

Signature Strengths Descriptions

Go to <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/> and click on “Questionnaires.” You should take the **VIA Survey of Character Strengths**. You will need to set up an account before taking the survey. This 20-25 minute exercise rank orders your signature strengths and compares your answers to the results of thousands of other people. Immediately after taking it, you will get feedback about your strengths. Listed below is a categorized list of Martin Seligman’s descriptions of each of the signature strengths. Please write your ranking for each of the categories below based on your test results.

Wisdom and Knowledge

- **Curiosity/Interest in the World:** Curiosity about the world entails openness to experience and flexibility about matters that do not fit one’s preconceptions. You do not simply tolerate ambiguity; you like it and are intrigued by it. Curiosity can either be specific (for example, only about roses) or global, a wide-eyed approach to everything. Curiosity involves actively engaging novelty. The passive absorption of information (as in the case of couch potatoes clicking their remotes) is not indicative of this strength. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Love of Learning:** You love learning new things, whether you are in a class or on your own. You enjoy school, reading, museums- anywhere and everywhere that there is an opportunity to learn. Are there domains of knowledge in which you are the expert? Is your expertise valued by people in your social circle or by the larger world? **My Ranking:** _____
- **Judgment/Critical Thinking/Open-Mindedness:** Thinking things through and examining issues from multiple points of view are important aspects of who you are. You do not jump to conclusions, and you rely on solid evidence to make your decisions. By judgment, one means the exercise of sifting through information objectively and rationally. Judgment, in this case, is synonymous with critical thinking. The opposite of this strength is thinking in ways that favor and confirm what you already believe. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Creativity, Ingenuity, and Originality** When you are faced with something you want, are you skilled at using novel yet appropriate behaviors to reach that goal? If you are strong in creativity, you are rarely content with doing something in a conventional way. Creativity is not necessarily limited to the fine arts. This strength is also called practical intelligence, common sense, or street smarts. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Social Intelligence:** Social and personal intelligence involves the knowledge of oneself and others. You are aware of the motives and feelings of others, and you can respond well to them. Social intelligence is the ability to notice differences among others, especially concerning their moods, temperament, motivations, and intentions- and then to act upon these distinctions. Personal intelligence involves accessing your own feelings and using that knowledge to understand and guide your behavior. Another aspect of this strength is niche finding: putting oneself in settings that maximize one’s skills and interests. Have you chosen you work, your relationships, and your leisure to put your best abilities into play every day, if possible? **My Ranking:** _____

- **Perspective Wisdom:** The most mature strength in this category, perspective is close to wisdom itself. Perspective involves a superior level of knowledge and judgment. Others seek you out to draw on your experience to help them solve problems and gain perspective for themselves. You have a way of looking at the world that makes sense to others and yourself. Wise people are the experts about the most important and difficult questions in life. People with perspective are aware of broad patterns of meaning in their lives, their own strengths and weaknesses, and the necessity of contributing to their society. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Bravery and Valor:** You do not shrink from threat, challenge, pain, or difficulty. Valor is more than bravery under fire, when one's physical well-being is threatened. It refers as well to intellectual or emotional stances that are unpopular, difficult, or dangerous. Fearlessness, boldness, and rashness are not valor. Valor is facing danger despite fear. The brave person is able to resist the behavioral response of flight and face the fearful situation, despite the discomfort produced by the situation. The notion of valor has broadened over history from battlefield courage or physical courage. It now includes moral courage and psychological courage. Moral courage involves taking stands that you know are unpopular, regardless of the consequences. Rosa Parks taking a front seat on an Alabama bus in the 1950s is an American example. Corporate or governmental whistle-blowing is another. Psychological courage includes the ability to face serious ordeals and persistent illness without the loss of dignity. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Industry, Diligence, and Perseverance:** Perseverance involves possessing the mental strength that is necessary to continue striving for one's goals in the face of obstacles and setbacks. The industrious person takes on difficult projects and finishes them with few complaints. Diligent people do what they say they will do and sometimes more, never less. The broader and more ambitious one's goals are, the more necessary perseverance is in order to achieve them. At the same time, perseverance does not involve the obsessive pursuit of unattainable goals. The truly industrious person is flexible, realistic, and not perfectionistic. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Honesty, Authenticity, and Genuineness:** You are an honest person, not only by speaking the truth but by living your life genuinely and authentically. You are down to earth and without pretense; you are a "real" person. Honesty and genuineness mean more than just telling the truth to others. It also means that you represent yourself—your intentions and commitments—in a sincere fashion, through your words and actions. **My Ranking:** _____

Humanity and Love

- **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. The kindness category encompasses various ways of relating to others. At times, the interests of others may override your own immediate wishes and needs. Are there other people—family members, friends, fellow students, or even strangers—for whom you assume responsibility? Empathy and sympathy are useful components of this strength. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Capacity to Love and Be Loved:** You value close and intimate relations with others, particularly those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated. Do the people that you have deep and sustained feelings about feel the same way about you? If so, this strength is present in your life. This strength is more than romance. Love can be expressed toward those we depend on and toward those who depend on us. This strength allows people to put their trust in others and make them a priority in making decisions. They experience a sense of deep contentment from their devotion. **My Ranking:** _____

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Justice

- **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 the group. Do you pull your own weight? Do you value the group goals and purposes, even when they differ from your own? Do you respect those who are rightfully in positions of authority, like teachers or coaches? The strength of citizenship is manifested through a sense of social belonging and civic responsibility. Good citizens are not blindly obedient, and when necessary they strive to change their groups for the better.

