THE SCIENCE OF CHARACTER

INSTRUCTIONS

Included in this deck are four types of cards to delve deeper into character development:

- 24 Strength Cards
- 12 Question Cards
- Three Quote Cards
- Four Discussion Guides

There are countless ways to engage. Begin by dividing the cards into the four types and follow the instructions on the back of this card.

Use with friends, family, classrooms, colleagues or let your mind wander alone.
FOUR WAYS TO PLAY:

1. One person begins by selecting one QUESTION CARD and one STRENGTH CARD. Read both aloud and answer the question in regards to the character strength. Take turns for as many rounds as you’d like.

2. Hand out the STRENGTH CARDS to participants. A QUESTION CARD reader reads the question aloud. Going around the room, each participant answers the same question based on their strength card. Repeat with each new question and have participants trade cards at any time.

3. Making sure the PERIODIC TABLE OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS is visible to everyone, read a quote from the QUOTE CARDS, and have each participant reflect on which character strength(s) it relates to and how.

4. After watching The Science of Character, use the supplied DISCUSSION GUIDE appropriate for your age group to facilitate conversation.

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR THIS FILM AND OTHERS AT WWW.LETITRIPPLE.ORG

Definitions provided by many sources including VIA Institute on Character
STRENGTH CARD
• artistic
• original
• imaginative
• independent
• risk-taker
• appreciative

Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it.
CURIOSITY

Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering.

- open
- novelty-seeking
- interested
- engaged in conversations
- exploring
- inquisitive
LOVE OF LEARNING

Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one’s own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows.

• knowledgeable
• well-educated
• interested
• experienced
• intelligent
• curious
• conversant
STRENGTH CARD
Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people.
courageous
strong-willed
principled
outspoken
honest
authentic
valorous

BRAVERY

Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it.
• persistence
• grit
• resilience
• determination
• strong-mindedness
• motivation

PERSEVERANCE

Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks.
Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way, being without pretense, taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.

- authentic
- genuine
- direct
- straightforward
- candid
- truthful
ENTHUSIASM

Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated.

• zest
• energetic
• passionate
• active
• vital
• spontaneous
• happy
• easily excited
Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people.
STRENGTH CARD
Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them.

- generous
- loving
- selfless
- nurturing
- caring
- compassionate
- altruistic
- nice
Character education is just as important to education as reading, math and science.
SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick.

• sociable
• savvy
• perceptive
• likable
• clever
• insightful
• intelligent
• analytical
• critical thinker
• open-minded
• reasonable
• clear thinker
• even-handed
• fair-minded
• rational
• clever

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one’s mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly
• cooperative
• collaborative
• understanding
  • flexible
  • helpful
• supportive
• reliable
• relational

TEAMWORK

Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share.
Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.

- balanced
- empathic
- tolerant
- just
- impartial
- even-handed
LEADERSHIP

Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done, and at the same time maintaining good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.

- collaborative
- supportive
- organized
- directive
- guiding
- helpful
FORGIVENESS

Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful.

- merciful
- compassionate
- patient
- gracious
- accommodating
Improve your character through mindful striving or let your character worsen through negligence and obliviousness
• modest
• humble
• agreeable
• unpretentious
• balanced
• wise
• unassuming
• compassionate

Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is.
watch your thoughts: they become words
watch your words: they become actions
watch your actions: they become habits
watch your habits: they become your character
watch your character: it becomes your destiny

-STRENGTH CARD-

-frank outlaw-
Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.
EMOTIONS

THINKING

STRENGTH CARD
SELF-CONTROL

Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one’s appetites and emotions.

- disciplined
- focused
- responsible
- dependable
- well ordered
STRENGTH CARD
APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY

Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.
Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.

• empathetic
• grateful
• appreciative
• generous
• considerate
• humble
• pleasant
STRENGTH CARD
OPTIMISM

Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.

• positive
• future-minded
• hopeful
• supportive
• encouraging
• goal-oriented
Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes.

- playful
- down-to-earth
- funny
- lighthearted
- good-natured
SPIRITUALITY

Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort.

- accepting
- at peace
- virtuous
- blessed
- faithful
Who in your life represents this strength and how?
Can you think of someone you don’t know personally, or that you admire from history, who embodies this strength and how?
What is one thing you can do this week to develop this strength?
What is one way you have used this strength in the past month?
How could you help others develop this strength?
How have you helped develop this strength in someone else? Who, and how?
Who in your life has helped to foster this strength in you?
How do you think the world would benefit from more of this strength?
How could this strength help you achieve a goal you have?
Can you think of a time when you could have used more of this strength? How?
Is this one of your top five strengths? Why or why not?
Is it possible to have too much of this strength?
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QUOTE CARD

PERIODIC TABLE OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS
I have a dream . . . that one day my four little children, will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.
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QUOTE CARD
The patterns of our lives reveal us. Our habits measure us.

— Mary Oliver
If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?

— Hillel
1. Take a look at the periodic table of character strengths. What are your top three strengths?

2. How can you use these strengths to make the world a better place?

3. Look back at the table of character strengths. What are three character strengths you’d like to develop?

4. Pick one of the strengths you want to develop. What’s something you could do right now to bring more of that strength into your life?

5. The Science of Character describes character strengths as being like super powers. Pick your favorite superhero. Why is that hero your favorite? What character strengths do they have?
6. If you were a superhero, what would your super-character strengths be?

7. Draw the superhero you!

8. Now think about real people. Who do you admire most in the world? What are the character strengths you admire in them?

