

Ways to Use VIA Character Strengths

Tayyab Rashid, Ph.D., University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada

Afroze Anjum, Psych.D, Toronto District School Board, Canada

CORE VIRTUE: WISDOM & KNOWLEDGE

acquisition and use of knowledge

I. Curiosity [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: Curiosity is taking an interest in all of ongoing experience. It involves actively recognizing and pursuing challenging opportunities and seeking out new knowledge. Curiosity can be broken down into three categories: interest, novelty seeking, and openness to new experience. It is this strength that drives individuals to make discoveries and to explore the boundaries of human knowledge.

Too much: prying, snooping

Too little: boredom, disinterest, apathy

Movies:

Wondrous Oblivion (2003; UK) – The movie tells a compelling story of David, who is obsessed with cricket but struggles to play it well. Upon knowing that a neighbor is installing a cricket pitch in his backyard, David strikes a cordial relationship to learn and know more about the game.

In America (2003) - This touching family movie depicts curiosity of an Irish immigrant family trying to settle in a chaotic New York apartment. Their curiosity is packed with challenges, dangers, weirdness, as well as hopes and charm of a place where anything could happen.

October Sky (1999) – Homer Hickam, a child living in a coal mining town, seems to have no future outside of work in the mines. His curiosity is inspired by the launch of Sputnik, and with the help of some misfit friends he begins to build his own rockets. Though at first the townspeople see his passion as a waste of time, eventually they get a spot in the National Science Awards competition with a chance of winning the prize: a college scholarship.

Suggested Actions

1. Look for jobs in which you are charged with acquiring new information daily, such as journalism, research, teaching, etc... Employment of this sort can help you feel refreshed and engaged over time.
2. Expand your knowledge in an area of interest through books, journals, magazines, TV, radio, or internet, for half an hour, three times a week. Speak to an expert in this area to get recommendations for good resources.
3. Attend a function/lecture/colloquium of a culture that differs from yours. Consider how similarities and differences between this culture and your own might arise, without being judgmental toward either culture.
4. Find a person who shares your area of your interest and learn how he/she increases his/her expertise in that area. Share your knowledge by setting up weekly or biweekly lunches to discuss this interest.
5. Eat food of a different culture that you have little or no exposure to. Explore the food's cultural context and become aware of your thoughts on it. Share a meal with a friend and compare your impressions.
6. Connect with a person of a different culture and spend at least an hour, twice a month, learning about his/her culture. Be inquisitive, non-judgmental, and open about your own culture.
7. Make a list of unknowns about your favorite topic and then delve into research to answer them. Experts and friends who share your interest can be excellent resources.
8. Try things that challenge your existing knowledge and skills. Give a presentation or seminar on a topic that interests you, or simply explain it in detail to friends who are unfamiliar with it.
9. Visit at least one new town, state or country yearly. If possible, explore it on foot or by bicycle rather than by car. Try to speak to some of the local people to learn more about their community.

10. Identify factors which might have diminished your curiosity in an area and search for three new ways to rejuvenate it. Consider attending a conference, show, or meeting on the topic.
11. Get engaged in more open-ended learning experiences (i.e., making ice cream to understand physics and chemistry or taking a yoga class to understand different muscle groups). Bring a friend and compare thoughts after the experience.
12. Explore processes of nature, for at least one hour weekly, by being in the woods, park, stream, yard, etc. Write, draw, or paint in order to record your impressions and feelings.

II. Creativity [Originality, ingenuity]: Creativity is the process of using one's originality to devise novel ways to positively contribute to one's own life or the lives of others. Such originality can range from everyday ingenuity to groundbreaking work that becomes highly recognized. Creative people are able to apply their imaginations in new and surprising ways in order to solve the problems that they encounter. Traditional notions of creativity focus on artistic expression and scientific discovery, but this strength can be applied to any area of life in which obstacles can be addressed imaginatively.

Too much: oddity, weird

Too little: dullness, banality, conformity

Movies:

1. *Julia & Julia (2009)* – Amy Adams's curiosity encourages her to cook every recipe in the cookbook of acclaimed celebrity chef Julia Child. The movie depicts several strengths in addition to curiosity, creativity, self-regulation, and love of learning.
2. *Pianist (2002)* – This movie is a good illustration of character strength of creativity's role in motivating people to survive and thrive despite very challenging circumstances. Wladyslaw Szpilman, a young and talented Jewish pianist and his loving, smart and caring family are caught in the horrors of World War II Warsaw, Poland. Despite the incredible cruelty of Nazis, Szpilman, finds the subtlety and sublime of his art and creativity to survive.
3. *Shine (1996)* – This movie deals with the mental illness of David Helfgott, a brilliant pianist whose promising career is interrupted by his disorder. His passion for performance carries him through life in a mental institution and back to life as a professional musician. David's creativity is evident both in his music and in the ways he deals with the hardships in his life.
4. *Amadeus (1984)* – Antonio Salieri, a court composer for Austrian Emperor Joseph II, is torn by his feelings of admiration and jealousy for the talent of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. His dislike for Mozart's personality stands in sharp contrast to his love for the composer's glorious music, which he wishes to emulate. The movie itself showcases the magnificence of the era and the human drive for creative expression.

Suggested Actions

1. Create and refine at least one original idea weekly in an area of your interest. To get ideas, peruse existing material on the subject and think of topics that haven't been addressed.
2. Do at least one assignment weekly in a different and creative manner. If your assignments don't leave much room for creativity, work on them in a new and different environment.
3. Work on an article, essay, short story, poem, drawing, or painting in relation to your passion once a week. When you finish, look for a way to share your work with others who share your interest.
4. Offer at least one creative solution to challenges of a sibling or a friend. Practice being open to their creative ideas as well as your own.
5. Compile an original and practical list of solutions or tips that will address common challenges faced by you and your peers. Publish your list in a newspaper, newsletter, or website.
6. Look for different and creative ways to spend more time at tasks you do best. Try to incorporate them into your work or chores to make these times more enjoyable.
7. Brainstorm ideas on a challenging task with your friends. Observe the ways that they think creatively.
8. Audition for community theatre or choir. If acting and singing don't interest you, be a set designer, stagehand, or fundraiser.
9. Redesign your room or home. Rearrange furniture to open up more floor space, even if you don't buy anything new.

10. Take a pottery, photography, stained glass, sculpture or painting class. If you have skills in one of these areas, consider teaching a class.
11. Learn about an exotic and creative art such as *Feng-shui* or *Ikebana*. Get advice on where to start from friends from different cultural backgrounds.
12. Read about famous creative people and identify what made them unique. Think about the unique aspects of your own life and how you could channel them for creative purposes.
13. Use leftovers (food, stationery and such) to make new products. Consider the artistic or practical uses for items before you throw them away.
14. Design a personalized card instead of buying one. Write something personal inside, such as a description of when you first met the recipient.

III. Open-mindedness [judgment, critical thinking]: Open-mindedness is thinking things through and examining them from all sides. It involves a willingness to consider evidence against one's own beliefs, plans, and goals, and to revise them if necessary. Open-minded people faithfully adhere to the standard of considering evidence fairly. This strength counteracts the pervasive "my-side bias" that prevents many people from considering views other than their own.

Too much: cynicism, scepticism

Too little: dogmatic, unreflective, unawareness, rigid and simplistic view of events, endorsement of authoritarian, dogmatic, and ethnocentric ideas

Movies:

1. *The Help* (2011) – Story of three extraordinary women in Mississippi during 1960s who establish an unlikely friendship circled around a secret writing project aimed to challenges social mores and to open the eyes of the world. The movie display a number of other strengths such as courage, hope, kindness and persistence.
2. *Water* (2006, India) --This Deepa Mehta film challeges the notion of widow being forced to live in a impoverished condition in a temple in the holy city of Varansi. It is excellent depiction of struggle to open eyes of a society to break social restriction and outcast status given to widows.
3. *The Matrix* (1999) – This protagonist of this movie, a computer hacker learns how he is trapped by artificial intelligence. He display open-mindedness by questioning this illusion and exploring meaning of reality. The movie also has two sequels.
4. *No Man's Land* (2001-Bosnian) – Branko Djuric's dark satire of the conflict in the Balkans centers on the meeting of two wounded soldiers, one Serbian and one Bosnian, in the midst of a battle. Trapped in no man's land, the men are forced to confront each other as people and to see past their deeply entrenched ethnic enmity. As more and more characters become involved in the incident, more and more examples of open-mindedness become apparent.

Suggested Actions

1. -0Identify the last three actions that you weren't happy with (such as not following through with a goal) and brainstorm better alternative ideas for the future. Consider both actions and omissions.
2. Ask a trusted and wise friend to critically appraise your judgment on your last three significant actions. Promise them that you will listen to their appraisal without getting angry or defensive.
3. Play devil's advocate on an issue that you have strong opinions about. Thinking through an argument for the other side may open your mind to a new perspective, or it may make your original arguments seem more valid.
4. At least once a week, consider the common themes that exist across races and religions on an important issue. Also consider reasons why certain religions develop different views of issues.
5. Identify the last three events during which you did not think through your actions. Develop a method, such as counting to ten, to give yourself time to think before you act next time.
6. Start an activity and ask yourself -- Why? When? And how? Apply this Socratic approach to life to everyday situations and routines in order to make them seem fresh and new.
7. Attend a multi-cultural event and critically evaluate your views during and afterwards. Discuss your impressions with a person from a culture that was represented at the event.

8. Identify possible causes of past failures or disappointments. Are there any patterns? Take some time to think deeply about how can you improve.
9. When deciding about an important issue, write pros and cons and repeat them while taking breaks in between. During these breaks, think carefully about the previous point rather than thinking ahead to the next.
10. Mentor someone of a different ethnic or religious background. Remember that the mentor can learn as much from the student as the student can from the mentor.
11. Monitor whether you often find information to confirm your opinions or seek new information to expand your view. Doing this can help you keep your opinions up-to-date and well informed.
12. When you face the next challenge, first imagine the best and worst scenarios and then decide the most realistic course of action. Taking the time to do this basic planning will ultimately save you time, since you will begin acting with a goal and a method of reaching it in mind.

IV. Love of learning: Love of learning involves enthusiastically studying new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge. People with this strength enjoy the cognitive engagement of acquiring new skills or satisfying their curiosity, even when the material benefits of learning may not be immediately available. Love of learning allows people to persist in the face of frustrations and obstacles that arise during the course of education, both formal and informal.

