**Work Readiness Activity Week #10: Identifying and *Activating* your Signature Character Strengths**

Good Afternoon,

I hope that you enjoyed the holiday weekend and were able to soak up some sunshine!

Now, work readiness activity #10, let’s get to it!

In past activities, we have asked you to take the time to reflect and identify your strengths and areas you could improve upon. Not only did you ask yourself these questions, but you also sought input from family and friends, asking for their opinions, based on their observations and relationships with you.

**Why is it important to identify your strengths?**

The VIA Institute on Character explains, “Your character strengths are the qualities that come most naturally to you. … When you discover your greatest strengths, you learn to use them to handle stress and life challenges, become happier, and develop relationships with those who matter most to you.… **Research reveals that people who use their strengths a lot are 18x more likely to be flourishing than those who do not use their strengths.**” This relates to all areas of life, including careers: “**Knowing and activating your strengths can make you happier, more productive and more engaged in your work**.” (VIA Institute on Character, 2020)

**Part 1: Watch this Ted Talk**, *A Universal Language that Describes What’s Best in Us* by Ryan Niemiec, to learn more about the importance of activating your character strengths. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMWck0mKGWc>

**Part 2: Take this survey** <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register> to identify your 24 character strengths. **While answering the survey questions, don’t stop to think about if your responses are right or wrong, good or bad, just be honest and truthful with yourself!** I completed the survey last week and it only took about 10-minutes of my time.

Before you can take the survey, you will first need to create an account, but it does not cost anything to take the survey or to view your results. Save your account login information because your survey results do get saved onto your profile, which will enable you to log back into your account in the future to view your results and retake the exam down the road, comparing your results to past surveys.

**Side note:** If you do not feel comfortable creating an account, please reach out and let me know. As an alternative, I can provide you with a list of the character strengths descriptions and you can then pick the ones you feel best represent your top strengths. However, after personally taking the survey, I feel like my results provided insightful realizations, that I wouldn’t have been aware of otherwise. If you first want to learn more about this non-profit, read more here <https://www.viacharacter.org/about> and explore the rest of their website.

**Email xxx the list of your top 7 character strengths.**

You willalso hearyour *top strengths* referred to as your *signature* character strengths, those that come most natural to you. Please keep in mind, “Your lower strengths (those near the bottom of your profile) are not weaknesses. Instead, they are strengths that come less naturally to you and require more effort to use.” (VIA Institute on Character, 2020)

**Part 3: After you have received your results, take the time to understand your top strengths.** To really dig deep into each one, and to make sure you thoroughly understand/comprehend them, refer to this page on the VIA website: <https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths>. You can locate and open your strengths from the list provided and, from there, it directs you to a page which provides a clear description/meaning, questions to ask yourself, and examples of ways to apply your strength.

**Part 4:** **Over the next week, pick one signature strength to focus on and find a new way to apply it to your life (in a way that you don’t already practice it and in a way that you haven’t before).** In order to *activate* your strengths, you must be mindful and intentional with these practices, incorporate them in a different way than you are accustomed to.

To give an example, one of my signature strengths is perseverance. To practice this in a new way, I sought ideas from the VIA website. Their suggestions were as follows:

* Set five small goals weekly. Break them into practical steps, accomplish them on time, and monitor your progress from week to week.
* Keep a checklist of things to do and regularly update it.
* Select a role-model who exemplifies perseverance and determine how you can follow her/his footsteps.

Out of those three suggestions, I already incorporate the second one into my life and have been doing so for years. So, I will continue to practice perseverance in this way, and keep checklists, but because this is something I already do, I won’t consider it a *new way* to apply and activate my strength. Instead, I will practice the other suggestions provided, incorporating it this week and in the weeks to come.

**Be sure to provide xxx with an update of how you applied your signature strength and what affect it had upon your day/week.**

**\*\***If you are currently working and are interested to learn how you can put your signature strengths into action on the job site, check out this article: <https://www.viacharacter.org/topics/articles/strengths-work-better-together-research-says>

**Send xx your written responses by xxx. As always, speak up and reach out if you have questions or would like to talk through any parts of this activity with us. We are happy to support you!**

**References**

TEDx Talks. (2017, June 29). TEDxXavierUniversity - Ryan Niemiec - A universal language that describes what’s best in us [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMWck0mKGWc>

VIA Institute on Character. (2020). *Bring your character strengths to life & live more fully.* <https://www.viacharacter.org/>

VIA Institute on Character. (2020)*.* *Career building.*

<https://viacharacter.org/topics/career-building>

*VIA Institute on Character. (2020, May 20). Your character strengths survey results.* [*https://www.viacharacter.org/*](https://www.viacharacter.org/)