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## Signature Strengths

Utilising your signature strengths is a secret to satisfaction! Developing insights as to your signature strengths, and then making conscious decisions about aligning what you with your strengths will help you unleash your potential and increase your happiness.

### What are signature strengths?

This concept has been researched and developed by Dr Martin Seligman who is a global leader in the field of Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology focuses on the empirical study of such things as positive emotions, strengths-based character, and healthy institutions. His research has demonstrated that it is possible to be happier — to feel more satisfied, to be more engaged with life, find more meaning, have higher hopes, and probably even laugh and smile more – regardless of your circumstances.

There are 24 strengths that fit under six overarching virtues that almost every culture across the world endorses: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. A strength is a trait, a psychological characteristic which can be seen over different settings and time. A strength is valued in its own right, and often produces good consequences. Using a strength will generally leave you feeling good!

The 24 Signature Strengths are summarised on the following pages.

### Diagnosing your signature strengths

To diagnose your strengths, complete the on-line “VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire”. The resulting report will indicate which your top strengths are.

This tool is free and takes about 20 minutes to complete. Go to <http://www.authentic happiness.com> and click on “VIA Survey of Character Strengths” link under the “Engagement Questionnaires” heading (see picture of menu options next page).

You can **register** yourself here – it is free you just have to provide logon.



Once you register, make a note of your details and you can return any time using this **login**.

**Engagement Questionnaires:**

- BRIEF STRENGTHS TEST**  
Measures 24 Character Strengths
- GRATITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE**  
Measures Appreciation about the Past
- GRIT SURVEY**  
Measures the Character Strength of Perseverance
- OPTIMISM TEST**  
Measures Optimism About the Future
- TRANSGRESSION MOTIVATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE**  
Measures Forgiveness
- VIA SURVEY OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS**  
Measures 24 Character Strengths
- VIA STRENGTH SURVEY FOR CHILDREN**  
Measures 24 Character Strengths for Children
- WORK-LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE**  
Measures Work-Life Satisfaction

After registering, select the menu item "VIA Survey of Character Strengths".

Once you have completed the survey, look at the list of your top five strengths to determine which of these you consciously own and celebrate, which are the real you? For each of your top five strengths, ask yourself if these criteria apply:

- A sense of ownership and authenticity
- A feeling of excitement while displaying it, particularly at first
- A rapid learning curve as the strength is first practiced
- Continuous learning of new ways to enact the strength
- A sense of yearning to find new ways to use it
- A feeling of inevitability in using the strength

- Invigoration rather than exhaustion while using the strength
- The creation and pursuit of personal projects that revolve around it
- Joy, zest, and enthusiasm while using it.

If one or more of these criteria apply, this is a Signature Strength!

Determine which are your signature strengths and record this in your Pre-Coaching Contemplation Workbook. We will use this knowledge during your coaching program.



## The 24 Signature Strengths

From "Authentic Happiness", Martin E P Seligman, PhD, Random House Australia, 2002

### Wisdom and Knowledge

The six routes to displaying wisdom and its necessary antecedent, knowledge, are arranged from the most developmentally basic (curiosity) up to the most mature (perspective).

#### 1. Curiosity and interest in the world

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

#### 2. Love of learning

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

#### 3. Judgment, critical thinking, and open-mindedness

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.

#### 4. Creativity, ingenuity, and originality

Thinking 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.

#### 5. Social intelligence

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

#### 6. Perspective (wisdom)

Although you may not think of yourself as wise, your friends hold this view of you. 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.

### Courage

These strengths reflect the open eyed exercise of will toward the worthy ends that are not certain of attainment. To qualify as courage, such acts must be done in the face of strong adversity.

#### 7. Bravery and valor

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.



## **8. Industry, diligence, and perseverance**

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.

## **9. Honesty, authenticity, and genuineness**

You are an honest person, not only by speaking the truth but by living your life in a genuine and authentic way. You are down to earth and without pretense; you are a "real" person.

## **Humanity and Love**

The strengths here are displayed in positive social interaction with other people; friends, acquaintances, family members and also strangers.

## **10. Kindness and generosity**

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.

## **11. Capacity to love and be loved**

You value close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated. The people to whom you feel most close are the same people who feel most close to you.

## **Justice**

These strengths show up in civic activities. They go beyond one:one relationships to how you relate to larger groups, such as your community, the nation and the world.

## **12. Citizenship, teamwork, and loyalty**

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.

## **13. Fairness, equity, and justice**

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.

## **14. Leadership**

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.

## **Temperance**

Appropriate and moderate expression of your appetites and wants. The temperate person does not suppress motives, but waits for opportunities to satisfy them so that harm is not done to self or others.



### **15. Self-control and self-regulation**

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.

### **16. Caution, prudence, and discretion**

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

### **17. Modesty and humility**

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.

## **Transcendence**

Emotional strengths that reach outside and beyond you to connect you to something larger and more permanent: to other people, to the future, to evolution, to the divine, or to the universe.

### **18. Appreciation of beauty and excellence**

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.

### **19. Gratitude**

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.

### **20. Hope, optimism, and future-mindedness**

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

### **21. Spirituality, sense of purpose, and faith**

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.

### **22. Forgiveness and mercy**

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

### **23. Humour and playfulness**

You like to laugh and tease. Bringing smiles to other people is important to you. You try to see the light side of all situations.

### **24. Zest, enthusiasm, and energy**

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