Too much: “know it All”-ism

Too little: complacency, smugness

Movies:

1. *The Great Debaters* (2007) – Based on the true story of Professor Melvin B. Tolson, a professor at Wiley College Texas. In 1935, who inspires his students to form the school's first debate team, which went on to challenge Harvard in the national championship.
2. *Akeelah and the Bee* (2006) – Having but no choice, Akeelah, an African-American adolescent, reluctantly participates in a spelling competition to avert detention. As she succeeds, her passion to learn, spellings from Dr. Larbee, grows and she wins the National Spelling Bee. Based on the real story that took place in 1999.
3. *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) – This movie details the rise, fall, and professional resurrection of John Nash, a Nobel laureate and one of the most brilliant modern mathematicians. His life begins to deteriorate as schizophrenia blurs his reality with delusions, but he throws himself into the task of self-discovery as earnestly as he did his professional studies. Nash’s passion for knowledge and understanding is inspirational, and the fact that the movie is based on true events makes it all the more compelling.
4. *Billy Elliot* (2000) – Billy Elliot is eleven and lives with his father in a mining town in northern England. He attends boxing lessons at school for a time, but tires of the brutality and instead takes up ballet. Despite the opposition of his family and the ridicule of his friends, Billy persists in his dance studies. When his hard work earns him an audition at the Royal Ballet School, however, he must open up to his community despite their traditional mindset.

Songs: On the Road to Find Out (Cat Stevens)

Suggested Actions

1. Deliberately learn five new words, including their meaning and usage, at least twice a week. Use a dictionary, website, or word-a-day email list to generate new words.
2. Visit a new museum every month and write about new things you learned. Bring a friend or family member and listen to their impressions of the trip.
3. Read a non-fiction book monthly on a topic you find absorbing and engaging. Find others who share your interest and swap books after finishing.
4. Read and research about a topic by visiting the library at least once a week. Write one page of pragmatic ideas that can advance that field and discuss them with someone who shares your interest.
5. Converse with someone on a topic of mutual interest. Plan regular meetings for lunch or to work on projects.

6. Follow an ongoing global event through newspapers, TV or internet. Observe the differences in reporting between various sources and evaluate each critically.
7. Join a local book club. Your local library may have information on one, and if they don't, they can help you start one.
8. Attend new gallery/exhibition openings in your area. These can be a good opportunity to meet artists and exhibitors face-to-face.
9. Read aloud with your loved ones. Take turns picking the reading material in order to share your interests with others.
10. Arrange a teach-learn date with a friend, learn a skill, and teach what you are best at. Try to find a friend with very different interests so that you are exposed to something totally new.
11. Identify topics about which you can share your knowledge with your peers. Share information in a humble, conversational manner.
12. Attend seminars, workshops, and conferences in your area of interest. Make contacts with other people who share your interests and follow up with them later.
13. Travel to new places and blend education with leisure. While you are there, take a tour or visit a local museum to learn more about the local culture and history.
14. Visit local factories and laboratories to understand the process of production. Take children and observe their curiosity.

V. Perspective [wisdom]: Perspective, which is often called wisdom, is distinct from intelligence and involves a superior level of knowledge and judgment. This strength involves being able to provide wise counsel to others. It allows its possessor to address important and difficult questions about morality and the meaning of 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.

Too much: Ivory Tower, arcane, pedantic

Too little: Superficiality

Movies:

1. *Hugo* (2011) – This Martin Scorsese film about Hugo, a 12-year-old boy living in the Gare Montparnasse railway station, Paris. Hugo, displays his resourcefulness to uncover a secret his father left to him. In doing so, Hugo offers perspective on experiences with, along with his social intelligence and resilience, transforms himself and those around him.
2. *Gandhi* (1982) – This movie portrays the life of Mohandas Gandhi, who pioneered the practice of nonviolent political protest in his efforts to free India from British colonial rule. Gandhi is often held up as an example of the highest mercy and morality, and his teachings have inspired leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. Nonetheless, he lived a simple life of poverty, humility, and spirituality.
3. *The Devil's Advocate* (1997) – Kevin Lomax, a gifted but ruthless young lawyer who has never lost a case, moves to Florida to work at a powerful law firm over the objections of his wife. Taken in by his boss' captivating personality and the prestige of his work, Kevin first loses and then later regains his sense of what is most important in life.
4. *American Beauty* (1999) – Lester Burnham, a middle-aged businessman trapped in his own misery, undergoes a rapid transformation after meeting the teenage boy living next door. Though Lester's rediscovery of his youthful passion throws his neighborhood into turmoil, he ultimately comes to realize what is truly important in his life.

Songs: My Way (Frank Sinatra), Strength, Courage, Wisdom, The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill (Lauryn Hill)

Suggested Actions

1. Explain the broad outlook of your life in one or two sentences as a weekly exercise. Monitor whether temporary events have an impact on your overall perspective. If you do see this pattern, brainstorm on ways that your perspective remains constant through daily joys and struggles.
2. Find purpose in the last five of your significant actions/decisions. Recall what motivated you to make the decisions that you made.
3. Find someone wise (either someone still alive or someone who has passed on), read or watch a film on his or her life, and identify how their life can guide your decisions and actions. Consider the philosophy that the person followed and compare it to your own.
4. Read quotes of wisdom and re-write them as small, practical steps for yourself. Leave them as notes for yourself in locations where you deal with challenges, such as an office desk or by a phone.
5. Offer advice, but only when asked and only after listening empathically to the seeker. Ask for advice from that person in return in the near future.
6. Become aware of the moral implications and potential consequences of your future actions. Take these possibilities into consideration without being driven to inaction by them.
7. Reflect on the moral implications of scientific endeavors that directly affect your life. Think of who that you know would benefit from or be harmed by contentious issues in science.
8. Pursue endeavors that have a significant impact on the world. Contribute time or resources to an international organization, or write a letter to an editor about an issue of global importance.
9. Exercise optimism and patience with tasks that challenge you most. Remember how these tasks fit into the larger scheme of things.
10. Examine a world event from historical, cultural and economic perspectives. Use sources from various groups involved in order to benefit from differing perspectives.
11. Seek a role, at least once every three months, which requires you to counsel others. Express your thanks to someone who has had an impact on your perspective in the past.
12. Schedule time when you can optimally muse, analyze, reflect, and synthesize on an issue about which you feel ambivalent. Seek the perspectives of others but also give yourself time to think on your own.
13. Connect your beliefs with your emotions by reading books or watching films of personal experiences with the issue. Put a human face on the issue and recall it when you feel your opinion getting too heated.
14. Build a network of friends and confidants with differing perspectives. Seek their council when you need expertise and offer your own perspective should they ask for it.
15. Mentor a child in your neighborhood. Remember a role model that you had as a child and try to emulate their qualities.

CORE VIRTUE: COURAGE

exercising will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

I. Bravery [valor]: Bravery is the capacity to take action to aid others in spite of significant risks or dangers. This strength allows people to avoid shrinking from the threats, challenges, or pain associated with attempting to do good works. Brave acts are undertaken voluntarily with full knowledge of the potential adversity involved. Brave individuals place the highest importance on higher purpose and morality, no matter what the consequences might be.

Too much: foolhardiness, risk taking, foolishness

Too little: debilitating fear

Movies:

1. *Milk (2008)* – A biographical film based on the life of gay rights activist and politician Harvey Milk. Movie depicts Milks' courage to be the first openly gay person to be elected to public office in California.
2. *The Kite Runner (2007)* - is a moving tale of courage of two friends Amir and Hassan whose friendship flourishes in pre-Soviet invasion Kabul in mid to late 1970s. Where Hassan displays the courage and loyalty of being faithful to Amir, Amir, ultimately overcomes his inner cowardice to rescue Hassan's son from war ravaged and Taliban ruled Afghanistan, to make things right, again.

3. *Schindler's List* (1993) – Oskar Schindler is a German businessman who sees the opportunity of cheap labor in the plight of persecuted Jews. Over the course of the movie, however, his perspective changes and he begins to use his factory as a cover for hiding refugees. His actions cost him his fortune but save over a thousand lives.
4. *Life as a House* (2001) – An architect diagnosed with terminal cancer finally faces the most difficult parts of his life: his relationships with his estranged son and ex-wife. As he rebuilds the house that contained his most painful memories, he braves the pain and uncertainty of his past in order to build a foundation for his future, no matter how short it may be.

Suggested Actions

1. Resist social or peer pressure, instead choosing to act on noble values and causes in meaningful ways. For example, you can write, speak out, participate in a protest, or join an activist organization.
2. Speak up for or write about an unpopular idea in a group. Be respectful of other opinions without backing down from yours.
3. Take small, practical steps for a constructive social change. Local volunteer organizations are an excellent resource for ways to get involved.
4. Report an injustice, abuse, blatant unethical practice, or abuse of power or resources to appropriate authorities, even if the perpetrator is someone close to you. Remember the people that you are helping by preventing further injustice.
5. Protect or stand up for someone who will not otherwise stand up for him- or herself, such as a younger sibling or a battered woman. Make them feel like they can depend on you in the future.
6. Ask difficult questions that help you and others face reality. Be gentle and kind, but don't keep questions inside merely because they are hard to express or answer.
7. Clarify your values by thinking about how best they have served you in challenging situations. Also consider ways in which your values have hindered you, and ways to change this in the future.
8. Cultivate a reputation for recognizing and appreciating brave acts that are accomplished despite challenges. Express your appreciation for other people who exhibit bravery.
9. Identify an area in which you generally shy away from confrontations. Practice the phrases, the tones, and the mannerisms that will enable you to effectively confront the situation next time.
10. Collect contemporary stories of bravery in everyday life situations. Save newspaper or magazine clippings about courageous acts.
11. Don't be afraid to be different while still being positive. Act in ways that make you feel true to your beliefs and personality.
12. Don't be afraid to befriend someone who is different. Think of ways that their strengths as a friend can compliment your own.

II. Persistence [perseverance, industriousness]: Persistence is the mental strength necessary to continue striving for one's goals in the face of obstacles and setbacks. This sort of perseverance requires dedication, focus, and patience. Persistent individuals finish what they start, persisting in the quest to achieve their goals in spite of any hardships they encounter along the way. The broader and more ambitious one's goals are, the more necessary persistence is in order to achieve them.

