THE PRESENT / PART TWO

Discovering *your virtues.*

Recognize the strengths that are already yours, and explore how they can help you grow.



THE PRINTABLE WORKBOOK

60-90 minutes / at your own pace

A little space to write, reflect, and find your way.

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A LITTLE ORIENTATION

Inside these pages

Follow the exercises in order, then repeat the worksheets for the traits, goals, or experiences you choose.

Before you begin 3

A little background 4

Extraversion/Introversion 7

Openness/Traditionalism 8

Conscientiousness/Carelessness 9

Emotional Stability/Low Stress Tolerance 10

Agreeable/Assertive 11

Choose what matters most 12

Put your priorities in order 13

Describe an experience 14

An alternative outcome 15

Build on this strength 16

A moment to look back 17

A little more room 18

GETTING STARTED

Before you begin

Recognize the strengths that are already yours, and explore how they can help you grow.

This is a space for you. Write honestly, at your own pace. Take a break and return whenever you are ready. Suggested lengths and times are guides, not deadlines.

> Print on A4 paper at actual size, or choose Fit for US Letter. Write on the ruled pages. Use the extra writing page whenever you need more space.

These pages work entirely on paper. No account or internet connection is needed after downloading. Keep your completed pages somewhere private.

Your path through this program

01 Recognize your strengths

02 Choose & prioritize

03 Build on what is good

> Select traits from each category, narrow your choices, and put them in priority order. Repeat the three reflection exercises for every trait you decide to explore.

Name (optional) _____ Started _____

GETTING STARTED

A little background

To complete the following exercise, there are a number of things that are useful to know (you may have encountered this information previously if you have completed the faults analysis exercise, but it might be worthwhile to review it):

Everybody's personality is composed of two higher-order traits. The first higher-order trait is known as plasticity, and can be thought of as the tendency to be flexible, exploratory, curious and quick to adapt. The second higher-order trait is known as stability, and can be thought of as the tendency to be structured, organized, emotionally stable and focused.

Plasticity

Plasticity, the first higher-order trait, can be further broken down into two sub-traits: Extraversion (the tendency to be enthusiastic and dominant) and Openness (the tendency to be open-minded and intelligent).

Extraversion (Outgoing vs Reserved)

- Sociable
- Active
- Adventurousness
- Positive
- Excitement-Seeking
- Gregarious

Openness (Original vs Traditional)

- Fantasy-prone
- Aesthetically-minded
- Philosophical
- Creative
- Intuitive
- Intellectual

A little background / continued

Stability

Stability, the second higher-order trait, can be further broken down into three sub-traits: Conscientiousness (the tendency to be orderly and industrious), Emotional Stability (lack of negative emotional volatility and the tendency to withdraw), and Agreeableness (politeness and compassion, as opposed to belligerence or aggression).

Conscientiousness (Conscientious vs Carefree)

- Competent
- Orderly
- Decisive
- Achievement-oriented
- Self-disciplined
- Deliberate
- Industrious

Emotional Stability (Calm vs Nervous)

- Anxious (reversed)
- Angry (reversed)
- Hostile (reversed)
- Depressed (reversed)
- Self-Conscious (reversed)
- Vulnerable (reversed)

Agreeableness (Agreeable vs Assertive/Aggressive)

- Warm
- Trusting
- Straightforward
- Altruistic
- Modest
- Compliant
- Tender-minded
- Nice

A little background / continued

Impact of Personality Traits

There are advantages and disadvantages to each trait, particularly at the extremes. Extremely sociable, extraverted people can be dominant and impulsive, while introverted, quiet people can easily become isolated and depressed. Extremely open people can be scattered and overwhelmed by their own thoughts and ideas, while closed-minded people may become narrow and inflexible. Exceptionally conscientious people can be obsessive about order, judgmental and rigid, while their more carefree counterparts may be messy, undisciplined and careless. People very high in emotional stability may engage in risky, dangerous behavior, while those who are more neurotic can become so preoccupied by anxiety and pain that they are unable to function. Finally, extremely agreeable people may never stand up for themselves, while those who are too assertive can be aggressive, callous and bullying.

Change

Personality is reasonably stable over the lifespan, and is also powerfully influenced by hereditary or genetic factors. Despite this, personality can broaden or even transform. As people age, for example, they tend to become more agreeable, conscientious and emotionally stable.
Changing personality means changing habits of action, presumption and perception. Personality change requires the formulation of clear future goals, as well as discipline and practice. People who are too agreeable can learn to stand up for themselves. Disorderly people can become more conscientious. Introverted people can become socially skilled. People who experience paralyzing levels of negative emotion can learn to explore.

