Who Am I ?

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You are unique. You are filled with noble qualities of character, such as perhaps truthfulness, creativity, humility, purposefulness, dependability, or flexibility. You have much to contribute to the lives of others. However, you may not be clear what your character strengths are.

The foundation of self-respect and personal transformation is personal knowledge. As you know and understand yourself--your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions--you learn what is excellent about yourself and what needs to improve. When you do a regular review of your words and behavior, then you can clearly see where you are creating positive outcomes and where you aren’t. Each day can be better than the previous one.

“I re-built my self-respect by going back to school, finding a good job, and taking on increasingly challenging positions. However, my breakthrough really happened when I began to see myself as a noble human being filled with beautiful, blooming qualities. Seeing that I had inner strengths of value made a huge contribution to my ability to be happy and succeed.”

You may or may not be familiar with character. Simply put, character is:

* The sum of all the qualities you develop throughout your life as you make choices about how to speak and act; character affects most of your words and actions
* The inner essence of who you are as a human being
* Your moral compass or ethical strength that provides the unwavering drive to choose what is right, even when that choice could cause you difficulties, and even if no one else is watching you or knows what you are doing

Your reputation is what others think about you. Your character is who you truly are. You have significant ability to practice character qualities with others for their benefit and yours, as well as to transform the ones that are weaker. You can build a good reputation for yourself by developing and applying strong character qualities. That change comes from the inside and will naturally reflect *outward.*

One aspect of character that is wise to remember is that the qualities often work best in pairs. You could be purposeful, but often that needs to be balanced with flexibility or moderation. Truthfulness is vital, but it’s wise to pair your words with compassion that takes the other person into consideration.

If you have not done this type of reflection about yourself, it may feel a little overwhelming. It may help you to think about how the character qualities look in the behavior of people around you, such as, family members, friends, or coworkers. Who has been a power of example for you? Perhaps you have a close friend or relative who knows you well and would be willing to help you with building your self-knowledge and self-respect.

***“Character is the foundation of life.”***

*~ John Covey, Director of Franklin Covey Home and Family Division*

**Assessing and Understanding My Character Qualities**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Purposes:**

1. To gain greater understanding of my own character strengths.
2. To identify areas for improvement.

The chart below is an effective way to systematically learn about your character. Complete it carefully, thoughtfully pausing to reflect as needed.

**Instructions:**

1. Read through the definitions of qualities in the table below. There are many more possible character qualities you could consider, so add in any missing ones that are important to you. However, be cautious about not overwhelming yourself with too many at this stage.

Rate yourself on each character quality by using the 5-point scale provided. Take whatever time you need to be thorough. Take whatever time you need to be thorough. You may or may not be able to do this activity all at once, and you may need to make revisions at times. You can rate yourself on each character quality by using the 5-point scale provided below. Record the number you think is accurate next to each quality. Do your best to be honest, but also don’t be overly harsh with yourself.

1. Write down the number you think is accurate in the “Rating” column, using the following assessment scale:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Rarely Use | I rarely use this quality, so my words and actions can often cause problems |
| 2 | Use occasionally | I use this quality only occasionally, possibly causing problems |
| 3 | Working on it | I understand this quality, and am strengthening it; sometimes resulting in positive outcomes |
| 4 | Getting better | I am becoming more consistent in practicing this quality, usually with positive outcomes |
| 5 | Consistently use | I practice this quality consciously and consistently (not perfectly!) |

1. After you have rated yourself on each, go through the list again and put an “**S**” next to qualities that are your outstanding **strengths**.

D. Now, go back through the list, and put a“**G**” next to the qualities that are significant areas where you want to see **growth** and development happening.

E. Next, looking at the list again, circle those 4 qualities you most want to develop or build upon—at least for now. The qualities you rated 1, 2, or 3 may offer good choices if you want to develop those that are in a currently weaker state.

**Note:** This activity will get you started on a self-understanding and development process if you are not doing one currently. You will continue to develop your qualities throughout your life.

