

# DISCOVERING YOUR STRENGTH

# STRENGTHS

**STRENGTHS** are the character traits we bring to life.

They are different to our skills, which we learn through practice, and talents, which come naturally but don't always have a positive outcome. **Our STRENGTHS support optimal** functioning in ourselves and **add positively to the community** around us.

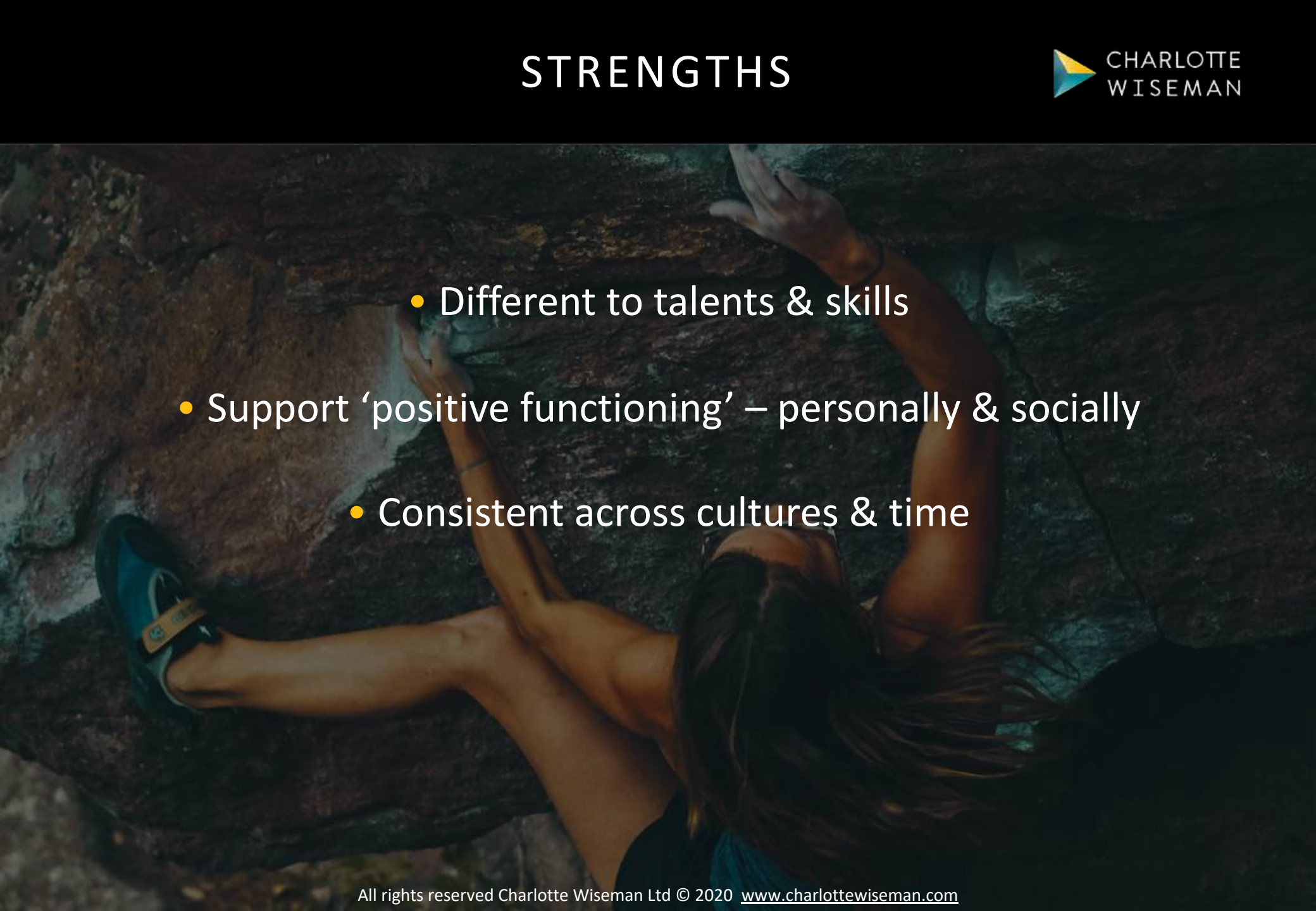
Developed by looking at over 3000 years of data from around the globe, these character traits lead to similar positive outcomes in all cultures. They not only improve our quality of life and performance, when we use these STRENGTHS, they **support positive physical health, enhance our relationships, reduce stress and increase our resilience.**

