



Manifesto Musings

Shining a Light on our Character Strengths

‘Character Strengths’ are the positive human qualities that support us to bring good into our world, and that support us to live a ‘good’ life. We view these strengths of character as the fuel to drive our skills and talents.

The knowledge and use of my character strengths has positively impacted my life over the past decade. Having greater awareness of my strengths, tempering some of my highest strengths, nurturing and harnessing different strengths in different contexts, has all contributed to my sense of confidence and self-efficacy and has assisted me to consciously action what’s good in me to benefit others.

At **my manifesto**, the pre-work to our experiences involves the completion of the [VIA Character Strengths survey](#). This survey consists of 120 questions and takes around 15 minutes to complete. It will provide you with a rank order list of your 24 character strengths which comprise your unique strengths profile. The list is broken down into three categories: your top strengths are known as your Signature strengths, then your Middle strengths and your Lesser strengths. Your lesser strengths are not weaknesses, they maybe just don’t come as naturally to you, or they may drain you when you use them, or perhaps you have given them less attention or simply not valued them as much as your signature strengths.

Whilst there are multiple approaches to help us explore our strengths, we refer to and recommend the VIA Character Strengths framework. The VIA classification of strengths was originally created by a team of 40 psychologists and researchers, led by Professor Martin Seligman and the late Professor Chris Peterson. It is the result of their attempt to answer the questions posed by the funding organisation: ‘How can we help people to evolve to their highest potential?’ and ‘How can we measure and support good character?’

In finalising the list of six virtues and 24 character strengths – the team, over a period of 3 years, brainstormed, researched, and discussed human qualities. They looked across the fields of psychology, psychiatry, youth development, social work and philosophy. And to ensure that a broad spectrum of cultural expression was canvassed, they looked at historical inventories of strengths, religious texts, and ended up even considering greeting card messages, bumper stickers, song lyrics and Pokemon and Harry Potter characters.

Their endeavour was to create a classification of morally valued human qualities, that are universal across time and culture. One suspects it is not perfect, it is not complete and there are limitations, but it is a very helpful contribution.



At **my manifesto**, we assist you to gain clarity, insights and direction in your life through facilitating a carefully sequenced conversation. Your professional certified coach starts by exploring with you, your character strengths profile. It is interesting to understand your emotional reaction when you 'see' your profile – what has been confirmed, what has been unearthed. It is common for all of us to have a level of strengths blindness.

From our experience, shining a spotlight on one's strengths is a perfect way for the coach and client to get to know one another. And, the vitality and clarity that comes from exploring your character strengths is a perfect platform from which to launch as we capture what is important to you so that you may create and live your authentic life.