

Week 3:

Using your Strengths

Workbook

The following pages list the 24 VIA Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The workbook is designed to help people to think about how they can use their character strengths, and to provide some prompts for people to generate their own ideas. How you use your strength is very personal and depends on your own interests and character, so feel free to be creative!

Curiosity

Curious people are open to new experiences, they are interested in exploring new ideas and activities; they are intrigued and want to find out more about what is happening around them. Curiosity leads to a wish to increase your own personal knowledge.

Other words associated to curiosity: Interested, inquisitive, wanting to know more

Ideas for how to practice Curiosity:

- a) Buy something different in the supermarket, learn about where it comes from and other ways it is used.
- b) Visit somewhere you have never been before and find out more about it (it might be somewhere in the place you live, or a new town or city).
- c) Visit a new exhibition/ museum event
- d) Start a conversation with someone who you don't know.
- e) Choose to learn something new- it might be a new recipe, a new route to travel somewhere, a course for a new skill you will learn (e.g. sewing, a new language).

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'curiosity' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show curiosity in your day to day life?

Creativity

Creative individuals are original thinkers who are able to generate novel ways of addressing problems and expressing thoughts/feelings and opinions. Traditionally associated to artistic expression (painting, drawing, acting), creativity can be applied to any setting.

Other words associated to creativity: originality, imagination, ingenuity

Ideas for how to practice Creativity

- a) Write an article, short story, poem or draw/paint/make something.
- b) Style/dress yourself in a different way to usual (it might be your hair or your outfit).
- c) Find a creative solution to something which you want to fix or change around your house.
- d) Spend time exploring and reading creative websites/blogs online.
- e) Take part in or go and watch a creative activity- singing, theatre, dancing, and production.
- f) Upcycle- make something from recycled/old materials which you have.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'creativity' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show creativity in your day to day life?

Judgement

Judgement (also sometimes Open Mindedness) is the ability to weigh up different perspectives. Open minded people are open to hearing all perspectives, willing to find evidence which is contrary (the opposite) to their own beliefs and to weigh up all the evidence fairly when making a decision.

Other words associated to Judgement: broad-minded, open to, impartial, open mindedness

Ideas for how to practice Judgement:

- a) When solving your next problem write down all the possible solutions and ways which you could address it, then write down the pros and cons of each before making up your mind.
- b) Next time a friend is telling you about a difficulty help them to weigh up and examine the different viewpoints, or offer an alternative viewpoint.
- c) Become aware of when your own judgements are around, and challenge yourself to consider different solutions.
- d) Spend time with someone who has different views to you and practice being open-minded to their views, experiences- how does this affect you?

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'judgement' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show judgement in your day to day life?

Love of Learning

Love of learning describes the way in which a person approaches new information, new skills and topics- people with this strength experience these novelties positively, with enjoyment. Love of learning is associated to motivation, with people more able to persist through challenges and obstacles which might arise.

Ideas for how to practice Love of Learning

- a) Look up something you don't know about and read about it.
- b) Deliberately learn five new words, including their meaning and try and use them in the coming week.
- c) Sign up to a free online course and take part in it.
- d) Follow the news/current affairs via TV or newspapers.
- e) Visit your local library/information centre and see what local events are coming up.
- f) Using skills and knowledge you have, sign up to volunteer and practice using them in a new way.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'love of learning' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show love of learning in your day to day life?

Perspective

Perspective is the ability to give advice and weigh up information from different standpoints. People with the strength of perspective think about the meaning in life and they are often seen as those who give guidance to others.

Other words associated with Perspective: Balance, Proportion, Wisdom

Ideas for how to practice Perspective

- a) Reflect and weigh up your future actions or plans.
- b) Connect your beliefs with your emotions
- c) If someone asks, and only once you have listened carefully to them, offer your advice. Ask for advice from that person in the near future.
- d) Become a mentor for someone.
- e) Seek the perspectives of others, and also spend time thinking on your own.
- f) Think of the last few decisions you made- what led you to make the decisions you did?

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'perspective' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show perspective in your day to day life?

Bravery

Bravery falls under the virtue category of Courage. Brave individuals take action in spite of how they might feel, what others might think or what risks might be involved. A person can be physically brave (in what they do), psychologically brave (confronting different aspects of themselves) or morally brave (speaking out for what is right or what they believe in).