9. Draw a pie chart of the character strengths that you’re made of. Which strength is the biggest slice? Which is the smallest?

10. Nobody’s perfect. Sometimes it’s good to mess up, because that’s how we learn and improve. Think about a time you really messed up. What did you learn?

MORE QUESTIONS AT WWW.LETITRIPPLE.ORG
1. Take a look at the periodic table of character strengths. What are your three strongest character strengths?

2. How can you use those strengths to improve your life? How can you use them to improve your community?

3. Now look back at the table of character strengths. What are three character strengths you’d like to develop?

4. Pick one of the strengths you want to develop. What’s something you could do right now to bring more of that strength into your life?

5. Think about who you admire most in the world. What are the character strengths you admire in them?
6. Different cultures value different character strengths. What are the most valued character strengths in your culture?

7. What character strengths are valued most at your school? Are these the same as the character strengths most valued in your home, or are they different? Explain.

8. The film describes a fixed mindset (when you think you can’t change who you are) and a growth mindset (when you believe you can change and improve things about yourself). Is there an area in your life where you have a fixed mindset, where you might say, “I’m no good at sports,” or “I just can’t do math”? Can you think of a way you can use your character strengths to improve in that area?

9. Nobody’s perfect. Sometimes it’s good to mess up, because that’s how we learn and improve. Think about a time you really messed up. What did you learn?

10. As the film mentions, failing can be a good thing—we learn by failing. Think of an activity you might fail at the first time but want to try anyway: snowboarding, skateboarding, singing, a dance class. What would it be? What could you learn by failing?

MORE QUESTIONS AT WWW.LETITRIPPLE.ORG
1. Take a look at the periodic table of character strengths. What are your three strongest character strengths?

2. Notice where your strengths lie. Are they all in one particular area (in, say, the Wisdom or Courage column) or are they spread out? What do you think of that?

3. How can you use your character strengths to improve your life? How can you use them to improve your community?

4. Now expand the list of your character strengths to five and draw a pie chart out of them. Which character strength is your biggest slice? Which is the smallest?

5. Look back at the table of character strengths. What are three character strengths you’d like to develop?

6. Pick one of the strengths you want to develop. What are some steps you could take to develop that strength?

7. Different cultures value different character strengths. What are the most valued character strengths in your culture?

8. What character strengths are valued most at your school? Are these the same as the character strengths most valued in your home, or are they different? Explain.

9. Think of someone you admire. What are the character strengths you admire in them? Now think of someone else you...
admire. Do they have the same strengths?

10. As the film notes, working on our character strengths has been important since ancient times. Can you think of any myths or stories that illustrate the importance of a particular character strength?

11. Of course, the world has changed a lot in the last few thousand years. What character strengths do you think are important in the digital age? Can you think of something you or someone else posted online that demonstrated a particular character strength?

12. Given that the Web allows a lot of anonymity, and permits people to try on different personas, what happens to our character when we’re online? Do our character strengths remain constant?

13. The film describes a fixed mindset (when you think you can’t change who you are) and a growth mindset (when you believe you can change and improve things about yourself). Is there an area in your life where you have a fixed mindset, and may think, “I’m no good at sports,” or “I just can’t do math”? How can you use your character strengths to improve in that area?

14. As the film mentions, failure can be a good thing—we learn by failing. Think of an activity you might fail at the first time but want to try anyway: snowboarding, public speaking, a dance class. What would it be? What could you learn by failing?

MORE QUESTIONS AT WWW.LETITRIPPLE.ORG
1. Take a look at the periodic table of character strengths. What are your five strongest character strengths?

2. Notice where your strengths lie. Are they all in one particular area (in, say, the Wisdom or Virtue Courage column) or are they spread out? What do you think of that?

3. How could you incorporate those strengths into more aspects of your life? How can you use them to improve your community?

4. Now expand the list of your character strengths to twelve and make a pie chart out of them. Which character strength is your biggest slice? Which is the smallest?

5. The film explores two ideas around character development: First, you should focus on the strengths you have, and second, develop the strengths you’d like. With that in mind, look back at the table of character strengths. What are three character strengths you’d like to develop?

6. What are some steps you can take to develop those three character strengths?

7. Different cultures value different character strengths. What are the most valued character strengths in your culture?

8. What character strengths are most valued on your campus or at your job? Are these similar to the character strengths valued by your family, or are they different? Explain.
9. Given that the Web allows a lot of anonymity, and permits people to try on different personas, what happens to our character when we’re online? Do our character strengths remain constant?

10. The film describes a fixed mindset (when you think you can’t change who you are) and a growth mindset (when you believe you can change and improve things about yourself). Is there an area in your life where you have a fixed mindset, and may think, “I’m no good at public speaking,” or “I don’t like others’ opinions”? Can you think of a way you can use your character strengths to improve in that area?

11. The film suggests we can affect other people’s character strengths, too. Do you agree? Can character be contagious? How?

12. As the film mentions, failure can be a good thing—we learn by failing. Think of an activity you might fail at the first time but want to try anyway: snowboarding, public speaking, a dance class. What would it be? What could you learn by failing?

13. FAIL and EPIC FAIL have become Internet memes. How is failing on the Internet different from failing in real life? Can you learn and develop character strengths from Internet fails, too?

14. Have you ever tried something that just didn’t feel like “you”? What was it, and why did you feel that way?

15. If our character strengths and our abilities aren’t fixed, that means we could, potentially, achieve just about anything. Think really, really big: If you could achieve anything, what would you do?

MORE QUESTIONS AT WWW.LETITRIPPLE.ORG