

Exploring Character Strengths

Exploring Character Strengths can be used to help you recognize your personal character strengths.

Your strengths are your positive traits and characteristics. They lead you to act, want, and feel ways that benefit both you and others.

Broadly, they fall into larger categories that are linked to six greater 'virtues'.

- **Wisdom:** Describing your cognitive strengths, these relate to seeking, gaining, and applying knowledge.
- **Humanity:** These interpersonal strengths encompass attending to, caring, and being close to others.
- **Courage:** Emotional character strengths that involve willpower and tenacity to achieve goals and overcome adversity.
- **Justice:** Civic strengths that relate to your role in society and community.
- **Temperance:** Strengths such as humility and self-regulation that involve restraint from excess.
- **Transcendence:** Spirituality, appreciation of beauty, and other strengths that connect you to 'the bigger picture' and provide purpose.

As you work through this exercise, reflecting on past experiences and events, the goal is to identify when and where you've put your strengths into action, helping you shine and experience you, at your best.

Instructions

These ten questions consider your whole lifetime, from when you were a child and up until the current day.

Use them to spot your signature strengths, as well as those you might have underrated, so that you can more consciously utilize them in your everyday life.

Exploring Your Character Strengths

1. As a child, what were your favorite pastimes? What activities brought you joy?
2. Reflect back on your happiest memories when you were a preschooler, or before you turned five. What were you doing? How did you feel at the time?
3. What was one of your proudest achievements during elementary school? What made you feel confident? Accomplished?
4. During this time, what was your favorite thing about yourself?
5. As a teenager, what are you particularly proud of having overcome? How did you deal with that struggle, and how did you feel afterward?

6. What did you particularly enjoy doing well? What feelings did you experience then, and looking back now?
7. In the past, what activities have always made you feel like you are being 'true to yourself'?
8. What aspects of your current job, or your life in general, do you feel you carry out particularly well? What emotions do you experience at the time?
9. Looking back on the past five years, what are some ways that you're proud of having grown?
10. How do you most enjoy spending your leisure time? How would you spend it, if you could do anything? How would that make you feel?

References:

- Niemiec, R. M. (2014). *Mindfulness and Character Strengths: A Practical Guide to Flourishing*. MA: Hogrefe.