Other words associated to Bravery: Courage, Valorous, Lion-hearted,

Ideas for how to practice Bravery:

- a) Challenge something you don't agree with.
- b) Do something which you are afraid of.
- c) Report an injustice, abuse or unethical action.
- d) Confront a situation which you might not normally speak out against.
- e) Act in a way which is true to yourself, even if others do not agree.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'bravery' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show bravery in your day to day life?

Perseverance

People with the strength of perseverance continue in the pursuit of their goals despite challenges and difficulties and discouragement. In doing so they demonstrate dedication, focus, patience and the mental strength to 'finish what they start'.

Other words associated with perseverance: Doggedness, Persistence, Dedication, Tenacity.

Ideas for how to practice Perseverance:

- a) Keep a to-do list and regularly keep it updated.
- b) Set a goal and work towards it until it is complete.
- c) Finish something that you have already started (it might be something you haven't got round to finishing yet).
- d) Think about challenges you have had in your life and how you overcame them- write these things down.
- e) Buy a small plant and nurture it so it grows to be healthy.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'perseverance' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show perseverance in your day to day life?

Honesty

People who are honest live their lives in a genuine and authentic way, they are open and take ownership of their thoughts, feelings and beliefs. “What you see is what you get”, they are people who are straightforward and who try not to mislead others.

Other words associated with Honesty: Sincere, genuine, integrity, truthful, authenticity

Ideas for how to practice Honesty

- a) Speak the truth, avoid telling lies, even small ones.
- b) When you are asked for advice or feedback, be fair but honest.
- c) Let yourself be guided by your true thoughts and feelings about a situation and notice what effect this has.
- d) Honour your commitments, if you have said you will do something then try and do it.
- e) Try and present yourself to others in a way which feels authentic to you.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'honesty' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show honesty in your day to day life?

Zest

People who have the strength of zest approach their experiences in life with energy and enthusiasm. They approach life whole-heartedly and as an adventure, full of excitement.

Other words associated with Zest: Vitality, Energy, Animated.

Ideas for how to practice Zest:

- a) Exercise regularly and notice how it affects your energy levels.
- b) Do something active which you haven't tried before or done for a while.
- c) Watch a film about new life experiences or adventure.
- d) Improve your sleep habits so that you get a better night's rest.
- e) Do something spontaneously.
- f) Call a friend and reminisce about old times.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'zest' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show zest in your day to day life?

Love

People with the strength of Love value the closeness of relations with others, particularly where there is caring and sharing reciprocated. Love can take different forms; intimate love (between partners/couples), attachment love (like that between siblings, parents and child), companionship (between friends) and compassionate (kindness).

Other words associated to love: cherish, affection, tenderness.

Ideas for how to practice Love:

- a) Let those you love know it, you can express it to them in words or in other ways.
- b) Be a caring and warm listener to someone.
- c) Celebrate an occasion which is important for a close other.
- d) Spend time thinking about/reflecting on times with loved ones.
- e) Plan something with your children which they will find special.
- f) Appreciate the strengths of someone you love.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'love' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show love in your day to day life?

Kindness

People with this strength are kind and generous to others, even those they do not know well, without expectation of getting something back. They are people who have high levels of empathy for others and a sense of social responsibility and moral reasoning

Other words associated with Kindness: Generosity, Care, Compassion, Altruism.

Ideas for how to practice Kindness:

- a) Make a small gesture for someone whom you don't know (e.g. hold the door open, smile at them, let them off the bus first).
- b) Give something you don't need to someone who needs it.
- c) Offer to do something which will help a friend.
- d) Carry out five random acts of kindness in one day.
- e) Say a kind word to someone who needs it.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'kindness' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show kindness in your day to day life?

Social Intelligence

People who are socially intelligent have a good awareness of the motives and feelings of other people and can adapt to fit into different situations. They are people who can make others feel at ease through their actions and way of being, and seek to help others feel included.

Other words associated with Social Intelligence: Emotional Intelligence, Connectedness, Social Awareness.

Ideas for how to practice Social Intelligence:

- a) Help someone who seems to be unfamiliar with a situation/environment that you are more comfortable in.
- b) Practice becoming more aware of your feelings e.g. keeping a diary, reflecting on how you felt about a situation which has happened.
- c) Notice when others try something different or change and comment on it in a positive way.
- d) Acknowledge a kind or sincere gesture from someone else.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'social intelligence' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show social intelligence in your day to day life?

