



**THE EVEREST** *Leadership Academy*

## Character Strengths Matter

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## Introduction

- How can you live a full life?
  - Leverage your character strengths
- What are character strengths?
  - The components of a good life
  - Elements of strong and virtuous behavior
  - Referred to as one's signature strengths
- Be more concerned with your character than your reputation because your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are



## Exploring Character Strengths

### 1. Appreciation –

- Ability to find, recognize, and take pleasure in the existence of goodness in the physical and social worlds
  
- Actions to build appreciation:
  - Every day – notice one instance of natural beauty
  - Weekly - appreciate the beauty of positive human behavior
  - Notice how others appreciate beauty and excellence



## 2. Bravery –

- Ability to do what needs to be done, despite fear
  - Courage – the will to take action despite fear
  - Fear – holds us back from actions that would make life rich and rewarding
  - A balancing act – when and how to act
- Actions to build bravery:
  - Respectful of other opinions without backing down from yours
  - Don't keep questions inside merely because they are hard to express
  - Identify areas in which you shy away from confrontations
  - Collect stories of bravery in everyday life situations

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### 3. Creativity –

- Ability to generate original solutions
  - Having creative confidence to meet life’s challenges and problems helps us avoid feeling helpless
  
- Various actions to build creativity:
  - Weekly – define one original idea in your area of interest
  - Read about famous creative people
  - Look for creative ways to spend more time at tasks you do best



#### 4. Curiosity –

- The active recognition, pursuit, and regulation of one's experiences in response to challenging opportunities
  - Openness to experience represents one's intrinsic desire for experience and knowledge - the engine of growth
  
- Actions to build curiosity:
  - Expand your knowledge in an areas of interest – books, internet,
  - Connect with a person of a different culture
  - Visit one new town, state, or country yearly
  - Get engaged in more open-minded learning experiences



## 5. Fairness –

- The product of moral judgment – the process by which people determine what is morally right, what is morally wrong, and what is morally proscribed
  - Concerned that all people get their fair share
  
- Actions that build fairness:
  - Be more forthright about your mistakes in the future
  - Foster a reputation as an “includer”
  - Self-monitor your principles of justice and fairness
  - Level the playing field
  - Be a voice for the rights of others

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## 6. Forgiveness –

- An internal state where the person lets go of resentment and does not hold grudges
  - Display forgiveness and mercy
  
- Actions that build forgiveness:
  - Don't demand a formal apology
  - Understand the offender's perspective
  - Think of ways the offender has done good deeds
  - Identify how a grudge tortures you emotionally



## 7. Gratitude –

- A sense of thankfulness
  - An awareness that one has benefited from the action of others
  
- Actions that build gratitude
  - Select one small yet important thing that you take for granted
  - Express thanks to all who have contributed to your success
  - Savor a pleasant experience



## 8. Hope –

- A stance towards the future and the goodness it might hold
  - In the face of setbacks, we should look forward to opportunity
  - Hard to imagine being truly hopeful without also being happy
  
- Actions to build hope:
  - Focus on someone who overcame an obstacle and succeeded
  - Sketch a pathway – one, five and ten years
  - When facing adversity look for where the opportunity is
  - Surround yourself with optimistic and future-minded friends



## 9. Humility –

- Not that you think less of yourself, just less of the time
  - To assess one's own mistakes and imperfections accurately
  
- Actions to build humility:
  - Resist showing off accomplishments in an arrogant way
  - Allow others to notice your skills on their own
  - Accept compliments from others humbly



## 10. Humor –

- A playful recognition and enjoyment of life's incongruities
  - Ability to see the light side of adversity and make others smile
  
- Actions to build humor:
  - Strike a balance between not taking things too seriously
  - Be friends with someone who has a great sense of humor
  - Go out with friends in casual settings and laugh together



## 11. Integrity –

- True to oneself – your internal intentions and commitments
  - Involves truthfulness and taking responsibility for one's actions
  
