



Finding Your
**Super
Powers!**

Discovering and Using
Your Character Strengths!
Let's Make Your Life
a Little Happier!



Finding Your Super Powers!

WISDOM

(strength of head)

Creativity

- Originality
- Adaptive
- Ingenuity

Curiosity

- Interest
- Novelty-Seeking
- Exploration
- Openness

Judgment

- Critical Thinking
- Thinking Things Through
- Open-mindedness

Love of Learning

- Mastering New Skills & Topics
- Systematically Adding to Knowledge

Perspective

- Wisdom
- Providing Wise Counsel
- Taking the Big Picture View

COURAGE

(strength of heart)

Bravery

- Valor
- Not Shrinking from Fear
- Speaking Up for What's Right

Perseverance

- Persistence
- Industry
- Finishing What One Starts

Honesty

- Authenticity
- Integrity

Zest

- Vitality
- Enthusiasm
- Vigor
- Energy
- Feeling Alive

HUMANITY

(strength of others)

Love

- Both Loving and Being Loved
- Valuing Close Relations with Others

Kindness

- Generosity
- Nurturance
- Care & Compassion
- Altruism
- "Niceness"

Social Intelligence

- Aware of the Motives/Feelings of Self/Others
- Knowing what Makes Other People Tick

Research has shown that when you focus on what works — your inner strengths — you become happier. One of the leading institutions on positivity and positive psychology has studied character strengths for years, and their research has shown by focusing on your character strengths, especially your top 5 strengths — your “Super Powers” — you have a sense of flourishing, you feel happier, you are more engaged, you are energized, you are more resilient, and have a sense of purpose.

There are 24 character strengths, each one falling under 6 broad virtues. All of us have the 24 strengths, but in varying degrees, giving each of us a unique character profile.

JUSTICE

(strength of community)

Teamwork

- Citizenship
- Social Responsibility
- Loyalty

Fairness

- Just
- Not Letting Feelings Bias Decisions About Others

Leadership

- Organizing Group Activities
- Encouraging a Group to Get Things Done

TEMPERANCE

(strength of self)

Forgiveness

- Mercy
- Accepting Others' Shortcomings
- Giving People a Second Chance

Humility

- Modesty
- Letting One's Accomplishments Speak for Themselves

Prudence

- Careful
- Cautious
- Not Taking Undue Risks

Self-Regulation

- Self-Control
- Disciplined
- Managing Impulses & Emotions

TRANSCENDENCE

(strength of spirit)

Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence

- Awe
- Wonder
- Elevation

Gratitude

- Thankful for the Good
- Expressing Thanks
- Feeling Blessed

Hope

- Optimism
- Future-Mindedness
- Future Orientation

Humor

- Playfulness
- Bringing Smiles to Others
- Lighthearted

Spirituality

- Faith
- Purpose
- Meaning
- Belief in a Calling

Character Strengths Approach

Most people, when asked to choose between focusing on their strengths or focusing on their weaknesses, pick the latter. However, studies in individuals and organizations clearly demonstrate that focusing on strengths not only makes people happier, it makes them more successful.



The Strengths Approach:

It's about identifying your best self

What is right for you, not what others are telling you.

It's about focusing on your strengths AND managing your weaknesses

Do not ignore your weaknesses. Improve your weaknesses to the point that they do not prevent you from exercising your strengths.

Be on the watch for when strengths become weaknesses

A manager who is very analytical may not connect to people. Someone who is too empathetic in the workplace will not be able to make necessary decisions.

It's about being honest

Acknowledges problems, but doesn't get lost in them.

This approach is positive

Focuses on what is best and good.

This approach is empowering

Encourages and advances the individual.

This approach is energizing

Uplifts and fuels the person.

This approach connects people

Brings the person closer to others, aiding in mutual connection.

Research shows focusing on your top five signature strengths – Your SUPER POWERS – is beneficial, making you happier and more successful.

Signature Strengths – Top 5

Your signature strengths are those strengths that best describe the positive aspects of who you are. These strengths are strong capacities in you and they are probably engaging, energizing, and comfortable for you to use. Your family and friends would immediately agree these are important strengths that you have. Finding ways to use and express these strengths is likely to bring you many benefits, and can help you create your best life. These are your SUPER POWERS!