Teamwork

Teamwork involves working as part of a group towards a shared goal, people with this strength do particularly well working as part of a collective. They demonstrate loyalty, dedication and interest in succeeding on behalf of the collective team. Teamwork is also related to citizenship which applies the same principles in relation to the wider community.

Other words associated with Teamwork: Citizenship, Union, Partnership, Working Together

Ideas for how to practice Teamwork:

- a) Join a discussion board for your local community and join in the conversations.
- b) Take part in a group discussion/activity.
- c) Offer to volunteer for a local event.
- d) Join a local sports team.
- e) Work side by side with others on a small project.
- f) Take part in a community activity; either by attending, donating, participating, volunteering, helping to organise.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'teamwork' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show teamwork in your day to day life?

Fairness

Fairness is treating everyone equally and involves an ability to make thoughtful and reasoned moral judgements, and to be able to put yourself in others shoes and be compassionate towards them. People with the strength of fairness are guided by the principles of equality and justice.

Other words associate with Fairness: Justice, Equality, Temeprate

Ideas for how to practice Fairness:

- a) If someone is being excluded or treated unfairly make an effort to involve them equally.
- b) Learn more about local ways in which social inequality issues are a problem.
- c) Reflect on how your judgements affect your likes, dislikes and actions.
- d) Volunteer or learn about an organisation that campaigns for social justice.
- e) Actively seek to find out more information about a different culture or set of beliefs so that you have a better understanding of another perspective.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'fairness' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show fairness in your day to day life?

Leadership

Leaders are able to define and establish a common goal or direction which they motivate others to work towards with them. Leaders are able to encourage others to get things done, whilst maintaining harmony and motivation within the group, they are good organizers who are able to communicate their vision or end-point to others so they feel included.

Other words associated with Leadership: Guidance

Ideas for how to practice Leadership:

- a) Take the lead on planning an activity with friends (an outing, a meal, a walk)
- b) Organise an event for a member of your family.
- c) Within a group offer to take a leadership role in a specific task.
- d) Read about a leader who inspires you and think about the qualities they demonstrate.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'leadership' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show leadership in your day to day life?

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is being able to put aside the negative feelings or actions we may have in relation to past transgressions (e.g. holding a grudge, feeling angry). Forgiveness is not forgetting or accepting an event or action, but choosing to give people a second chance, and to accept the shortcomings of others.

Other words associated with Forgiveness: Mercy

Ideas for how to practice Forgiveness

- a) Evaluate your emotions before and after forgiving someone.
- b) Think of someone whom you have wronged recently and put yourself in their shoes to see their perspective.
- c) Think of someone whom you hold a grudge against, and imagine what it would be like to forgive them.
- d) Reflect on how you respond when people offend you, would you want to change this in future? If so, how could you respond?

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'forgiveness' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show forgiveness in your day to day life?

Humility

People who have the strength of humility do not regard themselves as special or in need of special attention, they recognise the value their modesty and let their strengths and achievements speak for themselves. People who show humility are able to accept their limitations and keep their accomplishments in perspective.

Other words associated with Humility: Modesty, Reservedness, Humble

Ideas for how to practice Humility:

- a) Admit your mistakes and apologise for them when necessary.
- b) Be prepared to learn from anybody in any situation.
- c) Notice if you speak more than others in a group situation.
- d) Give others space to speak about themselves and their accomplishments.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'humility' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show humility in your day to day life?

Prudence

Prudence is being careful and cautious about what you say, do and the choices you make. People who are prudent are thoughtful in their plans whether short or long-term and demonstrate practical wisdom in the way they live their life. People who are prudent do not take undue risk and ‘think before they act’.

Other words associated with Prudence: Caution, Carefulness, Foresight

Ideas for how to practice Prudence:

- a) Think before speaking- practice doing this regularly and notice the effect.
- b) Leave ten minutes extra time for any journey you are completing.
- c) Carefully weigh up the different options before making a decision.
- d) Visualize the consequence of a decision you are making in one or five year’s time.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of ‘prudence’ (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show prudence in your day to day life?

Self-Regulation

People whose strength is self-regulation consciously control what they feel and do in order to achieve their goals. Self-regulation is associated to having a strong sense of discipline and being able to monitor and manage instinctive responses and impulses.