Too much: obsession, fixated, pursuit of unattainable goals

Too little: slackness, laziness

Movies:

1. *Life of Pi* (2010) – An epic journey of a young man to survive under open sea, who strikes an unlikely connection with beast, a ferocious Bengali Tiger. The movie displays a number of strengths from persistence, courage, spirituality, social intelligence, creativity, and hope and optimism.
2. *127 Hours* (2010) – A remarkable display of persistence and courage of Ralston, a mountain climber who becomes trapped under a boulder while canyoneering alone near Moab, Utah. Ralston, display an inspiring and gut ranching struggle to survive.

3. *Pursuit of Happiness* (2006) – Based on a true story Christopher Gardner shows exemplary persistence, hope, and courage to pursue his goals despite significant financial and relationship challenges.
4. *Aviator* (2004) – This Martin Scorsese movie tells the story of Howard Hughes’s industriousness who was one of 20th-century America's most pioneering and influential figures. Hughes made significant contributions to both the film and aviation industries. At only 25 years of age, Hughes directed the most expensive film ever made up to that point, *Hell's Angels* (1930) and then continued to test the limits of flight technology, building bigger, faster, and stronger aircrafts.
5. *The Piano* (1993) – This movie centers on the obstacles faced by a woman who voluntarily stopped speaking as a child, communicating exclusively through written notes and playing the piano. A marriage is arranged between her and a man who takes her to New Zealand and sells her instrument to a neighbor. When she is given the opportunity to earn back the piano and resume her playing, the extent of her determination becomes clear.

Also see, *Driving Bell and Butterfly* (2007, French) & *Inception* (2010)

Songs: My Way (Frank Sinatra), On the Road to Find Out (Cat Stevens)

Suggested Actions

1. Plan a big project and finish it ahead of time. Don't be deterred by unexpected obstacles along the way.
2. Select two activities that you find engaging and meaningful and give 100% to them. Try to immerse yourself so that you are totally focused.
3. Set five small goals weekly. Break them into practical steps, accomplish them on time, and monitor your progress from week to week.
4. Work harder than usual at your most important goal. Let the momentum of your productivity carry you forward.
5. Select a role model who exemplifies perseverance and determine how you can follow her/his footsteps. If this person is alive and someone you know, speak with him or her about this strength.
6. Read an inspiring quotation or poem that motivates you to achieve your goals. Write it on a card and carry it with you for when you need inspiration.
7. Seed some flowering plants early in the spring and tend them throughout the summer. Appreciate their life cycle and your role as caretaker.
8. Write your goals and aims and post them where they can inspire you regularly. Keep your list short enough that it doesn't seem overwhelming
9. Manage a challenging task from start to finish at your work. The experience will demonstrate your persistence to yourself and your co-workers.
10. Take control of at least one new situation at home or work, one that you can handle. If you fail, revise your plan but don't give up until you finish.
11. Regularly articulate your goals into specific actions. This helps you to stay motivated and persistent.
12. Keep a checklist of things to do and regularly update it. Make each item relatively simple to accomplish, so that you have the satisfaction of a shrinking list to spur you on to further progress.
13. Attend a seminar or workshop on time management. Write the key ideas down and review them weekly.
14. Share your goals with your loved ones. Let them inspire you with encouragement and advice.
15. Think about what you would like to accomplish in the next five years. Develop a road map and assess how your present skills match with your goals.
16. Be aware how to cut your losses in tasks that don't require persistence. Apply your energy where it is most productive.
17. For your next challenging task, make a realistic timeline and stick to it. Allow yourself some extra time to correct unexpected problems.

III. Integrity [authenticity, honesty]: The strength of integrity is manifested by speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way. A person of integrity is open and honest about his or her own thoughts, feelings, and responsibilities, being careful not to mislead through either action or omission. This strength allows one to feel a sense of ownership over one's own internal states, regardless of whether those states are popular or socially comfortable, and to experience a sense of authentic wholeness.

Too much: righteousness

Too little: shallowness, phoniness

Movies:

1. *Separation (2011, Iran)* – A compelling drama set in the backdrop of the dissolution of a marriage. The story shows the integrity and honesty of a person who is accused of lying.
2. *A Few Good Men (1992)* – Lt. Daniel Kaffee is a Navy lawyer assigned to defend two Marines accused of murdering a fellow soldier. Though he initially takes a lazy approach and arranges a plea bargain, as he uncovers more of the story he realizes the value of practicing his profession with integrity. The movie climaxes in a confrontation between Kaffee and a superior officer who he believes ordered the murder.
3. *Erin Brockovich (2000)* – The lead character, an unemployed single mother, has no luck finding a job until her lawyer reluctantly hires her on as an aide. Her mannerisms put off her co-workers at first, but during the course of the movie she stumbles upon a scheme at the Pacific Gas & Electric Company with huge implications for the community. Her determination to bring the truth to light eventually results in one of the biggest class-action lawsuits in American history.
4. *The Legend of Bagger Vance (2000)* – Rannulph Junnah, once the best golfer in Savannah, is reduced to life of alcoholism after a harrowing experience in the First World War. With the help of his new caddy, Bagger Vance, Rannulph is able to reconstruct both his golf game and his life, ultimately playing in a match against the two greatest golfers for \$10,000.

Songs: My Way (Frank Sinatra), Strength, Courage, Wisdom, The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill (Lauryn Hill), The Rose (Bette Midler), On the Road to Find Out (Cat Stevens)

Suggested Actions

1. Refrain from telling small, white lies to friends and family (including insincere compliments). If you do tell one, admit it and apologize right away.
2. Think of creative yet honest ways of relating to others. Present yourself in a manner that makes you feel authentic.
3. Monitor every time you tell a lie, even if it is a small one. Try to make your list shorter every day.
4. Monitor to catch lies of omission (such as not volunteering important information when selling a used item) and think how you would feel if someone did the same to you. Try to be forthcoming in your dealings with others.
5. Rate your satisfaction with authentic, honest, and genuine deeds vs. inauthentic and less than honest actions. Use your moment-to-moment level of satisfaction to gauge your integrity.
6. Monitor whether your next five significant actions match your words and vice-versa. Try to act in a manner that is consistent with what you say.
7. Write on issues about which you feel moral obligation. It helps to crystallize and integrate thinking.
8. Think and act fairly when you face your next challenge, regardless of its impact on your position or popularity. Put aside your perceptions of peer pressure when making your decision.
9. Identify your area of strongest moral convictions. Set your long-term priorities according to these convictions.
10. Seek roles with clear structure that allow you to be authentic and honest. Pursue positions in organizations that foster honest, forthright communication.
11. Learn and practice the ethical standards of your profession. Make these standards known to co-workers who do not follow them faithfully.

IV. Vitality [zest, enthusiasm, vigor, energy]: Vitality is an approach to life marked by an appreciation for energy, liveliness, excitement, and energy. A vital person lives life as an adventure to be approached wholeheartedly. A life of vigor allows one to experience the overlap of the mental and physical realms of experience, as stress decreases and health increases. Vitality differs from contentment in that it involves greater psychological and physiological activation and enthusiasm.

Too much: hyperactivity

Too little: passivity, inhibition

Movies:

1. *Up (2009)* – Uplifting (literally & metaphorically) story of a 78-year-old Carl who is pursues his lifelong dream to see the wilds of South America, with a young boy who comes along as stowaway but becomes the catalyst of Carl’s zest.
2. *Cinema Paradiso (1988, Italian)* – A famous director returns to his childhood town upon learning of the death of an elderly friend. The movie details the friendship forged between the old projectionist and the young director during his boyhood. This film celebrates youth through its touching portrayal of the friendship and a young man’s drive to pursue his dream.
3. *My Left Foot (1993)* – Born a quadriplegic in a poor Irish family, Christy Brown is marginalized and assumed to be mentally retarded. With the help of a dedicated mother and teacher, though, he eventually learns to write using the only limb he has any control over: his left foot. Christy refuses to live as a vegetable and instead explores painting, poetry, and writing.
4. *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975)* – This film explores hardship and joy inside a mental institution, where the dynamic personality of a few patients turns the ward upside down. His zest for living cannot be contained by the walls, staff, or psychiatric drugs, and under his influence many of the other patients begin to improve for the first time.

Songs: My Way (Frank Sinatra)

Suggested Actions

1. Do something that you already do, but with more energy, including some creative and different elements. Throw yourself into the activity.
2. Exercise at least 2-3 times a week and notice how it affects your energy level. Develop a regular routine that you can stick to and keep a log.
3. Do a physical activity of your choice, one that you don’t “have to do” and that you are not told to do. Notice how this affects your energy level.
4. Improve your sleep hygiene by establishing regular sleep time, eating 3-4 hours before sleeping, avoiding doing any work in the bed, not taking caffeine late in the evening, etc. Notice changes in your energy level.
5. Think of ways to make an assignment exciting and engaging before you undertake it. While doing it, see if you can focus to the point where you lose track of time.
6. Do a physically rigorous activity (bike riding, running, sports singing, playing) that you always wanted to do but have not done yet. If you enjoy it, plan to do it regularly.
7. Sing in a choir, play an instrument, or act in a play. Enjoy the rush that comes from performing in front of others.
8. Attend a dance club, concert, or a performing art event. If there is dancing involved, join in.
9. Watch a sitcom or a comedy film weekly. Invite friends over and have a movie night together.
10. Socialize with friends who like to laugh heartily. Notice how laughter can be infectious.
11. Do at least one outdoor activity weekly such as hiking, biking, mountain climbing, brisk walking, or jogging, for an hour. Enjoy both the outdoors and your own internal sensations.
12. Take time to celebrate your next two accomplishments and victories. Invite others to celebrate with you without coming off as boastful.
13. Call an old friend and reminisce about good old times. Notice how their laughter and joy make you feel.

CORE VIRTUE: HUMANITY

tending and befriending others

I. Love: Loving individuals value close relationships with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated. Love can be expressed toward those we depend on, toward those who depend on us, and toward those we feel romantic, sexual, and emotional attraction to. 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.

