



24 WAYS  
TO SEE THE BEST  
IN EVERY CHILD



♡ *Kristen Carter*



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Believing in  
yourself changes  
everything.

# Introduction

It's so easy for today's kids to focus on all the ways they aren't "good enough."

When we were young, it was tough enough comparing ourselves to the cute girls, the buff guys or the straight-A students in our own schools. Now, our children are exposed to "perfect people" from all over the world right on their own phones.

Never in recorded history have stress, depression, anxiety and, sadly, suicide been more prevalent among young people.

**Fortunately**, there's a great way we as parents — and teachers, grandparents and anyone else involved with kids — can help them believe in the ways they are strong, good, capable and valuable *on the inside*.

The qualities listed to the right and described in the following pages are the strengths used in the world's most popular assessment of character strengths.\* They are also like a magic vocabulary when you use them to say what you see and admire in someone.

Even better, when we see the best in our children, they begin to believe in themselves -- which can change everything. Inner strengths are the foundation for feeling positive and competent; for recognizing that being different can be okay; and for seeing how you can make a difference in the world.

## Do this:

1. Choose a few strengths you see in your child.
2. When you see her or him using those strengths, tell them you see that strength in them OR, for epic validation, tell them you *respect them* for having it.
3. Identify your own strengths. We're all valuable in different ways, and this will help you and your child have some great conversations about how you're the same or different but equally awesome.

\* VIA Assessment of Strengths, [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org)

## CHARACTER STRENGTHS

### Wisdom and Knowledge

Creativity  
Curiosity  
Love of Learning  
Open-Mindedness  
Perspective

### Courage

Bravery  
Honesty  
Perseverance  
Zest

### Humanity

Kindness  
Love  
Social Intelligence

### Justice

Fairness  
Leadership  
Teamwork

### Temperance

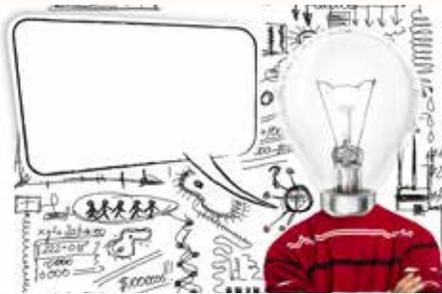
Forgiveness  
Humility  
Prudence  
Self-Control

### Transcendence

Awe  
Gratitude  
Hope  
Humor  
Spirituality

# Strengths of Wisdom & Knowledge

Cognitive strengths that entail  
the acquisition and use of knowledge



## Creativity

- You have a good imagination,
- Come up with new ways to do things, and can
- Think “outside the box.”



## Curiosity

- You like to explore and discover,
- Find new topics and subjects fascinating, and
- Enjoy experiencing new things.



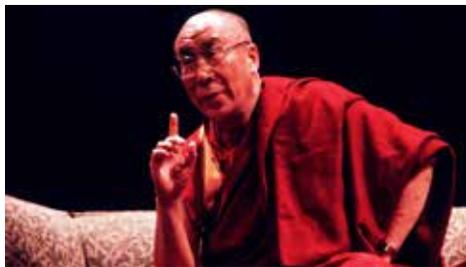
## Love of Learning

- You enjoy mastering new skills, topics or bodies of knowledge, and
- Enjoy building on what you know.



## Open-Mindedness

- You don't jump to conclusions,
- Are able to change your mind, and
- Weigh all evidence fairly.



## Perspective

- You have a way of looking at the world that makes sense to you and others, and
- People ask for your opinion.

# Strengths of Courage

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



## Bravery

- You don't shrink from challenges,
- You speak up for what's right, and
- You act on your convictions.



## Honesty

- You are genuine and sincere,
- Accept responsibility for yourself, and
- Speak the truth.



## Perseverance

- You finish what you start,
- Stay on track despite obstacles, and
- Feel good about completing tasks.



## Zest

- You approach life with excitement,
- Don't do things half-heartedly, and
- Live life as an adventure.

