A REFLECTION TOOL FOR LEADERS

The Strengths Overuse Check

A strength used on autopilot can start to work against you.

> *Sustainable leaders know their strengths and know when a situation calls for something else. Spotting where a strength overreaches lets you use it with choice, not habit.*

How to use it. This check lists the 24 character strengths from the VIA Institute on Character. Mark the ones you rely on most, whether you found them in the free VIA survey or elsewhere.

Read the belief that can push each strength too far. Then take your top strength through the questions on page 3.

MINE	STRENGTH	A BELIEF THAT CAN DRIVE OVERUSE	WHAT IT CAN COST
WISDOM			
◯	**Creativity**	"There must be a better way to do this."	Constant reinvention that leaves others unsure what to follow
◯	**Curiosity**	"I need to understand all of it before I decide."	Exploring more than deciding, and spreading attention thin
◯	**Judgment**	"I must weigh every angle before I act."	Overanalysis and delayed decisions
◯	**Love of learning**	"I need to know more first."	Preparing instead of acting, and adding to a full plate
◯	**Perspective**	"People rely on me for the wise view."	Becoming the advisor everyone depends on
COURAGE			
◯	**Bravery**	"If it is hard, I should take it on."	Taking on risks and hard conversations others could share
◯	**Perseverance**	"I cannot stop until this succeeds."	Persisting with an ineffective strategy
◯	**Honesty**	"I must say exactly what I see."	Candor that ignores timing or readiness
◯	**Zest**	"I must keep the energy up for everyone."	Running hot, skipping recovery, and tiring the team

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HUMANITY			
◯	**Love**	"I must stay close to everyone I care about."	Blurred boundaries and difficulty giving honest feedback
◯	**Kindness**	"I cannot let anyone struggle."	Rescuing others rather than supporting their development
◯	**Social intelligence**	"I must read and manage everyone's feelings."	Absorbing others' emotions and tiring from constant attunement
JUSTICE			
◯	**Teamwork**	"I must always be available to help."	Neglecting priorities and boundaries
◯	**Fairness**	"Everyone must be treated exactly the same."	Rigid rules that overlook context and slow decisions
◯	**Leadership**	"I must have the answer."	Micromanaging and limiting others' initiative
TEMPERANCE			
◯	**Forgiveness**	"I should let it go and move on."	Tolerating repeated problems without addressing them
◯	**Humility**	"My needs are not the point."	Staying in the background and not asking for what I need
◯	**Prudence**	"I must avoid every possible mistake."	Excess caution and missed windows of opportunity
◯	**Self-regulation**	"I should handle it without showing strain."	Suppressing needs and emotions until they surface elsewhere

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MINE	STRENGTH	A BELIEF THAT CAN DRIVE OVERUSE	WHAT IT CAN COST
TRANSCENDENCE			
◯	**Appreciation of beauty and excellence**	"Anything less than the best is unacceptable."	Perfectionism, excessive revision, and delayed decisions
◯	**Gratitude**	"I should be thankful, not complain."	Staying silent about real problems and unmet needs
◯	**Hope**	"If I keep trying, things will eventually improve."	Underestimating constraints or postponing necessary changes
◯	**Humor**	"I should keep things light."	Deflecting serious concerns so they stay unaddressed
◯	**Spirituality**	"This work is my calling."	Letting purpose justify unlimited sacrifice
OTHER STRENGTHS			
◯	**Responsibility**	"I must make sure everything gets done."	Taking ownership of work that should be shared

MY TOP STRENGTH

The strength I want to look at

When does it help me?

When does it overreach?

What would using it flexibly look like this week?

The 24 character strengths come from the VIA Institute on Character (viacharacter.org), where you can take the free VIA survey. The beliefs and prompts here are illustrative examples by Michelle Watson-Grant, Ed.D., ACC, not inevitable outcomes.