

## VIA Survey of Character Strengths – Coaching Guide

The [Values In Action \(VIA\) Survey of Character Strengths](#) can be used in almost any type of Coaching, but especially in:

- Leadership Coaching
- Career Coaching
- Job Search Coaching
- Life Coaching
- ADHD Coaching

### Increasing Happiness

- Created by Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman founders of the Positive Psychology movement.
- **If you use your Character Strengths in your work and other activities you will feel gratification, fulfillment, happiness**
- Six Core Virtues emerged from their analysis:
  - Courage
  - Justice
  - Humanity (Humanity & Love)
  - Temperance
  - Transcendence
  - Wisdom (Wisdom & Knowledge)
- Broken down into 24 Character Strengths

### Contracting the Coaching Session Agreement

- What do you hope to gain by debriefing the Values in Action (VIA) Survey of Character Strengths survey?

### Show the client pages 19-22 in the PowerPoint

- Are there any items from these slides that you want to add to your list of what you hope to gain from debriefing this survey?
- Would you also like to learn about how you can use the results to **increase your happiness?**

## Results Validation

- Do these 5 strengths all seem like your top 5 strengths?
- Do you feel authentically you when you are exercising them?
- Do you feel a sense of “flow” when utilizing each one of them?
  - You may want to select the 6<sup>th</sup> one to replace the one that doesn’t induce a sense of flow for you.
- What are your peak moments?
  - Did you use one of your strengths in that peak moment?
- What engages you most during the day? Are you using one or more of your character strengths when you do that?

## Leadership Coaching Questions

- How do you currently use your Character Strengths in your work?
  - How does that feel? Are you more successful in this area of your work?
- How can you leverage use of these strengths more? How can you expand your use of these strengths?
- What areas of your work could you use your strengths more?
- How could you leverage them in your leadership approach?
- Which of the Character Strengths represent the best of you as a leader?
  - How can you bring more of that into your leadership style?
- How can you use your Character Strengths to be a more authentic leader?
- Which strengths are you not using in your leadership approach?
  - How could you use that strength in your work?
- How could your character strengths help you reach your goals?
- Most jobs are shapeable, how could you shape your job to use your strengths more?
- How could you shape your job so that you use character strengths you don’t like to use as much less?
- What do your strengths tell you about what you should consider delegating? (who to? staff, boss, vendor, peers)
- For Each Strength:
  - How can you use **Social intelligence** more in your work? (*ask for each Strength*) How can you expand on that?
- **Increase self-understanding:** What does knowing your strengths tell you about yourself? What could you do with that information?
- How could you use your strengths for **personal branding**?
- What are your peak business experiences? Did they involve your strengths?

- How could you leverage your strengths to get a promotion?
- What strengths you will most need at the next level of leadership (review the entire list)?
- Using your Character Strengths in other areas of your life can help you be happier, and therefore a better leader. How can you use your strengths more in your: hobbies, volunteer work, everyday life, relationships?

### Using the Survey with Your Staff

- If you don't have your staff take the VIA Survey, how can you spot their top Character Strengths?
- Review each of your employees, what are their top Character Strengths?
  - How could you help each employee use their Character Strengths more?
  - Based on your staff's Characters Strengths, are they in the right jobs?

### Designing Actions

- Do you have any actions you'd like to take that relates to your character strengths?
- You've listed some ways you could use your strengths more; do you have any actions you'd like to take this week to use them more?
  - What might get in your way of doing that?
  - What will your long term actions be?
- We have a document on our web site that's a brainstorm of ways to use your strengths that might help get you thinking. Would you like to take an action to review that and see if it stimulates any other ideas for using your strengths?
- When will you do that by? Will you share those ideas with anyone?

### Increasing Happiness

- There are 5 Strengths that are most closely associated with happiness. They are:
  - Gratitude
  - Curiosity & Interest in the World
  - Zest, Enthusiasm & Energy (Vitality)
  - Hope, Optimism & Future-Mindedness
  - Capacity to Love & Be Love
- For you, these strengths are number v, w, x, y, z – that's great.
- Gratitude is the one that is most closely related to happiness. There are exercises to increase gratitude on this page. (Show her webpage)
- How could you increase use of the 5 character strengths more?
- Do you want to pick one to work on increasing for the next few months?

### Career Exploration, Career Management & Job Search Coaching

- Look for careers that utilize more than one of the client's top 5 strengths to create more fulfillment & happiness
- Brainstorm careers based on Survey results to add to their List of Possible careers
- Review final Career Possibilities List using Career Matrix (contains Top 5 Strengths as well as other criteria)
- Identify Careers that utilize the most of their strengths
- Which strengths can you use to position yourself to move toward the new career, job, or industry you are targeting?

### Life Coaching

- Help the client create more happiness and success by identifying ways to use their strengths more in their:
  - Work
  - Hobbies
  - Volunteer work
  - Life activities
- How to split responsibilities with life partner
- Could use to determine where to live
- Build self esteem
- Improve relationships through sharing Character Strengths
- Other ways?
- [Exercises to Increase Happiness \(Gratitude\)](#)

### ADHD Coaching

Helps the client:

- Build self esteem
  - Identify their Peak Experiences
    - Identify where Peak Experiences align with Character Strengths
  - See their positive attributes
  - Leverage Character Strengths to increase self esteem
- Select & Prioritize activities (work, hobbies, volunteer work, personal activities) that utilize their character strengths
- Stimulate an increase of interest in selected activities, and, therefore, focus (or hyper-focus)
- Increase their success because they are more likely to excel in Character-Strengths-oriented activities

- Increase self-understanding

### Questions to Identify Values in Action (If the Client Doesn't Want to Take the Inventory)

- **Childhood memories** – What do you remember doing as a child that you were good at? Enjoyed most?
- **Energy** – What activities give you energy?
- **Authenticity** – What are you doing when you feel most like the real you?
- **Ease** – What activities come naturally to you?
- **Attention** - Where does your attention naturally go?
- **Rapid Learning** - What skills or activities did you pick up quickly?
- **To Do** - What seems to always get done on your "To Do" List?
- **Peak Experiences** – Describe some of your Peak Experiences.

## Resources

### Take the Survey online at either:

- [On the Authentic Happiness Website](#) (Free)
  - There are other inventories and surveys on this webpage
  - Adult and Children's version
- [VIA Institute on Character](#)

### Sources of Information about VIA

- [Authentic Happiness](#) book by Martin Seligman (Positive Psychologist), 2004
  - Many Positive Psychology & Happiness Based on his work
- [Authentic Happiness Website](#)
- University of Pennsylvania (offers a Master's in Positive Psychology)
- [VIA Institute on Character](#): training for Coaches available
- [Engage – International Positive Psychology Association](#)

### Articles

- [The VIA Survey: 7 Ways to Recognize Your Strengths and Act on Them](#)
- *Psychology Today Blog: [VIA Survey or StrengthsFinder? By Ryan Niemiec](#)*

### Glacier Point Solutions / Donna Schilder Coaching VIA Survey Resources

- [GPSI Overview of the VIA Survey](#)
- [Examples of Career, Jobs, Volunteer Work, Hobbies that Use Character Strengths](#)
- [GPSI Exercises to Increase Happiness \(Gratitude\)](#)