Middle Strengths – 6-19

Your middle strengths are an important part of who you are. While these are not your highest, or signature strengths, they still are likely to be ones that you express in your life. However, it may be that they are strengths that you express mostly in one life domain (e.g., work) instead of broadly across all domains, or they could be strengths that are, situational strengths, in that you express them when the circumstance calls for it. These strengths are likely not as automatic as your signature strengths, but they are close within reach and at your disposal. Focusing on these strengths and building on them can help you in situational aspects of life.

Lesser Strengths – Lower 5

You have a capacity for each of these lesser strengths. These are character strengths that do not occur as naturally as your other strengths. It probably requires a fair amount of effort and energy for you to use these strengths well, and at times this may be draining to you. Naturally, some individuals may have an interest in boosting up their lesser strengths. It is most likely this can be achieved by deliberate practice and by using your signature strengths to do so. Remember: These are your INNER strengths, not your external strengths or talents. For example, you may be very talented at being creative, but it may not be an inner passion of yours. And remember, there are NO BAD strengths.

Find Your Signature Strengths at viacharacter.org



How to Use Your Character Strengths

Here are some strength-building exercises. Use these to spur thought and action on how you can focus on and use your strengths. Find ways to focus on them at home, at work, in all aspects of your life. All of these exercises are ways to help tap into your strengths and create a happier and more fulfilling life for you. Many of the exercises are also ways you can use that strength to help and heal the world.

Courage

Bravery

- Don't be afraid to befriend someone who is different but positive.
- Identify an area or an experience where you shied away from a confrontation due to fear or fear of not saying the right thing. Practice the phrases, the tones, and the mannerisms that will enable you to effectively confront the situation next time and speak up for injustice.

Perseverance

- 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 is different than you, who exemplifies perseverance and determine how you can follow her/his footsteps. Share their story with friends and colleagues. Share their story on your social media.

Honesty

- The next time you are asked for advice, give constructive, direct and authentic feedback.
- Honor your commitments in all of your relationships. If you agree to do something or schedule a time to meet with someone, be reliable and follow through.
- Have an honest conversation with yourself about how you may have treated someone differently because of the color of their skin or other difference from you. Come at it with a sense of forgiveness for yourself and how you can do better going forward.

Zest

- Improve your sleep hygiene by establishing regular sleep time, eating 3-4 hours before sleeping, avoiding doing any work in the bed, not taking caffeine late in the evening, etc. Notice changes in your energy level.
- Do a physically rigorous activity (bike riding, running, sports singing, playing) that you always wanted to do but have not done yet.
- Call old friend and reminisce good old times.
- Reach out to someone you normally wouldn't reach out to and share a fun outing, doing something together.

Humanity

Love

- Engage in a favorite activity with a loved one (e.g., hiking, going to an amusement park, biking, walking in the park, swimming, camping, jogging).
- Convey love at work by making an effort to understand who you're working with, finding out what is important to them and engaging with them on the topic regularly.

Kindness

- Say kinder and softer words to people when interacting through email, writing letters, talking on phone. Smile when answering the phone and sound happy to hear from the person on the other end of the line.
- Take out a friend(s) on a surprise dinner and pay for it.
- Perform a random act of kindness each day for a week for strangers.

Social Intelligence

- Practice noticing, labeling and expressing emotions. After you become aware of an emotion, label it, and if appropriate, express it to another.
- Watch a favorite TV program or film muted and write feelings observed.
- Write five personal feelings daily you have when it comes to race relations and monitor patterns.

Justice

Teamwork

- Help someone close to you set a goal and then periodically check on their progress.
- Start a book club with family members, friends or colleagues. Schedule a time to meet and discuss the selected books.
- Volunteer for activities such as serving as a Big Brother or Big Sister or constructing a Habitat for Humanity house.

Fairness

- The next time you make a mistake, self-monitor to see whether you admit it.
- Self-monitor to see whether you think about or treat people of other ethnicities and cultures stereotypically.

Leadership

- When two people are in an argument, mediate by inviting others to share their thoughts and emphasizing problem solving.
- Read a biography and/or watch film of a leader who is not your ethnicity and evaluate how he/she inspires you in practical ways.