***"Mastering others is strength.  
Mastering oneself makes you fearless."***

~ Lao Tzu ~

# Strengths of Humanity

Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others



## Kindness

- You take care of people,
- Do favors and kind deeds for others, and
- Help people.



## Love

- You value close relationships, especially those that are reciprocal, and
- Are able to give and receive expressions of love.



## Social Intelligence

- You are aware of your own and other people's feelings and motives,
- Know what makes other people tick, and
- Know how to fit in.

*"To handle yourself, use your head;  
to handle others, use your heart."*

~ Eleanor Roosevelt ~

# Strengths of Justice

Civic strengths that underlie  
healthy community life



## Fairness

- You treat all people fairly and justly,
- Don't let your feelings get in the way, and
- Give everyone a fair chance.



## Leadership

- You organize group activities and see that they happen, and
- Encourage people to get things done while keeping the peace.



## Teamwork

- You are loyal to groups you belong to,
- Work well as a member of a team, and
- Do your share.

*"You can do what I cannot do.  
I can do what you cannot do.  
Together we can do great things."*

*~ Mother Teresa ~*

# Strengths of Temperance

Strengths that protect against personal overindulgence



## Forgiveness

- You forgive those who do wrong,
- Accept others' shortcomings, and
- Give people a second chance.



## Modesty

- You don't think of yourself as being more special than others, and you
- Let your accomplishments speak for themselves.



## Prudence

- You keep long-term goals in mind,
- Can delay immediate gratification in order to have a better future, and
- Don't take unnecessary risks.



## Self-Control

- You regulate what you feel and do, and
- Have the self-discipline to control your emotions and behaviors.

*"If you do not conquer self,  
you will be conquered by self."*

~ Napoleon Hill ~

# Strengths of Transcendence

Strengths that forge connections to the universe  
and provide meaning



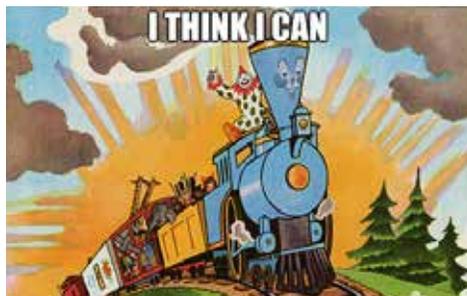
## Awe

- You notice and appreciate beauty, excellence and skilled performance in various areas of life, from art and nature to sport and everyday experience.



## Gratitude

- You are aware of and thankful for the good things that happen, and
- Take time to express appreciation.



## Hope

- You expect the best in the future and work to achieve it, and
- Believe a good future is something that can be brought about.



## Humor

- You like to laugh and tease,
- Bring smiles to other people, and
- See the light side.