Too much: emotional promiscuity

Too little: isolation, detachment

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Movies:

1. *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) – The doctor whose name graces the film is torn between two loves, that of his wife and that of the woman who inspires his poetry. This film explores the conflict between fidelity and passion in the midst of the Russian Revolution and its impact on a man trying to maintain his humanity.
2. *The English Patient* (1996) – During World War II, a young mapmaker employed by Great Britain lies dying after being badly burned in a plane crash. A young nurse stays lovingly by his side through it all, and together they relive the sorrows and joys of romances past.
3. *Sophie's Choice* (1982) – Sophie is a Polish survivor of the Holocaust who has recently emigrated to American with her lover, Nathan. Narrated by Stingo, a man who shares a boarding house with the couple, this incredibly emotional movie deals with the aftereffects of Auschwitz and their impact on human relationships.
4. *The Bridges of the Madison County* (1995) – Francesca Johnson is a married mother who falls in love with a traveling photographer while her family is away. Though her romance lasts only four days, it changes her life drastically. After her death, her children learn of the affair and must decide whether to honor the wishes of the family or the secret wish of their mother.
5. *Iris* (2001) – Iris Murdoch, a brilliant academic teaching at Oxford, falls in love with fellow professor John Bayley. Though they seem an unlikely pair at first, they enrich each other's lives over the course of decades. The movie concludes with Iris living a life ravaged by Alzheimer's disease, under the constant care of her frustrated yet devoted husband.
6. *My Fair Lady* (1964) – Henry Higgins is an arrogant professor who wagers that he can take a common woman and make her presentable as an aristocrat. He succeeds in transforming Eliza Doolittle and then falls in love with her, but his arrogance causes her to leave him for a younger member of high society. Higgins is forced to confront his need for Eliza's love and the shortcomings of his own personality.
7. *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) is a deep love-story of two cowboys who fall in love almost by accident in the conservative landscape and social milieu of sixties when gay love was still largely in closets. The movie is ultimately about love, sadly secretive but true one.

Songs: The Rose (Bette Midler), Isn't She Lovely (Stevie Wonder)

Suggested Actions

1. Express (verbally and/or non-verbally) to your loved ones that no matter what happens, your love for them will remain unconditional. Let all of your interactions rest on this firm foundation.
2. Express your love through physical gestures (hugs, kisses, cuddling, giving a gentle massage). Allow your loved ones to reciprocate.
3. Focus on the implicit motives of your loved ones, rather their behaviors. Try to see how their temporary moods, rather than their permanent dispositions, influence actions that seem hurtful. Embrace their dispositions and accept that their moods will fluctuate.
4. Explore and appreciate the strengths of your loved ones. Verbalize at least some of what you think in this area.
5. Arrange a date with your mate that celebrates both of your signature strengths. Discuss ways in which your strengths complimented each other during the date.
6. Express your love through gifts. When possible, create gifts yourself rather than buying them.
7. Always celebrate days or occasions that are mutually important. Arrange special events, such as trips and parties, for birthdays and anniversaries.
8. Express your love creatively, such as through a poem, note, or sketch. Consider taking a photograph of an important place, event or situation that reminds you of your mutual love.
9. Help your loved ones with a self-improvement plan (e.g., a new class, weight loss, exercise, a new career). Be encouraging but not pushy.
10. Plan and host a dinner party with your significant other. Enjoy the process of preparing it together.
11. Reunite at the end of the day and discuss how it went. Talk about ways that you used your signature strengths effectively and how to do so in the future.
12. Attend a concert, theatre, movies, or go dancing with your loved one. Try an activity that you haven't done before, or haven't done in a long time.

13. Engage in a favorite activity together, such as hiking, going to an amusement park, biking, walking in the park, swimming, camping, or jogging. If you can't think of a mutual favorite activity, pick one to try together.
14. Attend your child's sporting events or performances (recital, play, etc) together. Make a videotape for posterity.
15. Go out with your partner for brunch or dinner. Hire a babysitter for your children or leave them with a trusted relative, and simply enjoy each other's company.
16. Help your loved ones plan their future by helping them identify their signature strengths. Then, collaborate to design a future based on their signature strengths.
17. If you want to help your loved ones, first consider their strengths. Design your help around their strengths.
18. Tape record your parent's earliest recollections and share them with your children. Help your family record their cherished memories in a similar manner.
19. Make a family blessing journal in which everyone writes good things that happen to them daily. One night a week, read aloud some of the best things from the previous seven days.

II. Kindness [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "nice-ness"]: Kindness consists of doing favors and good deeds for others without the expectation of personal gain. This strength requires respect for others but also includes emotional affection. Kind people find joy in the act of giving and helping other people, regardless of their degree of relatedness or similarity.

Too much: intrusiveness

Too little: indifference

Movies:

1. *Blind Side* (2009) – Based on the true story of Michael Oher, a homeless and traumatized boy who became an All American football player and first round NFL draft pick with the help of a wealthy but caring woman, adoption by Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy who make him part of their family, an incredible story of kindness and love.
2. *The Secret Life of Bees* (2008) – This movie is a moving story of Lily Owens, a 14 year-old girl in South Carolina of early 1960s. Haunted by the memory of her later mother and a troubled relationship with her father, Lily escapes her lonely life and finds love and care in the home of Boatwright sisters and their engrossing world of beekeeping. The movie is a good illustration of connecting with strangers through the common bond of humanity and love.
3. *As Good as it Gets* (1997) – Despite his successful career as a romance novelist, Melvin Udall is cranky, obsessive, and bigoted. His life begins to change when his gay neighbor is brutally beaten and entrusts the care of his dog to Melvin while he recuperates. With the help of the neighbor and a waitress with whom he has a difficult relationship, the author begins to learn about the value of kindness and caring.
4. *The Cider House Rules* (1999) – Homer is a youth residing at an orphanage in Maine. He becomes a favorite of the director, Dr. Larch, who teaches him about both medicine and the value of kind actions over blind deference to rules. Homer's life lessons in caring continue as he leaves the orphanage to work at a farm, only to find himself alone with the farmer's wife in the midst of the Second World War.
5. *Promise* (1986) – A man struggles with his promise to care for his brother, who suffers from schizophrenia and epilepsy, after the death of his mother. He is reluctant to take on the responsibility, but at the same time can't bring himself to turn his brother over to professional care. This poignant film explores both the sacrifices and joys associated with selfless caring for others.
6. *Children of Heaven* (1997) – This engaging film from Iran is a story of a poor family who copes with the financial difficulties of day-to-day existence, and, despite the apparent obstacles, remains a happy and loving group. Unlike traditional rivalry, a brother and a sister are shown to truly care for each other.

Songs: Lean on Me (Al Green), You've Got a Friend (James Taylor or Mariah Carey), Time After Time (Cyndi Lauper or Tuck and Patti), Bridge Over Troubled Water (Simon and Garfunkel or Johnny Cash), I'll Be there for You (The Rembrants)

Suggested Actions

1. Do three random acts of kindness per week for those whom you know. Consider doing small favors for friends and neighbors, calling sick or sad friends, getting groceries for a friend busy in exams, cooking a meal for an elderly relative, or baby-sitting.
2. Do one random act of kindness weekly for someone you don't know. Consider letting someone ahead of you in line, putting money in a meter than has run out, or letting another customer take the last item on a shelf.
3. Donate blood periodically, especially when there is news of a shortage. Let people know about your action, not as boasting but as encouragement for them to do the same.
4. Visit someone who is sick and in the hospital. Bring them flowers and a card, and stay long enough that you notice their mood improve visibly.
5. Visit someone in a nursing home or hospice. Bring something that you know they enjoy, such as a favorite food, favorite flower, or photo album.
6. Give gifts to others that involve experiential activities. Some ideas include a gift certificate for a class, supplies for a hiking trip, or a ticket to a new place.
7. Take out a friend(s) on a surprise dinner and pay for it. Savor the satisfaction that you feel from your generosity.
8. Say kinder and softer words to people when interacting through email, writing letters, talking on phone. Be aware that communication over distance requires different types of gentleness than face-to-face communication.
9. Cook a nice meal for your loved ones. Let it be your project from beginning to end, from the shopping trip at the grocery store to washing the dishes afterward.
10. Share your belongings with others (e.g., lawn mover, snow blower, jump cables). Offer to help them if they don't know how to operate equipment or go about accomplishing a task.
11. Make an inventory of your possessions, keep only what you absolutely need, and donate the rest. Observe whether owning fewer unnecessary possessions affects your mood or your concept of self.
12. Donate your time to others through helpful actions. Find a local volunteer organization, start a project of your own, or simply find time to do random acts of kindness for others.
13. Greet others with smile. When you ask people how they are, really listen for their response rather than conversing on "autopilot."
14. While driving, give way to others and be courteous of pedestrians and bicyclists. When entering or exiting buildings, hold the door for others.
15. Help fix someone's flat tire or offer your cell phone to a stranded motorist. Carry jumper cables and flares in your trunk in case you need to help someone on the road.
16. Fix a community apparatus (such as playground equipment) even if you did not break it. Be aware of your role as a member of the community.
17. Stop and help someone who needs help on a highway. Stay with them until a tow truck or police officer arrives on the scene.

III. Social Intelligence [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: Socially intelligent individuals are aware of the emotions and intentions of themselves and others. No matter what the social situation is, they attempt to make everyone involved feel comfortable and valued. Socially intelligent people are perceptive of others' feelings and honest about their own, and are generally adept at fostering healthy relationships.

Too much: psychobabbling

Too little: obtuseness, cluelessness

Movies:

1. *Monsieur Lazhar* (2011) -- Bahir Lazhar, an Algerian immigrant, a replacement teacher in an elementary school connect with students of class which has just lost their teacher in a tragic and traumatic way. Using his extraordinary skills of social intelligence, humour and kindness, he facilitates a process of healing.
2. *Another Year* (2010; *British*) – A British comedy drama of ordinary people trying to make sense of their emotions in complex interpersonal relationships. On one end is the happily long-time married couple and on the other is lonely friend. The film portrays emotional intelligence of warmth, humor and cold chills of solitude.

3. *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989) – An elderly widow living in Atlanta can no longer drive, so her son hires her a chauffeur. Though she resists his service at first, over the years the two become close and comfortable together, transcending differences in age, race, and background. The movie beautifully showcases the birth and growth of a friendship.
4. *Children of a Lesser God* (1986) – This film depicts the relationship between a speech therapist of the oralist tradition and a Deaf woman who will only sign. The movie contains many examples of the characters working to bridge their differences in language, beliefs, and experiences to forge a meaningful relationship.
5. *K-Pax* (2001) – A mysterious patient in a mental hospital claims to be an alien from a distant planet. Though nobody believes him at first, he demonstrates a remarkable ability to relate to the other patients, helping them to make progress where they had stalled previously. His character shows the value of social insight in forming relationships with others.
6. *The Five Senses* (2001-Canadian) – This movie, featuring characters that correspond to different senses, shows the value of social intelligence in the isolation of a modern, urban environment. The characters' lives are transformed by their brief interactions, and they are able to teach and learn simultaneously through their conversations and encounters.
7. *I am Sam* (2002)- In this movie Sam (Sean Penn) displays a mentally disabled man who must fight for custody of his young daughter. The child welfare board of his native Santa Monica has taken her from him, worried that at eight years old she has already begun to pass him in intellectual development. Sam's argument is that it's not brains but love that counts. Sam is duly aided by an intelligent lawyer (Michelle Pfeiffer) who in the course of discovering her client's essential humanity, discovers her own as well.