Temperance

Forgiveness

- Take 20 minutes and write about the personal benefits that resulted from a negative incident.
- Think of someone who you may have treated differently in your past. Put yourself in their shoes and try to understand their perspective. Forgive yourself and do better. If you still know them, reach out and ask for forgiveness.

Humility

- Resist showing off accomplishments for a week and notice the changes in your interpersonal relationships.
- Notice if you speak more than others in a group situation.
- Admit your mistakes and apologize to those who you may have wronged.

Prudence

- Remove all extraneous distractions before you make your next three important decisions.
- Visualize the consequences of your next decision in one, five and ten years' time.
- Think twice before saying anything that you think may be taken the wrong way or that doesn't help further connecting vs. distancing.

Self-Regulation

- Set goals to improve your everyday living (e.g., room cleaning, laundry, doing dishes, cleaning your desk) and make sure you complete the tasks.
- Pay close attentions to your biological clock. Do your most important tasks when you are most alert.
- Next time you get upset about something ugly on social media, make a conscious effort to control your emotions and focus on what you can do to positively help.

Transcendence

Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence

- Get regular exposure to green space in your environment, especially if you live/work in an urban setting.
- Keep a "beauty log." When you believe you are seeing something beautiful in humankind such as the virtuous behavior of others – write it down. Describe the beauty in a few sentences.

Gratitude

- Write down three good things that you are grateful for each day.
- Set aside at least ten minutes every day to savor a pleasant experience.
- Reflect on how you can give something back to society that would make them feel grateful.

Hope

- Write an internal movie that features one of your goals. Picture yourself overcoming the obstacles, developing pathways around and through problems, to reach your goal.
- Write about a good event and why it will last and spread. How is this event linked to your actions?
- Picture yourself helping someone overcome obstacles. Think of ways you can deliver hope to those who are in need.

Humor

- Think about a past event in which you used humor for your benefit and the benefit of others.
- Watch a funny sitcom/ movie or read a comic/funny blog daily.
- Each day make a conscious effort to be aware of your sense of humor, others' sense of humor, funny situations, and clever comments and record them in a daily journal. Look over and make sure your humor only helps ease the world's sadness and that you don't use humor at the expense of someone's beliefs or who they are.

Spirituality

- Cultivate sacred moments in which you set aside time to "just be" with a special/sacred object or space/environment.
- Build in spiritual tools as a regular practice (ex: prayer, meditation, exploring nature) or as a way of approaching life such as giving charity, showing compassion to less fortunate individuals.
- When experiencing trauma or a difficult situation, look for the deeper meaning and purpose of the experience.

Wisdom

Creativity

- Set time aside each day for creative thinking or creative activities (such as: writing poems or using an everyday household object in a new way)
- When facing a problem, define the issue clearly and then practice divergent thinking, seeing all sides and creating multiple solutions/outcomes rather than just one solution.

Curiosity

- Consider an activity you dislike. Pay attention to 3 novel features of this activity while you do it.
- Practice active curiosity and explore your current environment, paying attention to anything you may often ignore or take for granted or things that need your attention to help heal the world.

Judgment

- Play devil's advocate on an issue that you have strong opinions about.
- Examine a past event that you are not happy with and brainstorm ideas for other ways that you could have approached that event/activity.

Love of Learning

- Deliberately learn five new words, including their meaning and usage, at least twice a week.
- Read a non-fiction book monthly on a topic you find absorbing and engaging.
- Follow an ongoing global event through newspapers, TV or internet.
- Learn more about the challenges of those different than you. Learn how others have helped heal the world. Learn how you can help as well.

Perspective

- For your next interaction, first focus on listening carefully and then focus on sharing your ideas and thoughts.
- Read quotes on wisdom, find one that resonates and then re-write it to make it your own and put it to memory. Try to think about ways that you can live more true to that quote.
- Find someone wise (alive or someone who has passed on), read or watch a film on their life, and identify how their life can guide your decisions and actions when it comes to inclusivity.

Did you know?

According to research, people who use their strengths daily are six times more likely to be engaged on the job and are less likely to experience stress or anxiety. People who regularly use their strengths are more engaged and happier at work. There's also the additional benefit of lower employee turnover.

