requiring less energy expenditure.

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

Zest (Score: 5)

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?

Signature Strengths: In-Depth Review

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.

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

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 e-mail.

Novel ways to use Zest

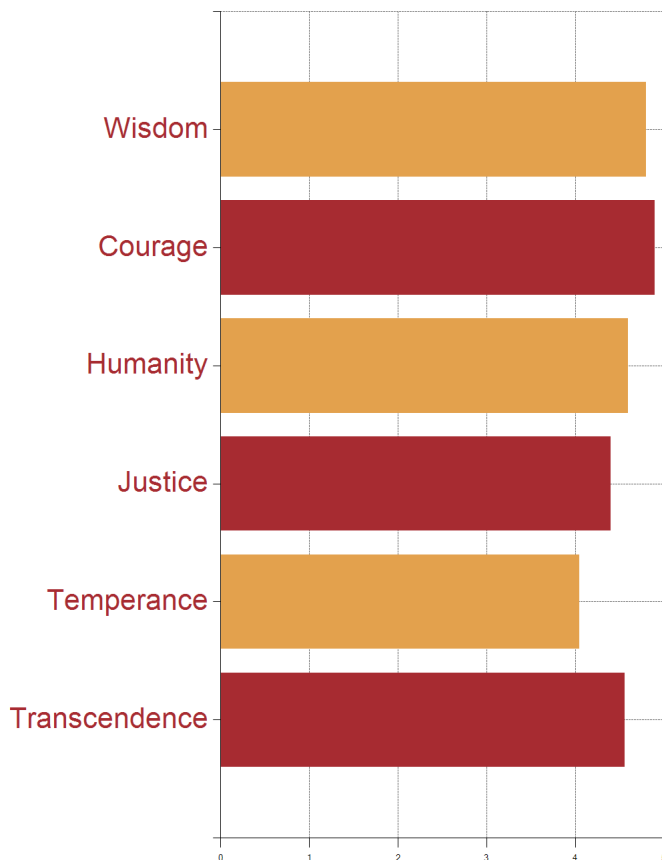
- Do something that you already do, but with more energy and vigor.
- Exercise at least two times a week and notice how it affects your energy level. Or, get a pedometer and increase the number of steps you take each week.
- Think of ways to make an assignment or task exciting and engaging before you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

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:



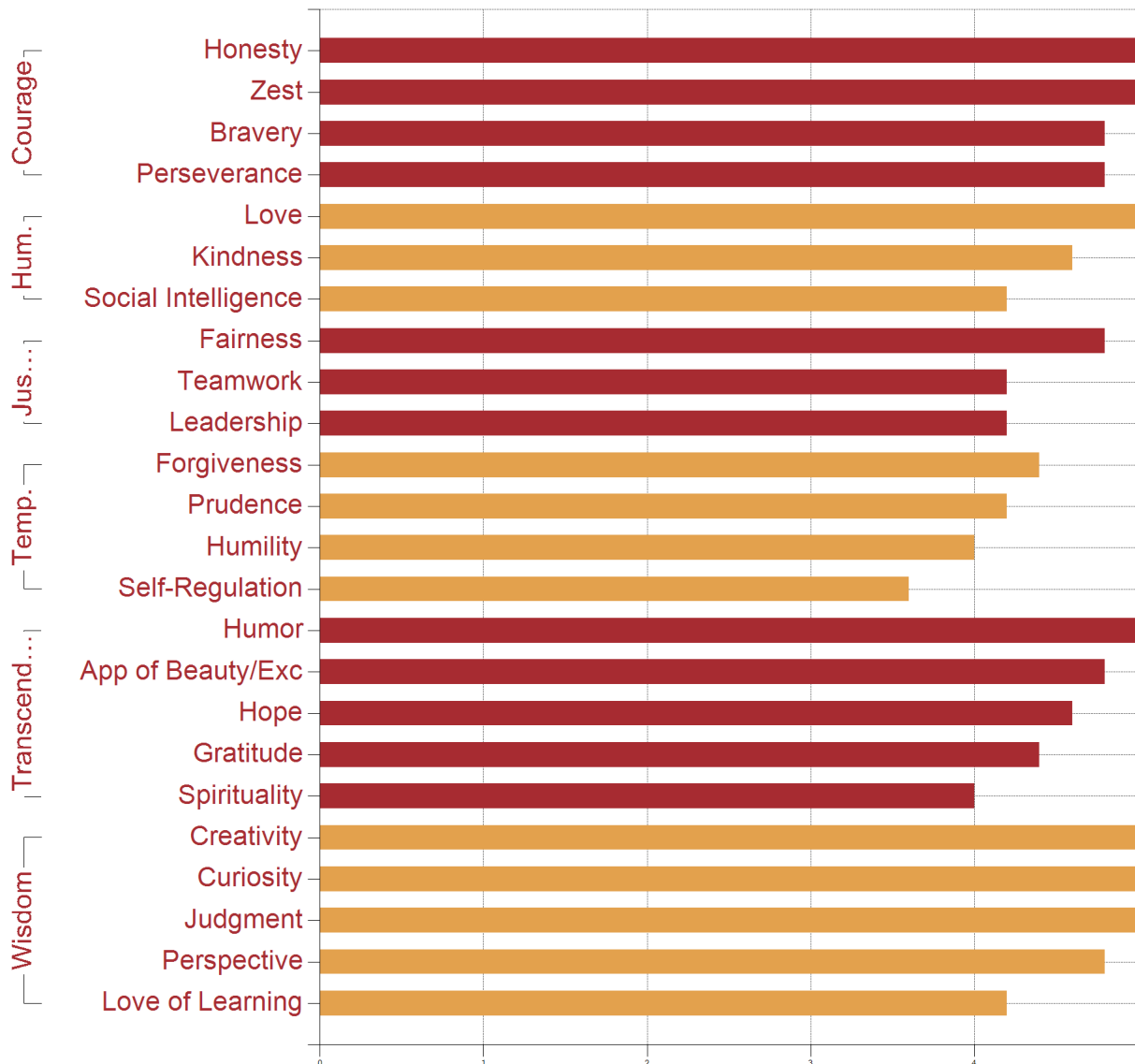
- Wisdom and Knowledge – cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge. These are creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, and perspective.
- Courage – emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition that is external or internal. These are bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest.
- Humanity – interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others. These are love, kindness, and social intelligence.
- Justice – civic strengths that underlie healthy community life. These are teamwork, fairness, and leadership.
- Temperance – strengths that protect against excess. These are forgiveness, modesty/humility, prudence, and self-regulation.
- Transcendence – 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:

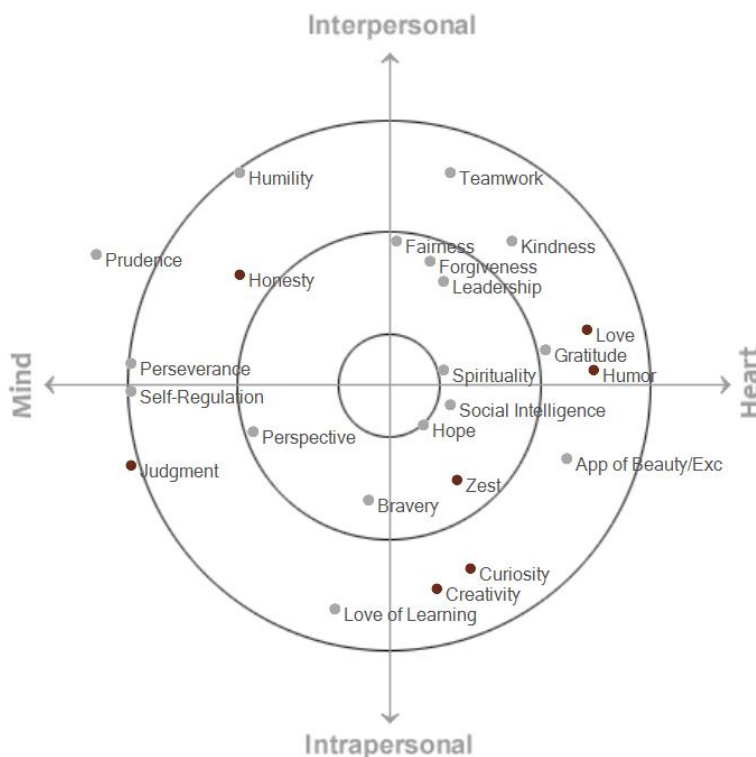
- Which character strengths jump out in each virtue category?
- How might the character strengths that are highest in each virtue category be viewed as a unique pathway or route to expressing that virtue?
- How might a character strength that is high in a virtue category be used to help build a strength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

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 interest, 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 reflecting 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>