

VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

Source: [VIA Institute on Character](#)

1. **Wisdom and Knowledge** – Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

- **Creativity:** Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it
- **Curiosity:** Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering
- **Judgment:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretence; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions
- **Zest:** Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or half-heartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activate

3. **Humanity** – Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others

- **Love:** Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people
- **Kindness:** Doing favours and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
- **Social 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

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4. **Justice** – Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

- **Teamwork:** 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 same time maintaining good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.

5. **Temperance** – Strengths that protect against excess

- **Forgiveness:** Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings, giving people a second chance, letting go of hurt
- **Humility:** Modesty, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves
- **Prudence:** Careful about one's choices, cautious, not taking undue risks
- **Self-Regulation:** Self-control, disciplined, managing impulses, emotions, and vices

6. **Transcendence** – Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

- **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence:** 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:** Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about
- **Humor:** Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes
- **Spirituality:** 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