Overuse and Underuse of Strengths

It's important to regularly ask yourself: How much of the time am I underusing my strengths? How much am I overusing my strengths? And how much am I optimally using my strengths? Researchers have recently found that both underusing and overusing your strengths can have negative consequences for your wellbeing by heightening your social anxiety. For example, overusing the strength of humility can put you at risk of closing yourself off from others in an effort to avoid evaluation. Underusing your strength of humor may mean that you're seen as too serious. Underusing zest can dampen down enthusiasm for social contact. Researchers suggest that the underuse of your strengths is more likely to undermine your wellbeing than overusing them. Your goal should be to consistently find the optimal use of your strengths in different situations to produce the outcomes you want. Just like Goldilocks, you're looking for that 'just right amount'!

STRENGTH	OVERUSE	UNDERUSE	IDEAL
Creativity	Eccentricity	Conformity	Originality that is Adaptive
Curiosity	Nosiness	Disinterest	Exploration/Seeking Novelty
Judgment	Narrow-mindedness	Un-reflectiveness	Critical Thinking & Rationality Cynicism
Love of Learning	Know-it-all	Complacency	Systematic Deepening (of Knowledge)
Perspective	Overbearing	Shallowness	The Wider View
Bravery	Foolhardiness	Cowardice	Facing Fears, Confronting Adversity
Perseverance	Obsessiveness	Fragility	Keep Going, Overcome all Obstacles
Honesty	Righteousness	Phoniness	Being Authentic
Zest	Hyperactive	Sedentary	Enthusiasm for Life
Love	Emotional Promiscuity	Emotional Isolation	Genuine, Reciprocal Warmth
Kindness	Intrusiveness	Indifference	Doing for Others
Social Intelligence	Over-analyzing	Obtuse or clueless	Tuned in, then Savvy
Teamwork	Dependant	Selfishness	Collaborative, Participating in Group Effort
Fairness	Detachment	Partisanship	Equal Opportunity for All
Leadership	Despotism	Compliant	Positively Influencing Others
Forgiveness	Permissive	Merciless	Letting Go of Hurt When Wronged
Humility	Self-deprecation	Baseless Self-esteem	Achievement Does Not Elevate Worth
Prudence	Stuffiness	Sensation Seeking	Wise Caution
Self-Regulation	Inhibition	Self-indulgence	Self-management of Vices
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence	Snobbery or Perfectionism	Oblivion	Seeing the Life Behind Things
Gratitude	Ingratiation	Rugged Individualism	Thankfulness
Hope	Pollyanna-ism	Negative	Positive Expectations
Humor	Giddiness	Overly Serious	Offering Pleasure/Laughter to Others
Spirituality	Fanaticism	Lack of Ethical Standards	Connecting with the Sacred

Use your Super Powers... Your Top Strengths!



The more you focus on what's great about you – your inner strengths – the happier, more connected and more successful you will be! Use the exercise below to help you practice using your top strengths, your super powers. Pick a different one a day and focus on it!

One of my TOP strengths is: _____

One thing I will do this week
to use this strength:



One of my TOP strengths is: _____

One thing I will do this week
to use this strength:



One of my MIDDLE strengths is: _____

One thing I will do this week
to use this strength:





8-1-8 Super Powers Strengths Exercise



When it comes to our work and life, most of us would love to have more opportunities to do what we do best. But there is one obstacle that consistently gets in our way: time. Finding time to tap into our strengths each day can be challenging.

Here is a small way you can find the time to do what you love. It's a small, daily strength development habit that can help you feel more engaged, energized in life and also valued at work: Strengths 8-1-8.

- *8-seconds of breathing and mindfulness*
Which strength speaks to you today. Close your eyes and concentrate on breathing. This will center you so you can decide what strength you're wishing to focus on, and you'll also feel more at ease to focus on that strength.
- *1-minute of looking at your top strengths and choosing which strength you wish to focus on*
You have many top strengths. Which one, in your 8-seconds of breathing, spoke to you? How will you focus on that strength?
- *8-minutes of doing something that taps into that strength*
Spend 8 minutes doing something that taps into that strength. For example, if you're focusing on Love of Learning, look online for new words and discover their meaning. If you're focusing on Kindness, think of three things you can do that day to be kind.

Doing this exercise helps you focus on what you love at least one time a day, and that can lead to a more fulfilled, happier life.

8-1-8 Checklist:

- 8-seconds of breathing, focusing on breath, relaxing, mindfulness.
- The top strength I will focus on: _____
- How I will focus on it: _____



Align Your Super Powers at Work!