- Actions to build integrity:
  - Monitor every time you tell a lie
  - Monitor to catch lies of omission
  - Think and act fairly when you face your next challenge
  - Try to act in a manner that is consistent with what you say
  - Identify your area of strongest moral convictions



## 12. Kindness –

- An awareness of the needs of others and the willingness to supply those needs without expecting a return
  - It's the motivation of the act of kindness that counts
  
- Actions to build kindness:
  - Consider doing small acts of kindness for those whom you know
  - Say kinder and softer words when interacting with people
  - Share your belongings with others



## 13. Leadership –

- Involves directing group activities toward collective success, creating good relationships among group members, and preserving morale
  - Setting goals and accomplishing them
  - Executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking
  
- Actions to build leadership:
  - Encourage other leaders to emphasize fairness in their groups
  - Rotate leadership
  - Read a biography of a favorite leader
  - Emphasize problem solving



## 14. Love of Learning –

- People experience positive feelings in the process of acquiring skills, satisfying curiosity, building on existing knowledge, and/or learning something completely new
  
- Actions to build love of learning:
  - Visit museums
  - Follow an ongoing global event through newspapers, TV, internet
  - Travel to new places and blend education with leisure
  - Learn from those who have succeeded



## 15. Open-Mindedness –

- The willingness to search actively for evidence against one's favored beliefs, plans, or goals and to weigh such evidence fairly when it is available
  
- Actions to build open-mindedness:
  - Identify the last three actions that you weren't happy with
  - Ask a trusted and wise friend to appraise your judgement
  - Give yourself time to think before you act next time



## 16. Persistence –

- A voluntary continuation of a goal-directed action in spite of obstacles, difficulties, or discouragement
- In life, it's rarely about getting a chance; it's about taking a chance. You'll never be 100% sure it will work, but you can always be 100% sure doing nothing won't work.
- Actions to build persistence:
  - Set small goals weekly
  - Select a role model who exemplifies perseverance
  - Apply your energy where it is most productive
  - Setbacks are an essential ingredient of success

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## 17. Perspective –

- People with perspective and wisdom address important and difficult questions about the conduct and meaning of life
  
- Actions to build perspective:
  - Find purpose in your significant actions/decisions
  - Find someone wise
  - Offer advise, but only when asked and only after listening
  - Build a network of friends and confidants / different perspective



## 18. Prudence –

- A form of practical reasoning and self-management that helps to achieve the individual's long-term goals effectively
  
- Actions to build prudence:
  - Think cautiously – very few emergencies in one's life
  - Remove all extraneous distractions
  - Visualize the future consequences of your decisions
  - Make important decisions when you are relaxed



## 19. Self-regulation –

- How a person exerts control over his or her responses
  
- Actions to build self-confidence:
  - Monitor and eliminate distractions
  - Control your emotions and focus on positive attributes
  - Create routines that you can follow through systematically
  - Do your most important tasks when you are most alert



## 20. Social Intelligence –

- Concerns one's relationships with people, including the social relationships involved in intimacy and trust, persuasion, group memberships, and political power
  
- Actions to build social intelligence:
  - Listen to your friends and siblings empathically
  - Find a positive element in a motive when someone offends you
  - Discuss emotional misunderstandings
  - Emulate the emotional skills in your friends



## 21. Teamwork –

- A strong sense of duty, works for the good of the group rather than for personal gain, is loyal to friends, and can be trusted
  
- Actions to build teamwork:
  - Volunteer community service
  - Help at least one person yearly
  - Play sports
  - Place “we” before “me”



## 22. Zest –

- Displaying enthusiasm for any and all activities
  - Mental and physical vigor
  
- Actions to build zest:
  - Do a physical activity of your choice
  - Improve your sleep hygiene
  - Think of ways to make an assignment exciting and engaging before you undertake it



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“Nearly all men / women can stand adversity,  
but if you want to test  
a person’s character, give him or her power”

Abraham Lincoln

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