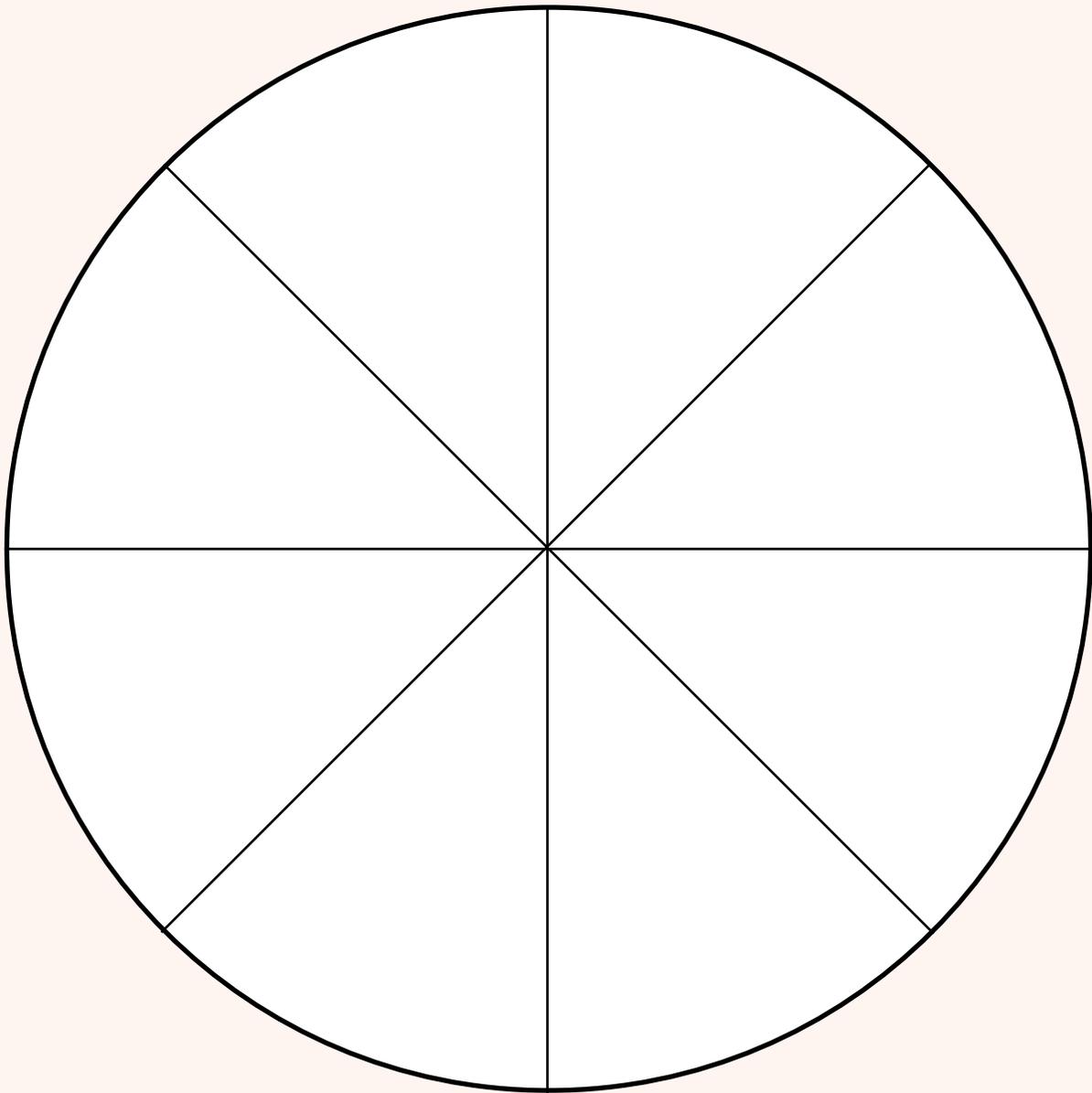
## Spirituality

- You believe there's a higher purpose,
- Have a sense of where you fit in, and
- Behave accordingly.

# A Full Circle of Strengths

Put the names of the strengths you see in your child in the circle segments below. In the extra spaces, add a few of their natural talents (running fast, singing on key, math, whatever).

When you see one of these qualities in action, tell your child you admire and respect them for it. You can even encourage them to draw on these strengths to handle challenges, like, "How could you use your kindness/humor/curiosity/teamwork/etc., to deal with that?"



# Sample Strengths Journal

*If I could teach one practice to kids (or parents), this would be it. It's like a gratitude journal, but with the added power of encouraging you to acknowledge how your own efforts and strengths help make good things happen. It's one of the most effective tools I know to build confidence. You can copy this and use it as a written journal or use it as a conversational practice in your family.*

What went well today?

- ▶ Why did that go well? Did you do anything to help make it happen?

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- ▶ Why did that go well? Did you do anything to help make it happen?

# NOTES



I hope this workbook gave you some insights into your child's strengths (and even your own). If you'd like to learn more about strengths, how to use them to make life better, or even get some one-on-one support, email me at [kristen@kcarter.com](mailto:kristen@kcarter.com).

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