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| **Rating** | **S or G** | **Character Qualities** |
|  |  | 1. **Adherence is** following guidelines, rules, agreements, and laws created to protect relationships, safety, and order; stays faithful to promises made to others.
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|  |  | 1. **Compassion is** demonstrating a unique capacity to listen deeply to others about their situations; understanding others’ feelings; caring for others’ well-being; and seeking ways to ease someone’s pain and suffering in mutually satisfactory ways.
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|  |  | 1. **Creativity is** drawing on ideas, inspiration, or imagination from many sources to develop or produce something new; being resourceful, intuitive, and solving problems in unique and beneficial ways; and immersing in a problem or situation, looking broadly for insights and connections, allowing for breakthrough ideas and solutions to emerge.
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|  |  | 1. **Dependability is** making and keeping commitments, completing agreed tasks, honestly managing resources and money, handling information wisely, and cleaning up after mistakes.
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|  |  | 1. **Excellence is** achieving high standards and a superior quality of work, effort, appearance, relationships, and personal development; learning and improving from experiences; and continually raising and meeting expectations.
 |
|  |  | 1. **Flexibility is** being open to change and surprises, adjusting and adapting to life as it happens; being nimble in responding to different people and situations; and considering new and different approaches, methods, ideas, and viewpoints.
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|  |  | 1. **Friendliness is** demonstrating an outgoing and positive social attitude and reaching out to connect and build relationships with people; and gracious and warm consideration for others by interacting with polite manners, respectful gestures, thoughtful actions, and tactful language.
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|  |  | 1. **Honor is** having clear principles, beliefs, and positive intentions that guide actions to create beneficial change.
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|  |  | 1. **Humility is** seeing and accepting one’s whole self, including strengths, imperfections, abilities, accomplishments, failures, and needs in modest and realistic perspective; offering one’s time, knowledge, and talents in a self-effacing way; and being willing to accept the knowledge, skills, and help of others.
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|  |  | 1. **Joyfulness is** maintaining a happy, optimistic, and uplifting attitude; energetically celebrating the best in relationships, work, and service; and looking at the positive side of circumstances.
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| **Rating** | **S or G** | **Character Qualities (continued)** |
|  |  | 1. **Justice is** making careful, independent, and proactive observations of other’s actions; initiating decisions, agreements, or actions based on clear facts that are free of bias or prejudice; ensuring fair rewards and appropriate natural consequences or agreed corrective actions occur; and setting appropriate boundaries in relationships.
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|  |  | 1. **Moderation is** recognizing and avoiding extremes in use of time, words, actions, and other choices; accomplishing variety, balance, and positive outcomes in such aspects as rest, work, reflection, community service, and leisure activities; and effectively applying and adjusting a level of intensity of focus and action to both accomplish goals and protect relationships and well-being.
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|  |  | 1. **Orderliness is** living and working with a sense of harmony; creating uncluttered, well-organized, clean, and shareable spaces; developing systems that allow for easy finding; and systematically planning improvements, tasks, and projects.
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|  |  | 1. **Perseverance is** applying energy, effort, and resources toward worthwhile goals until achievement is attained; being committed to the long-term future benefit of actions done in the present; and using willpower to overcome challenges or adversity as they arise.
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|  |  | 1. **Purposefulness is** pursuing and fulfilling meaningful long-term personal goals, commitments, aspirations, and needs; contributing ideas, words, and actions; and participating primarily in vital activities that contribute to desired outcomes.
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|  |  | 1. **Reflection is** calm self-awareness, understanding, and assessment; inwardly exploring actions, circumstances, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions; seeking inspiration; and analyzing to learn the best approaches for improving situations.
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|  |  | 1. **Respect is** interacting with all people and what they value with fair treatment, dignity, consideration, and esteem; and recognizing the best knowledge, skills, talents, and abilities of others.
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|  |  | 1. **Self-Discipline is** maintaining the inner control to perform needed and important tasks in a timely way; consciously responding in appropriate ways; and choosing what is beneficial or productive and resisting what is harmful or distracting.
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|  |  | 1. **Service is** acting selflessly and often sacrificially, directly or indirectly, and with positive intent; and providing time, knowledge, or resources to benefit others without expecting reward or recognition.
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| **Rating** | **S or G** | **Character Qualities (continued)** |
|  |  | 1. **Trust is** generously extending confidence; assuming the good intentions and actions of others; accompanying others through learning experiences that build skills and capacities; and giving and expecting appropriate confidentiality.
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|  |  | 1. **Truthfulness is** recognizing and accurately communicating facts and feelings; independently seeking knowledge of people, circumstances, issues, and information.
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|  |  | 1. **Unity is** consciously looking for and strengthening points of commonality, harmony, connection, and attraction; accepting differences; and working with others to build a strong and coherent foundation for oneness, love, fairness, commitment, inclusion, cooperation, and common goals.
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