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Extraversion/Introversion

Choose 2-10 strengths that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Can be the life of the party
- [ ] Easily start conversations
- [ ] Don't mind being the center of attention
- [ ] Can take charge and lead
- [ ] Feel at ease with people
- [ ] Am often happy
- [ ] Am enthusiastic about new opportunities
- [ ] Like to invite people out or at home to socialize
- [ ] Do not dominate conversations
- [ ] Do not spend my money on a whim
- [ ] Do not attract undue attention to myself
- [ ] Am not grandiose or arrogant
- [ ] Enjoy time in natural surroundings
- [ ] Am rarely impulsive
- [ ] Let other people have the spotlight
- [ ] Feel comfortable around people
- [ ] Talk to a lot of different people at social occasions
- [ ] Make friends easily
- [ ] Know how to captivate people
- [ ] Am skilled in handling social situations
- [ ] Make other people laugh and have fun
- [ ] Am fun to be around
- [ ] Can listen well
- [ ] Am rarely or never too loud
- [ ] Do not party or socialize excessively
- [ ] Do not always talk about myself
- [ ] Am comfortable alone
- [ ] Do not always need to seek excitement or novelty
- [ ] Do not always have to be the center of attention
- [ ] Think before I act

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Openness/Traditionalism

Choose 2-10 strengths that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Am full of ideas
- [ ] Can handle a lot of information
- [ ] Catch on to things quickly
- [ ] Am philosophically inclined
- [ ] Am a creative person
- [ ] Am always learning new things
- [ ] Am entrepreneurial
- [ ] Can always see new possibility in things
- [ ] Am a very sensible person
- [ ] Respect authority
- [ ] Do not believe in change for the sake of change
- [ ] Am stable in my moral beliefs
- [ ] Am concerned that my parents or relatives approve of my decisions
- [ ] Am a down-to-earth person
- [ ] Am seldom attracted by foolish, new-age ideas
- [ ] Am quick to understand things
- [ ] Carry the conversation to a higher level
- [ ] Have a rich vocabulary
- [ ] Have a vivid imagination
- [ ] Have excellent ideas
- [ ] Spend time reflecting on things
- [ ] Have a lot of insight into myself and others
- [ ] Believe that the tried and true way is the right way
- [ ] Never follow fads
- [ ] See the value in tradition and custom
- [ ] Am seldom or never bothered by strange thoughts or feelings
- [ ] Try not to introduce unnecessary change into my life
- [ ] Do not upset my parents or other cultural authorities with doubts and questions
- [ ] Am not flighty or unpredictable
- [ ] Am resistant to radical, dangerous thoughts

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Conscientiousness/Carelessness

Choose 2-10 strengths that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Am always prepared
- [ ] Am exacting in my work
- [ ] Do things according to a plan
- [ ] Get chores or tasks done right away
- [ ] Love order and regularity
- [ ] Pay attention to details
- [ ] Always arrive at appointments early or on time
- [ ] Do what I say I am going to do
- [ ] Can easily be spontaneous and enjoy the moment
- [ ] Do not set my expectations too high
- [ ] Do not feel that I always have to be in control
- [ ] Am not bothered when things don't go according to plan
- [ ] Don't get too caught up in my work
- [ ] Never do more work than is necessary
- [ ] Know how to go with the flow
- [ ] Have a very long attention span and can work without being distracted
- [ ] Continue until everything is perfect
- [ ] Strive for efficiency and economy
- [ ] Have seen my tendency for hard work pay off
- [ ] Make plans and stick to them
- [ ] Am extremely reliable
- [ ] Am very goal-oriented
- [ ] Have a relaxed, laid-back attitude
- [ ] Am not judgemental
- [ ] Am never perfectionistic
- [ ] Do not impose a rigid set of standards on other people
- [ ] Live in the moment
- [ ] Am seldom bothered by disorder
- [ ] Am not too uptight
- [ ] Don't waste my time thinking about little details

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Emotional Stability/Low Stress Tolerance