Other words associated with Self-Regulation: Self-control,

Ideas for how to practice Self-Regulation:

- a) Set yourself a goal for not using your phone or watching TV and stick to it.
- b) The next time you feel upset, take a step back before acting or responding to it.
- c) When you get an urge to snack try and resist, have a drink of water and notice if you are still hungry.
- d) Set goals to improve your everyday living (e.g., room cleaning, laundry, doing dishes, cleaning your desk) and make sure you complete the tasks.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'self-regulation' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show self-regulation in your day to day life?

Appreciation of Beauty

People who appreciate beauty are able to experience awe, satisfaction and richness from everyday experiences which surround them. Three types of beauty which people with this strength are responsive to are; physical beauty (it can relate to any of the senses we have), skill or talent or excellence (e.g. watching a gymnast, ballet performer or artist at work) and moral beauty (virtual goodness which inspire the person e.g. observing kind acts/generosity).

Other words associated with Appreciation of Beauty: Wonder, Awe, Elevation

Ideas for how to practice Appreciation of Beauty:

- a) When you are out for a walk notice the natural beauty which is around you.
- b) Do something which makes your surroundings more beautiful (e.g. place flowers in a room, arrange it so the light catches and reflects on something colourful, hang a picture).
- c) Notice the actions of others which inspire and elevate you.
- d) Notice how other people around you appreciate beauty through their actions, gestures, words or interests.
- e) Take photographs of beautiful things which you appreciate.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'appreciation of beauty' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show appreciation of beauty in your day to day life?

Gratitude

Gratitude is an awareness and appreciation of the good things that happen to you and not taking them for granted. People who are grateful acknowledge the good things in their life, and the source of them as outside of themselves and take time to express their thanks for these things.

Other words associated with Gratitude: Thankfulness, Appreciation

Ideas for how to practice Gratitude:

- a) Express your gratitude to someone whom you haven't told before.
- b) Select one small yet important thing that you take for granted. Work on being mindful of this thing in the future.
- c) Write a note to express thanks to someone who has helped you, being specific about what they contributed that you are grateful for.
- d) Set aside at least ten minutes every day to savour a pleasant experience
- e) Write down three things which you are grateful for everyday, try and be specific.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'gratitude' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show gratitude in your day to day life?

Hope

Hope is linked to optimism and a future oriented way of thinking that things will turn out well in the future, and leads people to expect the best from themselves and others.

Other words associated with Hope: Optimism, Future-mindedness

Ideas for how to practice Hope:

- a) Recall a situation when you or someone close to you overcame a difficult obstacle and succeeded.
- b) Visualize a goal you would like to have achieved in the future.
- c) Read an inspirational story.
- d) Spend time with optimistic and future-minded people, particularly when facing a setback.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'hope' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show hope in your day to day life?

Humour

Humour involves the ability to make other laugh, smile and play. People with this strength enjoy bringing a smile to others and can often see the lighter side of life which allows them to sustain a good mood.

Other words associated with Humour: Playfulness, Cheerfulness

Ideas for how to practice Humour:

- a) Laugh a lot.
- b) Watch a film or TV programme which you find funny
- c) Learn new jokes and tell people you know.
- d) When you get the chance, dress up in fancy dress.
- e) Be friends with someone who has great sense of humour.

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'humour' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show humour in your day to day life?

Spirituality

Spirituality is the belief or being part of something which is bigger and more all-encompassing than what is simply seen around you, a higher purpose or meaning. For those who are spiritual, their beliefs strongly influence and shape their actions and are a source of comfort and strength. It can include religious beliefs but is not limited to this and includes any source of faith or spirituality a person may have.

Other words associated with Spirituality: Faith, Purpose, Meaning, Religiosity

Ideas for how to practice Spirituality:

- a) Practice meditation/ mindfulness
- b) Spend time thinking about how your life experiences have influenced and shaped you.
- c) Spend some time every day in at least one activity that connects you to a sense of being part of something much bigger than yourself. Practice a religion or belief that you have with others who share that.
- d) Connect with people and organisations that enhance your signature strengths

What other ideas do you have for things you could do to use this strength?

What comes to mind when you think of 'spirituality' (it might be a song, film, book, quote, image, saying...)

How do you already show spirituality in your day to day life?
