Leading with Confidence & Ease: It all begins with YOU
Renée Riley-Adams and Jessica D. Wakefield

Learning Outcomes:
✓ Explore and appreciate your character strengths & values
✓ Cultivate self-trust by knowing how you are a leader in your own life
✓ Communicate and collaborate to gain practical insights & wisdom
✓ Develop your compassion by listening to yourself & other women
✓ Embrace your strengths and motivation
✓ Design a Next Best Step for work, home or community
✓ Re-discover and expand your network of support, reaching out to give and receive encouragement and valuing your magnificence. #OneStepInLeading
Inspirational Quotes:

“Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.”
~Frank Outlaw

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”
~Mahatma Gandhi

“A weakness is a strength overused.”
~Kris King, Wings Seminars

“A strong woman understands that the gifts such as logic, decisiveness, and strength are just as feminine as intuition and emotional connection. She values and uses all of her gifts.”
~Nancy Rathburn

“Most people search high and wide for the keys to success. If they only knew, the key to their dreams lies within.”
~George Washington Carver

“A woman is like a tea bag – you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water.”
~Eleanor Roosevelt

“May what I do flow from me like a river, no forcing and no holding back, the way it is with children.”
~Rainer Maria Rilke

“Until we can receive with an open heart, we are never really giving with an open heart. When we attach judgement to receiving help, we knowingly or unknowingly attach judgment to giving help.”
~Brené Brown

“The more we realize that most of our views of ourselves, of others, and of presumed limits regarding our talents, our health, and our happiness were mindlessly accepted by us at an earlier time in our lives, the more we open up to the realization that these too can change. And all we need do to begin the process is to be mindful.”
~Ellen J. Langer

“Relax into and enjoy your own magnificence!”
~Jessica & Renée
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The VIA Classification of Character Strength Descriptions

Wisdom: Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

1. **Creativity** [originality, ingenuity]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it

2. **Curiosity** [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering

3. **Judgment** [critical thinking]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one’s mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly

4. **Love of Learning**: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one’s own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows

5. **Perspective** [wisdom]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people

Courage: Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

6. **Bravery** [valor]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it

7. **Perseverance or Grit** [persistence, industriousness]: Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks

8. **Honesty** [authenticity, integrity]: Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one’s feelings and actions

9. **Enthusiasm or Zest** [vitality, vigor, energy]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated

Humanity: Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others

10. **Love**: Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people

11. **Kindness** [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, “niceness”]: Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them

12. **Social Intelligence** [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick
Justice: Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life
13. **Teamwork** [citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one’s share
14. **Fairness**: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
15. **Leadership**: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the time maintain time good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.

Temperance: Strengths that protect against excess
16. **Forgiveness**: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful
17. **Humility**: Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is
18. **Prudence**: Being careful about one’s choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
19. *Self-Regulation or Self-Control*: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one’s appetites and emotions

Transcendence: Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning
20. **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence** [awe, wonder, elevation]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience
21. *Gratitude*: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks
22. *Hope or Optimism* [future-mindedness, future orientation]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about
23. **Humor** [playfulness]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes
24. **Spirituality** [faith, purpose]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort

* Seven strengths, in particular, can be a real game changer for academic achievement, success and happiness no matter what your circumstance: Optimism, Gratitude, Social Intelligence, Curiosity, Self-control, Enthusiasm or Zeal, Perseverance or Grit
Questions for Character Strength Discussion:

Round 1- Identify Your Strengths and Appreciate What’s Going Well

A. Select one of your character strengths. How does this strength help you lead with ease?
B. What are your top five strengths and how do they shine through you in daily life?
C. Notice where your strengths are in the table. Are they all in one particular area (e.g. the Wisdom or Virtue column) or are they spread out? What does this mean to you?
D. The film suggests that we are like superheroes when we mindfully focus on our strengths. What would the impact be on your life if you focused on your strengths more often?

Round 2- Develop your Character Strengths

A. The film explores two ideas around character development: First, to focus on the strengths you have, and second, to consider the strengths you’d like. As you refer to the table of character strengths, which strengths would you like to explore?
B. Identify one character strength to discover and explore.
C. What impact would developing this character strength have on your life?
D. What are some steps you can take to develop that character strength?