One of the most practical uses of strengths is that your top strengths can be aligned with any activity, conversation, task or routine in life, including your work life. You can deliberately connect your signature strengths with your tasks to reach outcomes that will not only make you happier, but will benefit the entire company... and bring a sense of purpose and calling into your work. Use this exercise to align your strengths with what you do at work.

List one of your signature strengths: _____

List 5 tasks you do most frequently at work:

How can you use that strength with each task:

(e.g. leading team meetings, creating zoom meetings, emailing clients, working with clients, making sales calls, writing/designing content, etc.)

(e.g. using creativity to lead a team meeting by ending it with a new quote each time, using creativity to offer different perspectives when making a sales call.)



Repeat with a different strength...

List one of your signature strengths: _____

List 5 tasks you do most frequently at work:

How can you use that strength with each task:

(e.g. leading team meetings, creating zoom meetings, emailing clients, working with clients, making sales calls, writing/designing content, etc.)

(e.g. using creativity to lead a team meeting by ending it with a new quote each time, using creativity to offer different perspectives when making a sales call.)



Dance Your Power!

Super Powers = Strengths = Solar Plexus Power Energy
Power. Strength. Self-esteem. Warrior Energy. Resilience

The Music To Tap into Your Power Energy: Bring in the Drums, the Fire!

This music brings Power into the elemental mix of Life. Turn on the drums, turn on Katy Perry as she tell us, "I got the eye of the tiger, a fighter, dancing through the fire." Turn on "Brave." Dance your power, dance your authority. We are strong and brave. This energy center reminds us that we can stand strong even when change is happening, when we're fearful of what is next. Stand strong and then move forward anyway. Below are just some songs that connect with your strengths, your power. What others can you put on the list?

SONG

Bang the Drum
Batakatu
Best Years of Our Life
Brave
Dare
Dinner at the Sugarbush
Disco Inferno
Everybody Dance Now
Eye of the Tiger
Fire Dance
Fire Under My Feet
Fxxxkin Perfect
Ganesh is Fresh
Get this party started
Hit me with your best shot
I got a feeling
I will Survive
In this World
La Cachimba
LaBamba
Let's Get Started
Like it or Not
Lips are Movin
Masterpiece
Me Too
N-O is my New Yes
Respect
Roar
Rock on Hanuman
Rolling in the Deep
Shake it Off
Soak Up the Sun
Stayin' Alive
Strength, Courage, Wisdom

ARTIST

Abel
KDZ The Drummers of Kripalu Live
Baha Men
Sara Bareillas
Kelly Clarkson
Brent Lewis
The Trammps
C+C Music Factory
Survivor
Nomad
Leona Lewis
Pink
MC Yogi
Pink
Pat Benetar
Black Eyed Peas
Gloria Gaynor
Moby
Jose' Luis Cortes
Ritchie Valens
Black Eyed Peas
Madonna
Meghan Trainor
Jesse J
Meghan Trainor
Karen Drucker
Aretha Franklin
Katy Perry
MC Yogi
Adele
Taylor Swift
Sheryl Crow
Bee Gees
India Arie

Drums

**Feel the
beat**

Brave

*Character Strengths, your super powers,
are all about feeling your power, your
courage, your resilience — YOU DO YOU
and take on the world!*

SONG

Sunshine
Survivor
Stronger
That's Not My Name
The Definition of Me
This is Me
Top of the World
Turn the Beat Around
Uptown Funk
Walk this Way
We Got the Beat

ARTIST

Matisyahu
Destiny s Child
Kelly Clarkson
The Ting Tings
Mandisa
Keala Settle
Imagine Dragons
Gloria Estefan
Mark Ronson
Aerosmith
The Go Go's

I am STRONG.



Be a Benefit Finder!

Remember the main concept of character strengths and the science of happiness? Instead of just focusing on all the things that could go wrong... it's also important to celebrate all the things that can go right! Become a benefit finder!

Two Archetypes in Organizations and Life:

Fault-finder and the Benefit-finder

Happiness depends on our state of mind more so than on the state of our bank account. Happiness is about what we focus on.

Two people can experience the exact same thing and experience it differently. To one it is a disaster, to one it is a growth experience. External circumstances DO matter at the extremes, of course, but beyond extreme circumstances, the external matters very little to our happiness.



