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Processing Uncertainty: Invest in Your Strengths

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Processing Uncertainty: Invest in Your Strengths

Ryan Niemiec and Robert McGrath are leaders in the positive psychology movement. Last year, they wrote a book, *The Power of Character Strengths: Appreciate and Ignite Your Positive Personality*. The book highlights their work as leaders at the VIA Institute on Character (VIA is short for "Virtues in Action."). The organization was created with the help of Martin Seligman and has played a leading role in the study of virtue as it applies to flourishing. They have teamed up with over 50 scientists to create a deeper understanding of the power of character strengths.

They also created the VIA Inventory of Strengths test that has been taken by millions of people from around the world. This assessment will help you to find your top strengths, which can be applied to your home life, work, in relationships, and in your community. The assessment takes just 15 minutes to complete, and at the end you'll receive a list of the 24 character strengths, with your personal strengths listed from 1 to 24 (fun fact: there are 600 sextillion possible combinations!).

Here are a few highlights from the book to help better frame the assessment:

"Character is the part of your personality that other people tend to admire, respect, and cherish. It is the sum total of those aspects of who you are as a person that leads others to see you as a person with integrity, a person who contributes, a person who can be trusted."

"Nowhere is your uniqueness clearer than with your [top 5] signature strengths. The concept of signature strengths is an important part of the VIA Classification. These are the strengths that are strongest or most prominent in your own strengths profile. With over 5.1 million possible combinations in your top five strengths, these are the elements of your character that warrant your closest attention. They hold great potential. Ultimately, they are likely to be the strengths that matter most to you, that are most central to your identity."

The VIA Institute identifies three key features as being common in signature strengths, explained as "the 3 E's":

Essential – They feel essential to who you are as a person. The person for whom 'appreciation of beauty and excellence' is a signature strength doesn't just like beauty; seeking out experiences of beauty is part of what makes them who they are.

Effortless – When you enact the strength, it feels natural and effortless. Being curious or kind isn't work; it just flows. Recent research suggests this sense of flow when using a character strength is the best single identifier of a signature strength.

Energizing – Using the strength energizes and uplifts you. It leaves you feeling happy, in balance, and ready to take on more.

"May you grow in strengths awareness. May you appreciate, ignite, and grow your strengths use. May your strengths benefit others. May your life be filled with wellbeing."

The next page contains information directly from the authors about how the 24 different character strengths are broken into 6 different classifications. When you view this information while looking at the results of your assessment, you should gain a clearer picture of what each strength means for you.



VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

Virtue of Wisdom



Creativity

Original, adaptive, ingenuity, seeing and doing things in different ways



Curiosity

Interest, novelty-seeking, exploration, openness to experience



Judgment

Critical thinking, thinking through all sides, not jumping to conclusions



Love of Learning

Mastering new skills & topics, systematically adding to knowledge



Perspective

Wisdom, providing wise counsel, taking the big picture view

Virtue of Courage



Bravery

Valor, not shrinking from threat or challenge, facing fears, speaking up for what's right



Perseverance

Persistence, industry, finishing what one starts, overcoming obstacles



Honesty

Authenticity, being true to oneself, sincerity without pretense, integrity



Zest

Vitality, enthusiasm for life, vigor, energy, not doing things half-heartedly

Virtue of Humanity



Love

Both loving and being loved, valuing close relations with others, genuine warmth



Kindness

Generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruism, doing for others



Social Intelligence

Aware of the motives and feelings of oneself and others, knows what makes others tick



Teamwork

Citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty, contributing to a group effort



Fairness

Adhering to principles of justice, not allowing feelings to bias decisions about others



Leadership

Organizing group activities to get things done, positively influencing others

Virtue of Justice

Virtue of Temperance



Forgiveness

Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings, giving people a second chance, letting go of hurt



Humility

Modesty, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves



Prudence

Careful about one's choices, cautious, not taking undue risks



Self-Regulation

Self-control, disciplined, managing impulses, emotions, and vices

Virtue of Transcendence



Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence

Awe and wonder for beauty, admiration for skill and moral greatness



Gratitude

Thankful for the good, expressing thanks, feeling blessed



Hope

Optimism, positive future-mindedness, expecting the best & working to achieve it



Humor

Playfulness, bringing smiles to others, lighthearted – seeing the lighter side



Spirituality

Connecting with the sacred, purpose, meaning, faith, religiousness