Choose 2-10 strengths that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Am content with my physical appearance, despite its flaws
- [ ] Am difficult to offend
- [ ] Am in control of my emotions
- [ ] Am not afraid of new people or social situations
- [ ] Am rarely or never stopped from doing what I want by my fears
- [ ] Am relaxed most of the time
- [ ] Calm down quickly when I do get upset
- [ ] Don't get caught up in my problems or blow things out of proportion
- [ ] Rarely complain or grumble about things
- [ ] Rarely get irritated or angry
- [ ] Rarely or never suffer extreme anxiety, even when stressed
- [ ] Rarely self-conscious, ashamed or embarrassed
- [ ] Seldom feel depressed or blue
- [ ] Seldom feel hurt
- [ ] Seldom get disturbed or upset
- [ ] Seldom do anything dangerous
- [ ] Am rarely incautious
- [ ] Feel enough shame if I do something stupid so I won't do it again
- [ ] Make safety a top priority
- [ ] Watch what I eat carefully
- [ ] Am aware of potential trouble even when other people appear confident
- [ ] Am protective and careful with little children
- [ ] Will go to the doctor's office if there seems to be something wrong with me
- [ ] Am very careful with my sexual behavior
- [ ] Am a cautious, careful person
- [ ] Don't rush into things before I feel comfortable
- [ ] My higher levels of anxiety have kept me safer than some people I know
- [ ] Am good at identifying the risks in new situations
- [ ] Stay out of places that might have dangerous people in them
- [ ] Stick to what I know and am comfortable with

RECOGNIZE YOUR PATTERNS

Agreeable/Assertive

Choose 2-10 strengths that feel familiar. You will narrow your selection later. There is no need to judge yourself as you read.

- [ ] Trust people
- [ ] Am on good terms with nearly everyone
- [ ] Have a soft heart
- [ ] Inquire genuinely about others' well-being
- [ ] Love children
- [ ] Sympathize with others' feelings
- [ ] Take time out for others
- [ ] Am a very loyal friend
- [ ] Am not easily swayed by emotions that might be manipulative
- [ ] Am sceptical
- [ ] Will not forgive easily if betrayed or deceived
- [ ] Am not naively innocent
- [ ] Do not always believe what people promise
- [ ] Am very rarely taken advantage of
- [ ] Can be demanding when the circumstances warrant
- [ ] Am interested in people
- [ ] Feel others' emotions
- [ ] Work very well with other people on teams
- [ ] Know how to comfort others
- [ ] Make people feel at ease
- [ ] Am a good peacemaker
- [ ] Truly care about others
- [ ] Will stand up for myself
- [ ] Am good at seeing beneath the surface of false good intentions
- [ ] Am not a martyr
- [ ] Can see when people are playing games
- [ ] Am aware that malevolence exists in the world
- [ ] Do not trust people too easily
- [ ] Will confront people if necessary
- [ ] Am cautious of good intentions before proof is offered

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Choose what matters most

Choose 2-20 of your selected traits to explore. We suggest 6-9. Each one will have three short reflections.

> Refer back to the traits you checked in the category lists. Write your final selection below, or in your notebook.

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MAKE IT PERSONAL

Put your priorities in order

List the traits that matter most to you at the top. You can change this order later.

> Write your chosen traits from most to least important. Use this order for the reflection worksheets.

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REPEAT FOR EACH CHOSEN TRAIT

Describe an experience

> Use this exercise for every selected trait, working in priority order.

Trait: _____

Please write a short story about a time when this virtue contributed to a situation that had a positive impact on your life. Approximately 1,000 characters is a useful starting point.

Your reflection

REPEAT FOR EACH CHOSEN TRAIT

An alternative outcome

> Use this exercise for every selected trait, working in priority order.

Trait: _____

What might you have done differently in that situation so that it could have turned out even better?

Your reflection

REPEAT FOR EACH CHOSEN TRAIT

Build on this strength

> Use this exercise for every selected trait, working in priority order.

Trait: _____

How could you develop this virtue so that you and the people you care about benefit as much as possible?

Your reflection

YOUR FINAL REFLECTION

A moment to look back

Read through your pages. You can revisit any answer as your perspective changes.

What do you understand more clearly now?

What is one small step you want to take next?

Before you put these pages away

- [ ] I have worked through the exercises I chose.
- [ ] I have reviewed my reflections.
- [ ] I have chosen a next step.
- [ ] I have put my pages somewhere private.

EXTRA WRITING PAGE

A little more room

Print this page as often as you need. For repeated exercises, copy the relevant worksheet pages or continue here.

Exercise / trait / goal / experience: _____