Round 3- Explore Cultural Character Strengths

A. Different cultures and age groups value different character strengths. What are the most valued character strengths in your culture or age group?
B. What character strengths are most valued at your place of work?
C. What character strengths are most valued in your family?

Round 4- Shape Our Community’s Character

A. Who do you admire and what character strengths do you see in them?
B. How do your strengths help you to mentor others or to be mentored?
C. How do you use your strengths to affect your community?

Round 5- Applying a “Growth Mindset”

A. The film describes a fixed mindset (when you think you can’t change who you are) and a growth mindset (when you believe you can change and improve things about yourself). In what area of your life do you think, “I’m no good at X,” or “I don’t like Y”?
B. How can you use your character strengths to open possibilities for learning?
C. As the film mentions, failure can be a good thing. What “failures” have you experienced? What did you learn?
D. If our character strengths and our abilities aren’t fixed, that means we could potentially achieve Big Things. If you could achieve anything, what would you do?
Questions for Character Strength Discussion (Ages 4-9)

1. Take a look at the character strengths periodic table. Pick your top three strengths.
2. How can you use these strengths to make the world a better place?
3. Look back at the table of character strengths. What are three character strengths you’d like to develop?
4. Pick one of the strengths you want to develop. What’s something you could do right now to bring more of that strength into your life?
5. The Science of Character describes character strengths as being like super powers. Pick your favorite superhero. Why is that hero your favorite? What character strengths do they have?
6. If you were a superhero, what would your super-character strengths be?
7. Draw the superhero you!
8. Now think about real people. Who do you admire most in the world? What are the character strengths you admire in them?
9. Draw a pie chart of the character strengths that you’re made of. Which strength is the biggest slice? Which is the smallest?
10. Nobody’s perfect. Sometimes it’s good to mess up, because that’s how we learn and improve. Think about a time you really messed up. What did you learn?

Questions for Character Strength Discussion (Ages 10-14)

1. Take a look at the periodic table of character strengths. What are your three strongest character strengths?
2. How can you use those strengths to improve your life? How can you use them to improve your community?
3. Now look back at the table of character strengths. What are three character strengths you’d like to develop?
4. Pick one of the strengths you want to develop. What’s something you could do right now to bring more of that strength into your life?
5. Think about who you admire most in the world. What are the character strengths you admire in them?
6. Different cultures value different character strengths. What are the most valued character strengths in your culture?
7. What character strengths are valued most at your school? Are these the same as the character strengths most valued in your home, or are they different? Explain.
8. The film describes a fixed mindset (when you think you can’t change who you are) and a growth mindset (when you believe you can change and improve things about yourself). Is there an area in your life where you have a fixed mindset, where you might say, “I’m no good at sports,” or “I just can’t do math”? Can you think of a way you can use your character strengths to improve in that area?
9. Nobody’s perfect. Sometimes it’s good to mess up, because that’s how we learn and improve. Think about a time you really messed up. What did you learn?
10. As the film mentions, failing can be a good thing—we learn by failing. Think of an activity you might fail at the first time but want to try anyway: snowboarding, skateboarding, singing, a dance class. What would it be? What could you learn by failing?
COMPLETE THE WHEEL:

1. Review the 8 Wheel Categories - think briefly what a satisfying life might look like for you in each area.

2. Next, draw a line across each segment that represents your satisfaction score for each area.
   - Imagine the centre of the wheel is 0 and the outer edge is 10
   - Choose a value between 1 (very dissatisfied) and 10 (fully satisfied)
   - Now draw a line and write the score alongside (see example above)

IMPORTANT: Use the FIRST number (score) that pops into your head, not the number you think it should be!
Don’t stop here, take action!


- Take the VIA Survey that measures them. What are your highest strengths? How will you express them more strongly in your life? [http://www.viame.org/](http://www.viame.org/)


- Online courses on strengths: [http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Courses](http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Courses)


- Beyoncé, “I Was Here” video: [https://youtu.be/i41qWJ6QjPI](https://youtu.be/i41qWJ6QjPI)


References:

VIA Institute on Character: [https://www.viacharacter.org/www/](https://www.viacharacter.org/www/)

Let it Ripple Film Studio: [letitripple.org](http://letitripple.org)

Woven: A strengths approach to building high-performing teams by Fiona Campbell Hunter