

25 Character Strengths

That Lead To Happy, Engaged, And Meaningful Lives

1. **Zest:** approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated
2. **Grit:** finishing what one starts; completing something despite obstacles; **a combination of persistence and resilience**
3. **Self-control:** regulating what one feels and does; being self-disciplined
4. **Optimism:** believing that good things are possible
5. **Gratitude:** being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen
6. **Social intelligence:** being aware of motives and feelings of other people and oneself
7. **Curiosity:** taking an interest in experience for its own sake; finding things fascinating
8. **Love:** valuing close relationships with others; being close to people
9. **Hope:** expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it
10. **Humor:** liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing a light side
11. **Creativity:** coming up with new and productive ways to think about and do things
12. **Open-mindedness:** examining things from all sides and not jumping to conclusions
13. **Love of learning:** mastering new skills and topics on one's own or in school
14. **Wisdom:** being able to provide good advice to others
15. **Bravery:** not running from threat, challenge, or pain; speaking up for what's right
16. **Integrity:** speaking the truth and presenting oneself sincerely and genuinely
17. **Kindness:** doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
18. **Citizenship:** working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group
19. **Fairness:** treating all people the same; giving everyone a fair chance
20. **Leadership:** encouraging a group (of which one is a valued member) to accomplish
21. **Forgiveness:** forgiving those who've done wrong; accepting people's shortcomings
22. **Modesty:** letting one's victories speak for themselves; *not* seeking the spotlights
23. **Prudence/Discretion:** being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks
24. **Appreciation of beauty:** noticing and appreciating all kinds of beauty and excellence
25. **Spirituality:** having beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe

Source: Peterson, C. and Seligman, M.E.P. (2004) Character strengths and virtues. Oxford: Oxford UP.

The 7 Most Important Strengths

*** especially likely to predict life satisfaction and high achievement***

1. ZEST

- Actively participates
- Shows enthusiasm
- Invigorates others

2. GRIT - building block of outstanding achievement

- Finishes whatever he or she begins
- Tries very hard even after experiencing failure
- Works independently with focus

3. SELF-CONTROL

a. SCHOOL WORK

- Comes to class prepared
- Pays attention and resists distractions
- Remembers and follows directions
- Gets to work right away rather than procrastinating

b. INTERPERSONAL

- Remains calm even when criticized or otherwise provoked
- Allows others to speak without interruption
- Is polite to adults and peers
- Keeps temper in check

4. OPTIMISM

- Gets over frustrations and setbacks quickly
- Believes that effort will improve his or her future

5. GRATITUDE

- Recognizes and shows appreciation for others
- Recognizes and shows appreciation for his/her opportunities

6. SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

- Able to find solutions during conflicts with others
- Demonstrates respect for feelings of others
- Knows when and how to include others

7. CURIOSITY

- Is eager to explore new things
- Asks and answers questions to deepen understanding
- Actively listens to others

Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., & Kelly, D.R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 9, 1087-1101.