Songs: Lean on Me (Al Green), You've Got a Friend (James Taylor or Mariah Carey), Time After Time (Cyndi Lauper or Tuck and Patti), Bridge Over Troubled Water (Simon and Garfunkel or Johnny Cash), I'll Be there for You (The Rembrants)

Suggested Actions

1. Withhold a powerful and decisive argument that will win you a discussion but might hurt someone, at least twice a month. Focus your energy on the logic of your arguments rather than on their emotional “punch.”
2. Listen to your friends and siblings empathically, without preparing rebuttals, and simply reflect your feelings after they are finished. Don't just wait for your turn to speak during conversation.
3. If someone offends you, attempt to find at least one positive element in his or her motives. Consider reasons why their offensive behavior may result from temporary, situational factors rather than from their disposition or nature.
4. Attend an uncomfortable social situation as an active observer and describe what you observe without any judgments. Note whether the situation got heated or out-of-hand and why.
5. Note and appreciate others in the light of their positive attributes. Voice your thoughts to them in conversation.
6. Write five personal feelings daily for four weeks and monitor patterns. Are there situations that you encounter regularly that alter your emotional pattern?
7. Watch a favorite TV program or film muted and write feelings observed. Note your own non-verbal communication methods when you engage in conversation.
8. Express your feelings appropriately to someone for whom you have not done so. Listen carefully to their response and process your emotions together.
9. Ask someone close to you about times you did not emotionally understand him/her and how he/she would like to be emotionally understood in the future. Think of a few small, practical steps that you can take when interacting with this person next.
10. Listen to others with unconditional regard. Make it clear to them that your friendship is not conditional on what they tell you.
11. Notice when your family and friends grow. Congratulate them and record specific observations. Make your loved ones feel like they are special parts of your life.
12. Identify which of your friends relate most emphatically with others. Observe them closely and try to emulate the social skills that you admire in them.
13. When working with others, emphasize the value of being agreeable. Remember that group harmony is as essential as, or even more important than, productivity.

14. In your close relationships, speak plainly and directly about your needs and wishes. Allow others to do the same without judging them or responding with rebuttals.
15. Perceive and acknowledge three sincere gestures of a friend. Observe how your expression of gratitude makes you both feel.

CORE VIRTUE: JUSTICE

healthy community life

I. Citizenship [social responsibility, loyalty, teamwork]: Citizenship involves working as a member of a group for the common good. People with this strength are loyal to the organizations of which they are members, ready to make personal sacrifices for their neighbors. 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.

Too much: mindless and automatic obedience

Too little: obtuseness, cluelessness

Movies:

1. *A Mighty Heart* (2007) Amidst the sickening murder of Wall Street Journalist, Daniel Pearl, this movie brings home some bright spot of a sense of community of friends in a alien land, of security officers, government officers which try to save a life. It ends with a optimistic note where Mariane Pearl seems to transcend hate and decides to start a noble community project in the very city, where her husband was murdered.
2. *Hotel Rwanda* – (2004) Extra-ordinary display of social responsibility of Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager who during the Genocide, housed over a thousand Tutsi refugees to shield them from Huta militia.
3. *L.A. Confidential* (1997) – Faced with the task of solving a murder, three police officers must use their very different standards of justice and morality to find those responsible. This movie explores the nature of corruption and integrity as they relate to leadership, government, and individual relationships, and leaves the viewer with several conflicting examples to reconcile.
4. *Finding Forrester* (2001) – Jamal Wallace is a gifted basketball player who is accepted into a prestigious prep school after scoring highly on his standardized tests. There he befriends the reclusive writer William Forester, and in this meeting of the minds the two find they have much to teach each other. Their personal relationship serves as a transformative example for their community.
5. *Awakenings* (1990) – A doctor working in a mental ward full of comatose patients finds a cure for their affliction, freeing them from their unconsciousness but bringing them a host of adjustment problems. The doctor's life becomes a quest to bring these patients into functional roles in modern society, though some of them have been comatose for decades. His character is a shining example of civil responsibility and social caring.

Songs: Lean on Me (Al Green), You've Got a Friend (James Taylor or Mariah Carey), Time After Time (Cyndi Lauper or Tuck and Patti), Bridge Over Troubled Water (Simon and Garfunkel or Johnny Cash), I'll Be there for You (The Rembrants)

Suggested Actions

1. Pick up litter on curbsides and put it in trashcans. If you see anyone doing the same, thank them and offer to help.
2. Volunteer weekly for a community service project in your town, one that deals with what you are best at. Find new friends through it who share your passion.
3. Facilitate a group discussion and attempt to achieve consensus on a conflicting issue. Regardless of whether an agreement is reached, come away from the discussion having learned more about people with different views on the issue.
4. Help at least one person yearly to set goals and periodically check on their progress. Offer help and encouragement whenever you think it is needed. If the person wishes to reciprocate, allow them to help you achieve one of your own goals

5. Arrange or attend at least one social gathering monthly. Try to bring people from different parts of the community together.
6. Spend at least half an hour weekly cleaning a communal place. Bring a friend and if anyone stops to watch, offer him or her the chance to pitch in.
7. Decorate a communal place. Consider painting a mural, planting flowers, or putting up holiday decorations. Be sure to check with the community's local government before doing anything permanent.
8. Play sports for your town or school. Allow the spirit of friendly competition to bring your neighbors closer together.
9. Start a book club in your neighborhood. Invite people who might not approach you on their own, such as new or elderly neighbors.
10. Car pool or give someone a ride to work regularly. Think of your car as less of a possession and more of a resource to be shared.
11. Start a community garden. Invite anyone who wants to plant flowers or vegetables to do so.
12. Donate blood or become an organ donor. Encourage neighbors to do the same during shortages.
13. Seek a role in an organization or club that brings people of diverse cultures closer. Note how various cultures interact within your community.
14. Volunteer for activities such as serving as a Big Brother or Big Sister or constructing a Habitat for Humanity house. Encourage friends and neighbors with spare time on their hands to accompany you.
15. Organize a social gathering to bid farewell to a parting neighbor or welcome a new neighbor. Gauge the interests of new neighbors and recommend community organizations or projects for them to get involved in.
16. Volunteer to deliver Meals on Wheels in a poor neighborhood. Take time to talk to the people you interact with.
17. Ask your neighbors, especially elderly ones, if they need anything from the supermarket. Make them feel valued and comfortable asking you for such favors.
18. Shovel snow or scrape ice for a neighbor during the winter, rake leaves during the fall, and cut grass during the spring and summer.
19. Cook a favorite meal for your neighbor or a friend. Look for times when they particularly need such a favor, such as when they are sick or particularly busy.

II. Fairness, Equity and Justice: Fairness involves treating everyone according to universal ideals of equality and justice. Fair individuals do not let their personal feelings bias their moral or ethical decisions about others, but instead rely on a broad set of moral values. 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.

Too much: detachment

Too little: prejudice, partisanship

Movies:

1. *In a Better World (2010, Denmark)* – A remarkable story of a doctor and his family struggles amid complex choices between strengths fairness and forgiveness.
2. *The Green Zone (2010)* -- Roy Miller, a senior CIA officer, in unearthing evidence of weapons of mass destruction in the Iraq war, realizes that operatives on the both sides of the conflict are attempting to spin the story in their favor. As Miller's search continues answers prove pivotal in clearing a rogue regime, or escalate the war in a region that grows increasingly unstable with each passing day? A chilling depiction of fairness and social justice.
3. *The Emperor's Club (2002)* – William Hundert, a principled Classics professor, comes into conflict with a pupil at a prestigious academy. His attempts to teach the young man to act fairly and morally have mixed results, and Hundert's confidence in his beliefs begins to be shaken. When the two reunite at a 25th reunion, they both have lessons to teach the other.
4. *Philadelphia (1993)* – Andrew Beckett, an up-and-coming lawyer at a powerful and conservative law firm, is fired when his bosses learn that he is gay and HIV-positive. Beckett sues the firm for discrimination with the help of a homophobic lawyer, Joe Miller. During the legal proceedings Miller comes to view Beckett as a person worthy of respect and fair treatment, rather than as a stereotype.

Suggested Actions

1. The next time you make a mistake, self-monitor to see whether you admit it. Try to be more forthright about your mistakes in the future.
2. The next time you present an argument, self-monitor to see whether you compromise fairness for social desirability. Be objective while still taking the feelings of others into consideration.
3. Encourage equal participation of everyone involved in a discussion or activity, especially those who feel left out. Foster a reputation as an “includer.”
4. Self-monitor to see whether your judgments are affected by your personal likes and dislikes or are based on principles of justice and fairness. Try to minimize the influence of your personal preferences when making future judgments.
5. Recall and write about instances where you were unfair or could have been fairer. Consider how you could improve your future behavior.
6. Self-monitor to see whether you think about or treat people of other ethnicities and cultures stereotypically. When dealing with people from different backgrounds, remind yourself that they are individuals with unique characteristics, opinions, and beliefs.
7. Serve on a club or organization that offers unprivileged people a leveling playing field. Encourage your place of employment to provide a level playing field whenever you see the opportunity.
8. Write a letter to an editor or speak up on an important issue concerning social justice. Write in a manner that is firm, reasonable, and respectful to all concerned. Use language that emphasizes positivity and strengths.
9. Politely discuss fairness with a friend whom you notice shows gender or ethnic bias. Give them an opportunity to explain their reasoning, and be aware that they may have had past experiences that negatively affected them. Be a good listener and a role model for just behavior.
10. Volunteer for or learn about an organization that educates and campaigns for equal human rights. Provide an example of respectful, informed activism.
11. Explore an ongoing event anywhere in the world where human rights are being violated. Write your reactions and suggestions to promote social justice on that issue.
12. Watch a film or a documentary that exemplifies fairness, social justice, and equity. Think of how the topic relates to issues that you encounter in your own life.
13. Read biographies of famous people who exemplify social justice, such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela. Consider what strengths you share with these figures.
14. Speak up for your group. Be a voice for the rights of others in a manner that respects people from other groups.