There are two archetypes and what we choose to focus on determines our happiness.

Fault-finder

- Always looks at the problem. Always finds things to complain about.
- “The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise.” – Henry David Thoreau
- The world is just a bad, negative place.
- Many companies can be filled with fault-finders. It’s their story. If you find yourself in a conversation with a fault-finder, try to help them find the positive about the situation. If they are too steeped in the negative, end the conversation and move on.

Benefit-finder

- Tries to look on the bright side of life.
 - The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common.
 - “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” – Winston Churchill
- The benefit-finder finds the good things in their lives. They experience bad feelings, too (there will ALWAYS be some challenging days), but there’s a balance.

Train Yourself to be a Benefit Finder

There will always be things that happen. How we become happier is by finding something good about the bad. You can train yourself to be a benefit-finder:

- At the end of the day, write down something “bad” that happened during the day.
- Then write down 1-3 things that are “good” about that situation — something good that you learned, something that came out of the situation that is positive.
- Do this for a week or more. You will soon find yourself finding the benefit more and more.

The more you focus on something good about a situation, the more positive you will become about life in general.

Every moment in our lives we have a choice: a choice to look at the negative or focus on the positive. You can always find a benefit in something. Looking at the “bright side” just 51% of the time can tip the scale.



Be a Benefit Finder!

Write one thing that went wrong today:

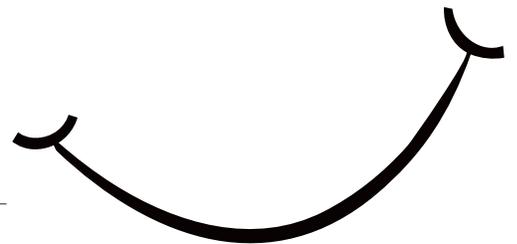
Now, write down at least one good thing regarding the above. If you can think of 2-3, great, but write down at least one.

Write one thing that went wrong today:

Now, write down at least one good thing regarding the above. If you can think of 2-3, great, but write down at least one.

Practice Gratitude

Write five things that you are grateful for in your life:



- Make it heartfelt.
- FEEL it. If you just write it, you're just going through the motion.
- Visualize it.
- Journal gratitude when it feels right. One time a week is enough to increase happiness.



5 Easy Ways to Happiness

According to Shawn Achor, a New York Times bestselling author on the research of happiness and one of the world's leading experts on the connection between happiness and success, there are five very short habits that if you do them every day, will improve your levels of happiness. It's best to do each of them each day, but just doing one for 21-days will significantly increase your happiness.



1. Practice Gratitude

Spend two minutes a day scanning the world for three new things you're grateful for. The reason why that's powerful is you're training your brain to scan the world in a new pattern, you're scanning for positives, instead of scanning for threats. It's the fastest way of teaching optimism. This only works if you're scanning for new things and you're very specific. If you say, "I'm grateful for my son," it doesn't work. But if you say, "I'm grateful for my son because he hugged me today, which means I'm loved regardless," that specificity gets the brain stuck in a new pattern of optimism

2. Journaling a Positive Experience

For two minutes a day, think of one positive experience that's occurred during the past 24-hours. Bullet point each detail you can remember. It works because the brain can't tell the difference between visualization and actual experience, so you've just doubled the most meaningful experience in your brain.

3. The Fun Fifteen

Do 15-minutes of cardiovascular exercise a day. It's the equivalent of taking an anti-depressant for the first six months, but with a 30 percent lower relapse rate over the next two years. This is not a repudiation of anti-depressants. It's an indication that exercise works, because your brain records a victory, and that cascades to the next activity. The best one to do? DANCING!

4. Mindfulness/Breathing for 2 Minutes

Take your hands off your keyboard for two minutes a day. Go from multitasking to simply watching your breath go in and out. This raises accuracy rates. Improves levels of happiness. Drops your stress levels. And it takes two minutes.

5. Conscious Acts of Kindness

The final habit is the most powerful one. For two minutes each day, start work by writing a two-minute positive e-mail or text praising or thanking one person you know. And do it for a different person each day. People who do this not only get great e-mails and texts back, they are also perceived as positive leaders. The key: it has to be heartfelt.