

KINDNESS

Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them.

BUILD IT:

RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS: Each day, do something kind for another person without anticipation of being thanked or rewarded.

SPEAK KINDLY: It is easy to get caught up in a swirl of negativity when you are stressed or overwhelmed. Challenge yourself to diffuse that negativity by only speaking kindly to and about others.

LOVE OF LEARNING

Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally.

BUILD IT:

GROW YOUR MIND: Take 5 minutes each day to learn something new. Check-in on current events or look up the meaning of a word you don't know.

LEARN NEW FACES: Life is full of familiar faces, but how well do you know the people around you? Get to know 2-3 new people's name and what they really enjoy doing.

PRUDENCE

Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that could be regretted.

BUILD IT:

WEIGH THE OPTIONS: When facing a difficult decision, list the pros and cons of each option. Carefully examine your choices before making a decision.

UNCOVER OBSTACLES: When planning an activity, stop and consider potential obstacles that could get in your way. Consider obstacles you've encountered in the past.

SPIRITUALITY

Having strong beliefs about a higher purpose & meaning in the universe; knowing where one fits in the world.

BUILD IT:

CONNECT TO YOUR WHY: Ask yourself: "Everything I do is to ____ so that ____." Write down your answer and keep it someplace visible as a reminder to your purpose.

LIVE YOUR PURPOSE: Do an activity that directly connects to your sense of purpose. If you find meaning in helping others, volunteer at a local organization.

LEADERSHIP

Encouraging a group to get things done and at the same time maintain good relations within the group.

BUILD IT:

LEAD WITH LOVE: Organize something special for individuals who are important in your life. Take the lead role in identifying the activities and activating people to help you get all the pieces in place.

UNDER AND OVERUSE: Pay attention to how your strengths show up in a leadership role. How are they received by others? Are you over or underusing?

PERSEVERANCE

Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of actions despite obstacles; joy in completing tasks.

BUILD IT:

CHECK IT OFF: Create a to-do list each day and update it when a task is completed. Try to get as many items as you can crossed off by the end of the day.

PLAN AHEAD: Spend 30-40 minutes thinking through what you want to achieve in the next 6-12 months. Identify key steps to help you prioritize your activities.

SELF-REGULATION

Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's emotions.

BUILD IT:

FIRST THINGS FIRST: At the start of each day, identify the most important things you have to complete. Do these things first when self-regulation is the highest.

SETTING SMALL GOALS: Set a small goal each day and complete it right away. It can be scheduling a meeting, doing a load of laundry, or calling a friend you've fallen out of touch with.

TEAMWORK

Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share.

BUILD IT:

APPRECIATIVE TEAM: When interacting with team members, practice appreciating the contributions that each person makes.

POSITIVE TEAM: Encourage and model positive self-talk about your team (not yourself). Fostering positive feelings about one's team can help fuel teamwork.

LOVE

Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated.

BUILD IT:

ACT OF LOVE: Do one act of love each day for a coworker, friend or family member. Let them know they are valued and respected.

DOUBLE THE LOVE: What's better than doing something you love? Doing something you love with someone you love! Ask an individual you care for to do something you both like to do together.

PERSPECTIVE

Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to others.

BUILD IT:

GET THE FULL PICTURE: When faced with a challenging decision, ask yourself "in what context, for what outcome" to get the full perspective.

SHARE YOUR WISDOM: Share an idea or thought in each interaction you have. Start by listening carefully, then share your perspective.

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations.

BUILD IT:

TAP INTO POSITIVITY: Notice when others are really engaged or excited. Find ways you recreate a similar positive experience for those around you.

BRUSH UP ON BODY LANGUAGE: Watch a few minutes of a TV show while on mute. Write down the different emotions that are conveyed through body language.

ZEST

Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway, feeling alive and activated.

BUILD IT:

WALK FOR ZEST: Take 5 minutes each day for a brisk walk to replenish your energy. Even if it is just a short distance, get up and be active.

ENERGY BOOST: Make a list of activities that give you energy, like eating a healthy snack, taking a walk or listening to upbeat music. When you start to feel drained, do an energy activity on your list.

A pocket-sized guide to

Character Strengths



Character strengths are the **positive parts** of your personality that describe you at your best. There are 24 character strengths. You have all 24, but there are some that you use most regularly, your **signature strengths**.

Learn your unique strengths by taking the VIA Character Strengths Survey at: www.viacharacter.org.

Be the Best You!

Strengths can help you:

- Understand what gives you energy
- Connect deeply with others
- Manage conflict positively
- Feel fulfilled in your work
- Accomplish your life goals

Use this guide to better understand your strengths and how to build them!

APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE

Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various life domains.

BUILD IT:

CONNECT WITH NATURE: Take a 10 minute break to walk outside or sit under a tree. Be mindful of the everyday beauty that surrounds you.

HUNT FOR GREATNESS: Look for uplifting moments of excellence in your day that inspire you to be better.

CURIOSITY

Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake, finding subjects and topics fascinating.

BUILD IT:

ACTIVELY CURIOUS: During your next conversation, ask questions to better understand the perspectives of everyone involved.

SHIFT TO CURIOUS: When having to do an activity or task you dislike, notice at least three novel features of this activity while you do it.

GRATITUDE

Being aware and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.

BUILD IT:

DAILY THANK YOU: Create a daily gratitude habit by thanking one person each day. When thanking, be specific about their contributions and what strengths you saw in them.

GRATITUDE NOTES: Carry a notebook and record your grateful moments. At the end of each day, try to have identified at least 3 things you are grateful for.

HUMILITY

Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is.

BUILD IT:

BE A "HUMILITARIAN:" Identify 1-2 people who exemplify humility. Notice their actions and demeanor. Try to incorporate one observation into your own actions.

RECALL HUMILITY: Remember and write down a time you experienced humility. Explore the causes and results of this strength. Make sure the experience is genuine and not self-deprecatory.

BRAVERY

Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right.

BUILD IT:

OUTCOME OVER FEAR: When pushing yourself to take on a brave act, focus on the beneficial outcome of being brave rather than your fears.

CALL OUT BRAVERY: When you do or observe a brave act, make a point to communicate that bravery. Labeling bravery increases psychological bravery.

FAIRNESS

Treating people according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions.

BUILD IT:

AVOID THE BLAME GAME: Everyone makes mistakes and it's easy to assign blame. If you feel yourself wanting to blame someone, think about how you may have contributed to the mistake.

SPEAK UP: Look for opportunities to act as an ally to friends or even strangers who experience unfairness. Investigate tips and articles on how to be a good ally.

HONESTY

Speaking the truth but more broadly, presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way.

BUILD IT:

WALK YOUR TALK: Practice showing up as a friend in the same way you would like your friends to act with you. Model behaviors you'd like to see from others.

DO WHAT YOU SAY: Practice integrity, part of honesty, by honoring your commitments. Be careful to only make commitments you can keep.

HUMOR

Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making jokes.

BUILD IT:

STARTING YOUR DAY LAUGHING: Start your day watching a funny video, reading a favorite cartoon, or talking to someone who always makes you smile.

LAUGH IT OFF: When faced with a disappointing setback, look for the parts that made you smile or laugh.

CREATIVITY

Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things.

BUILD IT:

EXPLORE SOLUTIONS: When facing a challenge, push yourself to identify 7 different solutions. Creativity starts to emerge if we push beyond the obvious.

CREATIVITY BREAK: Set 5-10 min aside each day to focus on a creative activity. Try sketching your ideas, writing a poem, or choreographing your own dance.

FORGIVENESS

Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance.

BUILD IT:

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK: We are often hardest on ourselves; commit to forgiving yourself for one thing a day; it might be a mistake or unkept commitment.

PRACTICE EMPATHY: Frustrated with someone? Explore different perspectives of where they might be coming from. What would make you respond similarly?

HOPE

Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing you can bring about a good future.

BUILD IT:

BEST POSSIBLE SELF: Describe a future in which you bring your full self into whatever you do and fully engage in life's activities. Recall this throughout the day.

HOPEFUL PATHS: Think about one of your goals. Brainstorm 3 different pathways to get there and 5 reasons why you will be able to reach it.

JUDGMENT/CRITICAL THINKING

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; changing one's mind.

BUILD IT:

NOT YOUR SHOES: When approaching a disagreement, place yourself in someone else's shoes and assume their perspective. Ask questions to better understand the other viewpoint before expressing your own.

SEEK OPPOSITION: Actively seek information that runs counter to your own personal views or behaviors.

MY TOP STRENGTHS:

LEAD WITH STRENGTHS

- Identify team members' strengths and acknowledge when they are used.
- Fully engage in your own strengths and use strengths language in your communications (i.e. emails, presentations, meetings).
- Attend strengths trainings and encourage others to attend to learn more about personal strengths and the strengths of others.
- Change your NKU password to a strength or positive phrase as a reminder to lead with strengths and positivity every day.
- When caught in a downward spiral of negativity, call yourself out on it and change the thought and communication to a positive strength. Look for strengths or positivity in a negative situation.

Definitions and activities adapted from VIA Institute on Character and Ryan Niemiec's *Character Strengths Interventions* book.