III. Leadership: Leadership is the process of motivating, directing, and coordinating members of a group to achieve a common goal. Leaders assume a dominant role in social interaction, but effective leadership requires listening to the opinions and feelings of other group members as much as it involves active direction. Individuals who possess this strength are able to help their group to achieve goals in a cohesive, efficient, and amiable manner.

Too much: despotism, bossiness

Too little: compliance, acquiescence

Movies:

1. *Lincoln* (2012) – An extraordinary display of numerous strengths but above all the leaderships and courage to go against the current and emancipate the slaves despite continuing unrest on the battlefield and strife within his own ranks.
2. *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) – T.E. Lawrence is an eccentric British army officer serving in North Africa during World War I. Bored with doing menial jobs, he jumps at the chance to act as an observer with an Arab tribal Army. The movie shows Lawrence’s transformation into a skilled desert leader and culminates as he unites the Arab tribes against the Turkish army.
3. *Dances with Wolves* (1990) – After accidentally leading Union troops to victory during the Civil War, Lt. John Dunbar requests and receives reassignment to a remote outpost in the Dakotas. He befriends the local Lakota Sioux and is assimilated into their tribe, but must confront his conflicted loyalties when white settlers arrive and

attempt to drive the Native Americans from the land. His character demonstrates the conflicts of interests and other challenges associated with leadership.

Suggested Actions

1. Lead an activity, assignment or project and actively solicit opinions from group members. Encourage members who rarely speak up to share their opinions.
2. Organize a family event that is intergenerational, including both young and old relatives. Involve everyone in conversation rather than allowing age groups to self-segregate. Draw people's attention to cross-generational similarities.
3. Organize an event (surprise birthday party, shower, etc.) at your work that involves your colleagues. This can be a good opportunity to get to know them on a personal level.
4. Mentor a child in your neighborhood who would benefit from your skills. Listen carefully to them without paying attention to the age difference.
5. Stand up for someone who is being treated unfairly. Encourage other leaders to emphasize fairness in their group processes.
6. Rotate leadership of an event or activity. Give others the chance to be leaders and speak with them about their experiences.
7. Read a biography and/or watch film of your favorite leader and evaluate how he/she inspires you in practical ways. Consider what strengths you share with this figure.
8. When two people are in an argument, mediate by inviting others to share their thoughts and emphasizing problem solving. Set a respectful, open-minded tone for the discussion.
9. Help coach Little League or other youth sports even if you don't have a child playing. Emphasize group harmony and dynamics over competition and winning.
10. Initiate and lead a new family tradition such as thematic reunions, anniversaries, surprise parties, family strength dates, etc. Help organize your family members according to their signature strengths.
11. Organize a town-wide or block-wide yard sale. Form and lead a group to help elderly neighbors move possessions that they wish to sell.
12. Host a block party or holiday open house. Get to know the strengths and interests of your neighbors in case you are involved in a project with them in the future.
13. Gather and lead a group to clean a local park or cemetery. Give enthusiastic participants the chance to organize their own cleaning projects in the future.
14. Start a fitness or health group with your co-workers. Provide each other with encouragement, praise, and motivation.
15. Participate in a local political campaign. Learn about the issues involved and stay above "mud slinging."
16. Make a list of possible ways that you could improve your leadership style. Ask people who you have led in the past for their input.

CORE VIRTUE: TEMPERANCE

protecting against excess

I. Forgiveness and Mercy: This strength involves forgiving those who have wronged or offended us. Forgiveness entails accepting the shortcomings of others, giving people a second chance, and putting aside the temptation to hold a grudge or behave vengefully. Forgiveness allows one to put aside the self-destructive negativity associated with anger and to extend mercy toward a transgressor.

Too much: permissiveness

Too little: mercilessness

Movies:

1. *Incendies* (2010, France/Canada) With a series of flashbacks, *Incendies* follows the journey of twin brother and sister as they try to uncover the attempt to unravel the mystery of their mother's life which unsettles them but the strength of forgiveness helps them to reconcile with the past.

2. *Pay it Forward* (2000) – Trevor McKinney is a young boy living in fear of an alcoholic mother and an abusive father. When his social studies teacher assigns the class to put into action a plan to change the world, he sets in motion a chain of kindness and forgiveness that extends far beyond his small social circle. This movie provides a poignant example of how much impact a simple act of forgiveness can have.
3. *Terms of Endearment* (1983) – This film traces the sometimes tumultuous relationship between a mother and daughter. Through the ups and downs of the mother’s marriage and the daughter’s involvement with a retired astronaut, the pair finds ways to see past each other’s transgressions and find joy in their relationship.
4. *Dead Man Walking* (1995) – This movie follows the developing relationship between a nun and a condemned man living out his last days on death row. It presents the difficulties and paradoxes of mercy in vivid detail, interspersing tender moments with clips of the brutal crime in question. Ultimately, this subtle and emotional movie demonstrates that forgiveness is possible even under the worst of circumstances.
5. *Ordinary People* (1980) – An affluent family in suburban Chicago lives in various stages of denial after the accidental death of one of their sons, unable to express their emotions or deal with their grief. Only after the surviving son attempts suicide and begins to see a psychiatrist do the barriers begin to come down, and at that point the family must deal with their strained relationships and haunting past.

Suggested Actions

1. Remember times when you offended someone and were forgiven, then extend this gift to others. Don’t demand a formal apology.
2. Evaluate your emotions before and after forgiving someone. Compare these emotions to your feelings when you hold a grudge.
3. Understand from the offender’s perspective why he/she offended you. Then assess whether your reaction is hurting you more than the offender.
4. Make a list of individuals against whom you hold a grudge, then either meet them personally to discuss it or visualize whether bygones can be bygones. Put the original offense into its proper context and perspective.
5. Meet a person who offended you in the past, especially if he/she is a family member. Tell them that you have forgiven them, or just be kind in your interaction with them.
6. Ask for forgiveness from a Divine power according to your faith. Assess how you feel afterwards.
7. Pray for the noble behavior of your offender. Think of ways that this person has acted nobly in the past.
8. Identify how a grudge tortures you emotionally. Does it produce disruptive emotions (anger, hatred, fear, worry, sadness, anxiety, jealousy and such)? Write three ways these disruptive emotions affect your behavior.
9. Plan out what your response should be the next time someone offends you. Remind yourself of your plan (rehearse if possible) and periodically affirm, “No matter how he/she offends me, I will respond as I have planned.”
10. Imagine your offender and consider whether you have any payback fantasies. Imagine in detail what might happen if you forgive the offender. Journal your reactions. Start with a moderate offense and continue until you achieve forgiveness and resolution. During this exercise continuously remind yourself that this is a forgiving exercise, not a grudge-holding one.

II. Humility / Modesty: Humility and modesty involve letting one’s strengths and accomplishments speak for themselves. Individuals with this strength do not need to have low self-esteem, but merely avoid seeking the spotlight and regarding themselves as better than others. Humble people are honest with themselves about their own limitations and the fallibility of their own opinions, and are open to advice and assistance from others.

Too much: self-deprecation

Too little: footless self-esteem

Movies:

1. *Peaceful Warriors* (2006) – Dan Millman is a university student as well as a gymnast, aspiring to win the National Championship meets “Socrates” who runs a gas station. Socrates offers Dan perspective of reflecting on his life choices and that “knowledge is doing” not just knowing.

2. *Little Buddha* (1994) – Lama Norbu believes that he has located his teacher reincarnated as a boy in Seattle. The pair travel to Bhutan and the boy learns about the teachings of Buddhism, which emphasizes the value of humility in everyday life. This film explores the impact that modest spirituality can have on the lives of those who embrace it.

Suggested Actions

1. Resist showing off accomplishments for a week and notice the changes in your interpersonal relationships. Do people act surprised that you waited to reveal your news?
2. At the end of each day, identify something you did to impress people or put on a show. Resolve not to do it again.
3. Resist showing off if you notice that you are better than someone at some task. Allow others to notice your skills on their own.
4. Resist showing off when others shows off. Observe the reactions that show-offs get from observers.
5. Notice if you speak more than others in a group situation. Concentrate on listening to the words of others rather than simply waiting for your turn to speak.
6. Dress and speak modestly. Note how it makes you feel.
7. Compliment sincerely if you find someone is authentic and better than you in some ways. Accept compliments from others humbly.
8. Use environmental resources modestly. Some ways to do this include using more recycled products, limiting your use of products that harm the environment, and buying only items that you really need.
9. Admit your mistakes and apologize even to those who are younger than you. Be aware of your place as a role model to the next generation.
10. Utilize your sexual energies modestly, such as by having one committed sexual partner. Concentrate your energy on the intimacy of the situation and the pleasure of your partner.
11. Ask a trusted friend for honest feedback about your weaknesses. Think about their words at length before replying.

III. Prudence: Prudence is a practical orientation toward future goals. It entails being careful about one's choices, not taking undue risks, and keeping long-term goals in mind when making short-term decisions. Prudent individuals monitor and control their impulsive behavior and anticipate the consequences of their actions. This strength is not synonymous with stinginess or timidity, but instead involves an intelligent and efficient perspective towards achieving major goals in life.

Too much: prudishness, stuffiness

Too little: mercilessness

Movies:

1. *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2008, Sweden) – Once-respected financial journalist, in order to save his professional life from disintegrating, has to spend a year researching mysterious disappearance of a female. The story depicts excellent illustrations of prudence and caution.
2. *Shawshank Redemption* (1995) – Andy Dufresne, a banker is convicted wrongly fully for a double murder is sentenced for a life term at the Shawshank State Prison in Maine. Despite the ugly realities of the prison, Andy uses his strengths of prudence, social intelligence and resilience to improve the conditions of the prison which enhances dignity of prisoners.
3. *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) – Wealthy Mr. Dashwood's death leaves his son rich but his second wife, along with her two daughters, in difficult financial straits. This movie, adapted from the book by Jane Austen, chronicles the daughters' attempts to find love in the face of obstacles and trials. Ultimately, they find that hope for a better future gives them the strength to endure temporary setbacks and reach their goals.

Suggested Actions

1. Think twice before saying anything. Do this exercise at least ten times a week and note its effects.
2. Drive cautiously and note that there are fewer time-bound emergencies than you actually think. Make highway safety a priority, especially at busy times such as rush hour and holiday weekends.
3. Remove all extraneous distractions before your make your next three important decisions. Take the time to clear your mind and gather your thoughts.