My Ranking: _____

- **Fairness, Equity, and Justice:** You do not let your personal feelings bias your decisions about other people. You give everyone a chance. Are you guided in your day-to-day actions by larger principles or morality? Do you take the welfare of others, even those that you do not know personally, as seriously as your own? Can you easily set aside personal prejudices? True fairness incorporates both a respect for moral guidelines and a compassionate approach to caring for others. This strength is applicable at all levels of society, from everyday interactions to international issues of social justice.

My Ranking: _____

- **Leadership:** You excel at organizing and executing group activities. The effective leader maintains good relations among group members while accomplishing tasks. Strong leadership skills are useful in a wide range of fields, including schools, the workplace, athletics, clubs, faith-based groups, and government. **My Ranking:** _____

- **Self-Control and Self-Regulation:** You can easily hold your desires, needs, and impulses in check when it is appropriate. When something bad happens, can you regulate your emotions? Can you repair and neutralize your negative feelings? Can you remain optimistic even in a trying situation? Self-regulating individuals are able to control instinctive responses such as aggression and impulsivity. This strength can apply both to resisting temptations, such as when a dieter avoids sugary foods, and to initiating actions, such as when someone gets up early to exercise. **My Ranking:** _____

- **Caution, Prudence, and Discretion:** You are a careful person. You do not say or do things that you might later regret. Prudent people think before embarking on a course of action. Prudent individuals are far-sighted and deliberative. They are good at setting aside immediate gratification for the sake of longer-term success. Discrete individuals are able to maintain confidences when appropriate. They know how to handle sensitive individuals or situations. **My Ranking:** _____

- **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. You are unpretentious. Humble people are honest with themselves about their own limitations and the fallibility of their own opinions. They are open to advice and assistance from others.

My Ranking: _____

Transcendence

- **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence:** Individuals with an appreciation for beauty feel a sense of awe at the scenes and patterns around them. You appreciate beauty, excellence, and skill in all domains: nature, art, mathematics, athletics, science, and everyday things. When intense, it is accompanied by awe and wonder. This strength allows people to experience satisfaction and richness in everyday experiences. **My Ranking:** _____

- **Gratitude:** You are aware of the good things that happen to you, and you never take them for granted. You always take the time to express your thanks. Gratitude is an appreciation of someone else's excellence in moral character. As an emotion, it is a sense of wonder, thankfulness, and appreciation for life itself. We are grateful when people do well by us, but can also be more generally grateful for good acts and good people. Gratitude can also be directed toward impersonal and non-human sources (e.g., divine beings, nature, and animals) but it cannot be directed toward the self.
My Ranking: _____
- **Hope, Optimism, and Future-Mindedness:** Hope, optimism, and future-mindedness are a family of strengths that represent a positive stance toward the future. You are hopeful about the future, and you plan and work hard order to achieve your goals. This strength leads people to expect the best of themselves and others. **My Ranking:** _____
- **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 of things. Your beliefs shape your actions and are a source of comfort to you. Do you derive meaning and purpose from your belief in a higher power? Spirituality provides an awareness of the good things in life and comfort in the face of adversity. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Forgiveness and Mercy:** You forgive those who have done you wrong. You always give people a second chance. Mercy is a guiding value in your life. When people forgive, their thoughts and actions towards the transgressor become more positive (e.g., benevolent, kind, or generous) and less negative. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Humor and Playfulness:** You like to laugh and bring smiles to the faces of others. You can easily see the lighter side of life. Individuals with this strength find things to be cheerful about rather than letting adversity get them down. Humor does not necessarily refer just to telling jokes, but rather to a playful and imaginative approach to life. **My Ranking:** _____
- **Zest, Enthusiasm, and Energy:** Zest is an approach to life that is marked by an appreciation for liveliness, excitement, and energy. An energetic person lives life as an adventure to be approached whole-heartedly. Do you throw yourself, body and soul, into the activities you undertake? Do you wake up in the morning looking forward to the day? Is the passion that you bring to activities infectious?
My Ranking: _____

Source: Seligman, M. (2002). *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (pp. 378-449). New York: Free Press.

What were your top three strengths?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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