4. Consult with your significant other before making a final decision on an issue that affects you both. Be aware of the importance of advice from people who know you well.
5. Visualize the consequences of your decisions in one, five, and ten years' time. Take these long-term consequences into account when making short-term choices.
6. Do a risk-benefit analysis before making a final decision. Consider risks and benefits that are intangible as well as tangible.
7. Make important decisions when you are relaxed, rather than when you are anxious or depressed. If you must make a decision under pressure, take a few seconds to breathe deeply and clear your mind.
8. Before cheating or lying about trivial things, ask yourself whether you will need ten more lies to hide the first lie. Visualize how dishonesty can compound itself.
9. Avoid competitive situations that generally end in win-loss outcomes or in which you or your opponent has little chance to win. Instead, seek out situations that foster cooperation and win-win outcomes.
10. Don't hesitate to check as often as necessary to ensure that all relevant details of your next important task are covered. Keep careful lists and schedules.
11. Evaluate the quality, efficiency, and wisdom of your next three projects and write down methods of improvement. Consider each project within a larger context.

IV. Self-Regulation [self-control]: Self-regulation is the process of exerting control over oneself in order to achieve goals or meet standards. Self-regulating individuals are able to control instinctive responses such as aggression and impulsivity, responding instead according to pre-conceived standards of behavior. 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.

Too much: inhibition

Too little: self-indulgence

Movies:

1. *The Queen (2006)* – The Queen offers a window in the House of Windsor in the aftermath of Princess Diana's death. It depicts Queen Elizabeth II's self-regulation, excessive at times, and how she at times does allow her to express emotions freely.
2. *Forest Gump (1994)* – Forest Gump is a man of low intelligence but great heart who finds himself accidentally present for many of the historic events of the 1950's, 60's, and 70's. Through it all he remains true to his own simple standards of human decency. The film follows this unassuming man's travels through life in search of his childhood love, who follows a much different path than he does.

Suggested Actions

1. Set goals to improve your everyday living and make sure you complete the tasks. Ideas can include cleaning your room, doing your laundry, doing your dishes, cleaning your desk, and rearranging your furniture to maximize floor space.
2. Monitor and eliminate distractions such as phone, TV, and internet while focusing on a particular assignment. Allow yourself short breaks to avoid burnout.
3. Eliminate objects of temptation: when dieting, don't keep junk food around; when abstaining from alcohol, don't socialize in bars; when quitting smoking, replace cigarettes with chewing gum; when cutting back on shopping, leave credit cards or money at home. Ask others that you interact with to respect the removal of tempting items and to encourage your positive lifestyle changes.
4. Start a regular workout routine and make sure you stick to it. Be realistic about the time and energy you can dedicate, and savor your increased energy and vitality.
5. Next time you get upset, try to control your emotions and focus on positive attributes of the situation. Become aware of the degree to which you can control your feelings and reactions.
6. Avoid talking about others in their absence. Don't solicit gossip from friends or co-workers.
7. When you get upset, do a progressive relaxation. Allow your stream of thoughts to be interrupted momentarily so that it doesn't go out of control.

8. Self-congratulate for self-regulation when you successfully resist an indulgence. Accept congratulations from friends who are aware of your lifestyle change.
9. Carefully create routines that you can follow thorough systematically. Make minor adjustments as needed but keep the core elements intact.
10. Establish a regular time and a place for most of your activities. Budget your time so that you aren't rushed or stressed by trying to accomplish all your goals at once.
11. Identify your role models and examine them in detail. Let these details inspire and regulate your goals.
12. Pay close attention to your biological clock. Do your most important tasks when you are most alert.
13. Do partial or complete fasting or deliberately resist a comfort (e.g., chocolate, ice-cream, sex, TV) for a while. Reward yourself with it after accomplishing a challenging task.

CORE VIRTUE: TRANSCENDANCE

forging connections to the larger universe and providing meaning

I. Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence [awe, wonder, elevation]: Individuals with an appreciation for beauty feel a sense of awe at the scenes and patterns around them. They take pleasure in observing physical beauty, the skills and talents of other people, and the beauty inherent to virtue and morality. Beauty can be found in almost every area of life, from nature to arts to mathematics to science to everyday experience. This strength allows people to experience satisfaction and richness in everyday experiences.

Too much: snobbery

Too little: oblivion

Movies:

1. *Out of Africa* (1985) – Karen Blixen came to Africa from Denmark in order to start a coffee plantation, accompanied by her aristocratic husband of convenience. Her time in Africa sees her husband begin to be unfaithful, a romance develop between her and another man, and her appreciation for African culture increase dramatically. She begins to appreciate the beauty in both her surroundings and her relationships, difficult as her circumstances may be.
2. *The Color of Paradise* (2000- Iranian) – This film follows the early life of a blind Iranian boy. His father sees him as an obstacle to marriage and passes him off to a kind-hearted carpenter. Much of the movie is an exploration of worldly beauty through the boy's remaining senses, though the ending is both dramatic and emotionally powerful.
3. *An inconvenient Truth* (2006) - A candid, powerful and informative documentary by former U.S vice president Al-Gore which illuminates some of the myths and truths about global warming and climate change. A compelling account of what could happen to natural beauty and habitat if we did not change our life-style and did not take practical actions to preserve natural wonders.

Songs: Isn't She Lovely (Stevie Wonder), Somewhere Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World (Israel Kamakawiwo'ole)

Suggested Actions

1. Notice at least one instance of natural beauty around you every day (sunrise, sunset, clouds, sunshine, snowfall, rainbows, trees, moving leaves, birds chirping, flowers, fruits and vegetables, etc). Bring back the mental picture when your surroundings feel unpleasant.
2. Make your surroundings aesthetically beautiful. Hang a favorite piece of artwork on the wall, paint the walls a pleasing color, and provide comfortable spaces to work and relax.
3. Listen to a piece of music or watch a film and evaluate how it touches you aesthetically. Note patterns of aspects that you particularly appreciate.
4. Visit a museum, pick a piece of art, and consider how it touches you aesthetically. Hang a reproduction of the artwork on your wall or place it on your desk.

5. Write your aesthetic/artistic reactions to another person's artistic expression. If possible, share your reaction with the artist.
6. Appreciate a beautiful piece of architecture, dress, sculpture, pottery, poetry, prose, etc. Try to find a category of art or expression that you have little previous exposure to.
7. Explore expressions of beauty in different cultures. Are there cross-cultural similarities? What might account for differences?
8. Hang a bird feeder and observe the birds. Borrow or buy a book to help you identify different species.
9. Decorate the outside of your home on special occasions. Appreciate neighbors' decorations on holidays that you don't celebrate personally.
10. Explore beauty in the face of a child. Take note of which qualities you particularly admire in children.
11. Take mental pictures of art and note how they affect your everyday life. Do they make you feel more happy, cheerful, and fulfilled?
12. Take pictures of natural scenes or your loved ones and make them your PC's desktop. Rotate them each week.
13. Note weekly how the goodness of other people affects your life. Appreciate the beauty of positive human behavior.
14. Think of something that contains beauty, love, and connection at least once a day. Note the aspects of your life that are particularly beautiful.
15. For your next three projects, pick at least one to do particularly mindfully. Instead of doing it meticulously, prioritize to do it with care and an appreciation for beauty.
16. Attend local exhibits of clothes, jewelry, cultural artifacts, and paintings. Try to expose yourself to new areas of art.
17. Experience at least once a day the excellence, beauty, and joy expressed through colors, sounds, flavors, images, ideas, aromas, sensations, or words. Take a mental picture of the emotions you feel
18. Notice how others appreciate beauty and excellence through specific words, expressions, gestures, and actions. See if you notice them admiring aspects of life that you aren't typically aware of.
19. Notice and admire excellence of someone's character strengths. Appreciate them as a whole person with unique aspects.
20. Appreciate the subtle changes of different seasons. Find beauty in seasonal change, growth, and renewal.

II. Gratitude: Gratitude is an awareness of and thankfulness for the good things in one's life. Grateful individuals take time to express thanks and contemplate all that they have been given in life. Gratitude can be directed at a specific person, at a Divinity, or simply expressed outwardly for the mere fact of existence. This strength is a mindset of appreciation and goodwill for the benefits derived from other people.

Too much: ingratiating

Too little: entitlement

Movies:

1. *Amélie* (2001-French) – Amélie approaches life with an inquisitive nature and an appreciation for the little things in life. She befriends one shut-in neighbor, plays pranks, and returns lost items to their owners. Gradually this charming character begins to realize that her life becomes richer by reaching out to others and pursuing the details that spark her interest.
2. *Sunshine* (1999) – This epic film follows the lives of three generations of Jewish men living in Hungary. The movie does a great job of showing family similarities as the characters struggle with political turmoil, persecution, and family hardships. The grandson's ultimate realization is his gratitude toward his family and his heritage, regardless of the pain of the past.
3. *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991) – Evelyn Couch is a housewife living in an unhappy marriage. While visiting a nursing home she meets and befriends Ninny Threadgoode, whose stories inspire Evelyn to approach her own life with greater assertiveness and compassion. Gratitude is a central theme in the film, as the characters are able to change each other's lives for the better.

Songs: Strength, Courage, Wisdom, Isn't She Lovely (Stevie Wonder)

Suggested Actions

1. Consider how this statement describes your usual mental state: “A still mind sees what is good and present. An anxious mind sees what is negative and missing.” Still your mind for five minutes in the morning and in the evening.
2. Count three of your blessings (good things that happened to you) before going to bed every day. Write them down in a bedside journal for when you feel down or blue.
3. Express your gratitude to someone whom you haven’t told before, preferably through a personal visit. Observe how your expression of gratitude makes both of you feel.
4. Every day, select one small yet important thing that you take for granted. Work on being mindful of this thing in the future.
5. Notice how many times you say thanks and whether you mean it every time. Notice when people do small gestures of kindness, such as holding a door for you, and be sure to thank them.
6. Express gratitude by leaving a note for someone who has helped your intellectual growth, such as a high school teacher. Explain how their influence helped shape who you are today.
7. Express thanks to all who contributed to your success, no matter how small their contribution might have been. Be aware of the degree to which your success is a product of others’ helpful influence in addition to your own hard work.
8. Express thanks without just saying “thanks”-- be more descriptive and specific (e.g., “I appreciate your prudent advice”). Observe how people notice detailed gratitude as opposed to a simple, reactionary “thanks.”
9. Write three apprehensions that you feel when you wake every morning. Before you go to bed, write three good things that happened to you and why. Then evaluate your apprehensions in light of the good things.
10. Set aside at least ten minutes every day to savor a pleasant experience. Decide to withhold any conscious decisions during these ten minutes.
11. Write a letter to an editor about an event that brought your community closer. Express your thanks to the organizers of the event.
12. Express gratitude to public officials such as police officers, fire fighters, and postal workers. Be mindful of the people who work hard, and in some cases put themselves at risk, to ensure your safety and comfort.
13. Before eating, think of all people who have contributed to what you are eating. Do this at least once a week.
14. Over dinner, talk with your loved ones about two good things that happened to them during the day. After you finish eating, express your gratitude for the conversation and company.
15. Think of three past adversities and identify three serendipitous goods they led to. Be aware that you can feel retrospective gratitude even when you were upset at the time.
16. Reminisce about your best moments of recognition, achievement, praise, and connection. Remember all of the people who helped you get there.

III. Hope [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]: Hope is the expectation that good things will happen in the future. Hopeful individuals are confident that their efforts toward future goals will lead to their fruition. This strength leads people to expect the best from themselves and others.

Too much: panglossism

Too little: present orientation

Movies:

1. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007) -The film tells the remarkable tale of Jean-Dominique Bauby, a French editor, who suffered a stroke and was paralyzed by the inexplicable "locked in" syndrome when he was 43. Bauby's only way of communicating with the outside world was by blinking with one eye, and after several dedicated helpers, he was able to speak through his seemingly irrelevant gestures and began to produce word. The movie depicts strengths of hopefulness and optimism despite significant challenges.
2. *Cinderella Man* (2005)- is an inspiring by the life of legendary athlete Jim Braddock, a once-promising light heavyweight boxer forced into retirement after a string of losses in the ring. As America plunges into the Great Depression of 1930s, Braddock accepts a string of dead-end jobs to support his family. A last minute cancellation finds Braddock in the ring against the second-ranked world contender--and to everyone's amazement, Braddock wins in the third round. Despite being pounds lighter than his opponents and repeated injuries to his hands, Braddock continues to fight against challengers and win. The movie is an excellent illustration of hopes and dreams of the disenfranchised masses which dubs Braddock as “Cinderella Man.”
3. *Gone with the Wind* (1939) – Scarlett O’Hara is living during the tumultuous years of the Civil War in a society torn by every sort of strife. In addition, she must contend with the trials of unrequited love and romantic frustration.

In spite of all these obstacles, Scarlett maintains her sense of hope and continues to strive toward a better future for herself.

4. *Life is Beautiful* (1998-Italian) – Guido is a charming Jewish man living in Italy during the rise of Fascism. His natural qualities allow him to put together a beautiful family, but soon he and his loved ones are shipped to a concentration camp and put into mortal danger. Guido never loses his cleverness, humor, or hope, protecting his young son from the horrors of the Holocaust by pretending that the whole affair is a game. The movie's title sums up Guido's approach to life.
5. *Good Will Hunting* (1997) – Will Hunting works as a janitor at MIT while recovering his life from a difficult past. His natural ability with math leads to his discovery by an award-winning professor, but also leads to conflict between different groups of friends and associates. Will's hope that he can improve his future allows him to face his obstacles with strength and resolve.
6. *Field of Dreams* (1989) This is gentle touching movie, filled with baseball but indeed, it is not about baseball - instead it is about a man (Kavin Costner) realizing his dreams and learning that sometimes you have to take a chance in life. The film depicts hope and optimism amidst highly improbable seemingly unrealistic odds.

Songs: Strength, Courage, Wisdom, The Rose (Bette Midler), Somewhere Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World (Israel Kamakawiwo'ole)

Suggested Actions

1. Recall a situation when you or someone close to you overcame a difficult obstacle and succeeded. Remember this precedent when you are faced with a similar situation
2. List all the bad things that happened to you in the previous day. Then find at least two positive aspects for each.
3. Visualize where and what you want to be after one, five and ten years. Sketch a pathway that you can follow to get there. Include manageable steps and ways to chart your progress.
4. Record your negative and positive thought patterns and notice how they affect your future performance. Experiment with making your thoughts more positive and see if your performance improves.
5. Read about someone who succeeded despite difficulties and setbacks. Look for similar obstacles that both of you faced.
6. Recall bad decisions you made, forgive yourself, and see how you can make better decisions in the future. Learn from your mistakes rather than being haunted by them.
7. When facing adversity, focus on how you overcame a similar adversity in the past. Let your successes set the precedent for your future endeavors.
8. Mentally rehearse your next anticipated challenge. Build perspective by managing obstacles rather than trying to eliminate all of them.
9. For the next three challenging tasks, identify what would work best for you: thinking your way into right action or acting your way into right thinking. Influence your future in a way that plays to your strengths.
10. Document three of your past accomplishments in detail and let them inspire your future. Keep your descriptions in a place where you typically deal with adversity, such as in desk drawer.
11. Surround yourself with optimistic and future-minded friends, particularly when you face a setback. Accept their encouragement and help, and let them know that you will do the same for them when they face obstacles.
12. Schedule at least fifteen minutes twice a week to spend generating optimistic ideas. Write them down and list actions you can take to realize your ideas. Discuss your ideas with your friends and make them partners in your endeavors.

IV. Humor [playfulness]: Humor involves an enjoyment of laughing, friendly teasing, and bringing happiness to others. Individuals with this strength see the light side of life in many situations, finding 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.

Too much: buffoonery

Too little: humorlessness, too serious

Movies: *Patch Adams* (1999) – Patch Addams commits himself to a mental ward and finds joy in helping his fellow patients. Disturbed by the staff’s cold and mechanical approach to their patients, he vows to change the system and enrolls in medical school. His unorthodox blend of medicine a humor brings him both praise and condemnation as he helps his patients by breaking the rules of established medical practice.

Suggested Actions

1. Bring a smile to someone’s face every day through jokes, gestures, and playful activities. Be observant of the moods of others and respond to them.
2. Learn a new joke three times a week and tell them to friends. Note how laughing together improves the mood of the group.
3. Watch a sitcom, funny show/movie, or read a comic daily. Clip comics and recommend shows for friends.
4. Cheer up a gloomy friend. Be an example of how to approach life with a good-natured attitude.
5. Find the fun and lighter side in most situations. Strike a balance between taking things seriously enough and not taking them too seriously.
6. Be friends with someone who has a great sense of humor. Watch how they use this strength to deal with difficult situations and bad news.
7. Impersonate someone and share this with someone close to you. Be kind and witty.
8. Go out with your friends at least once a month for bowling, hiking, cross-country skiing, biking, and such. Note how the group dynamic improves when you laugh together.
9. Make a snowman when it snows or play volleyball at the beach. Let your “inner child” enjoy the things that you enjoyed during childhood.
10. Send funny emails to your friends. Rather than simply forwarding chain letters, share humor from your own life.
11. Dress up for Halloween. Go to a costume party with friends.
12. Play with your pet daily. Observe the animal’s attitude toward play and novelty.
13. Go watch fireworks with your loved ones. Enjoy the pleasure of being outside and having fun with people you care about.
14. Go with your loved ones to a baseball, hockey, or basketball game. Really get into rooting for your team.
15. Go with your loved ones to a holiday show. If you bring children along, go to a child-themed show.

V. Spirituality [religiousness, faith, purpose]: Spirituality is a universal part of human experience involving knowledge of one’s place within the larger scheme of things. It can include but is not limited to religious belief and practice. Spirituality affords us an awareness of the sacred in everyday life, a sense of comfort in the face of adversity, and the experience of transcending the ordinary to reach something fundamental.

Too much: fanaticism

Too little: anomie

Movies:

1. *Contact* (1997) – Dr. Eleanor Arroway is a scientist working for the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. When she discovers a signal from a faraway star, it throws society into turmoil as the age-old conflict between reason and belief erupts. Dr. Arroway must reconcile her commitment to science with her rocky relationship to spirituality and with the pain of her past.
2. *The Apostle* (1997) – When a God-fearing preacher from Texas discovers that his wife is having an affair, he responds by assaulting the interloper and plunging him into a coma. His run from the law takes him on a journey to Louisiana and forces him to confront his own spiritual problems. The director steadfastly refuses to condemn

or vindicate his character, leaving it up to the audience to decide the true depth of his faith and the true significance of his actions.

3. *Priest* (1994—British) – Fr. Greg Plinkington lives two lives, one as a conservative Catholic priest and the other as a gay man with a lover. When a girl in his confessional tells him of sexual abuse at the hands of her father, his frustration with the laws of the Catholic Church boils over and he must reconcile his inner beliefs with the tenants of his doctrinal faith.
4. *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* (2004)- A documentary-style film which integrates interviews, computer-animated graphics, and a narrative that links spirituality with quantum physics and consciousness. The documentary surrounds a deaf female photographer who encounters emotional and existential obstructions in her life. She gradually comes to nourish the idea that individual and group consciousness can influence the material world.

Suggested Actions

1. Spend some time every day in at least one activity that connects you with a higher power or reminds you where you fit in the large scheme of things. Be mindful of your place in the larger context of life.
2. Spend ten minutes daily in breathing deeply, relaxing, and meditating (emptying the mind of thoughts by focusing on breathing). Observe how you feel afterward.
3. Mindfully worship and/or pray for five to ten minutes a day. Remove all distractions from your environment during this time.
4. Read a spiritual or religious book every day for half an hour. Discuss the ideas in it with someone you trust and respect.
5. Explore different religions – take a class, research over the internet, meet a person of different religion, or attend the congregation of a different religion. Speak to people who practice this faith and get to know them as people.
6. Note whether your everyday actions have any spiritual significance. If not, think ways of connecting the two.
7. Explore a fundamental purpose of your life and link your actions to it. Each day, ask yourself if you accomplished anything toward fulfilling this purpose
8. Reflect how your spiritual beliefs and practices connect you with others authentically. Find spiritual similarities with those you love.
9. Make a weekly list of experiences that forge strong connections in your life. Be mindful of how you fit into the lives of others.
10. Write your eulogy or ask your loved ones how they would like to remember you. Do they mention your signature strengths?
11. Build relationships with people who appreciate your ability to help them identify and solve problems. Rely on them and let them rely on you. Be aware of the level of trust in your relationships.
12. Connect with people and organizations that enhance your signature strengths. Think of ways to use your strengths to make people more aware of their own spirituality.