While we all have STRENGTHS we use more, we all have every STRENGTH, even if we are out of practice of using it. And, just like a muscle that has got weak over time, the good news is that **we can build these muscles any time we want to.**


To understand your Strengths more, turn to [page 5](#).



# STRENGTHS

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- A person is climbing a dark, textured rock face. They are wearing a dark top and teal shoes. Their hands are placed on the rock for support, and their legs are extended downwards. The background is dark and moody.
- Different to talents & skills
  - Support 'positive functioning' – personally & socially
  - Consistent across cultures & time

# STRENGTHS

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- A photograph of a person rock climbing, viewed from above. The person is wearing a dark blue shirt and teal climbing shoes. They are positioned on a dark, textured rock face, with their hands and feet visible as they grip the rock. The background is dark and slightly blurred, emphasizing the climber.
- Enhanced performance - by up to 18 times
  - Improved health, relationships & resilience
    - Lead to greater life satisfaction
    - Can be developed like muscles

**So, what are your STRENGTHS? Try the following exercise.**

**Think of a time you overcame a challenge.** This could be at work (doing a big presentation or completing a person of work), personally (managing a difficult relationship or working to a health goal), dealing with a big life transition or in any other area of your life.

**Take 5 minutes to write down everything you remember about this time.** Including the time leading up to it, during the event and following the event. Try to add in as much detail about the people, places and actions that were involved.

Now, look back over your story and use the **STRENGTHS WHEEL** on the following page to identify **which STRENGTHS you showed?**

**Ask yourself,**

- ▶ Which ones surprise me? Which did I know I have?
- ▶ Which ones do I still use? Which ones could help me now?

**NOTE:** You may want to **try this with your team** and encourage people to pair up so they can work together to pick out STRENGTHS in each other.



# STRENGTHS



# STRENGTHS

It is possible to **OVER** and **UNDER-USE STRENGTHS**. We tend to do this through habit, learning or stress.

For example,

- If you **were told as a child**, “you are just not creative”, you might not practice **CREATIVITY**
- Your **job role might have changed**, leaving you unsure of how to use your **STRENGTH** of **CURIOSITY** or **TRUST** in your new leadership role.
- Or you **might feel stressed** and find yourself snapping at others or making snap decisions, unable to access your **STRENGTHS** of **SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE** and **JUDGEMENT**.

But remember, we all have these muscles and **we can build them like muscles**.

1. Look back at the **STRENGTHS WHEEL** on the previous page and identify **one STRENGTH you are underusing** right now and would like to develop.
2. Think of **5 ways you can use this STRENGTH** over the next week. Try to use it in a wide range of context and ways. For example, how can you bring this into your exercise and eating habits, into your conversations with friends and family, into your work and into your hobbies?
3. Use the next pages to stimulate some ideas and then commit to use this **STRENGTH every day in a new way for the next week**. Record how you used it at the end of each day.

# CURIOSITY

- Eat food from a different culture & learn about the history of the dish.
- Try new exercise routines or take walks through new areas of town.
- Spend 30 minutes researching a topic you know nothing about.
- Ask others how they increase their expertise and knowledge.
  - Watch a lecture or webinar about a new topic.



# CREATIVITY

- Try 3 new recipes this week.
- Think of as many possible uses for a wooden spoon or other household object
  - Research an artist or a style of art and pick a favourite image .  
(You may also want to try to recreate it)
  - Go for a walk without a plan, just let your intuition guide you.
    - Spend 15 minutes writing about the ideal month ahead,  
if everything went your way.

# JUDGEMENT

- Consider what you have learnt in a day & what you could have done differently.
  - Learn about someone else's ethnic or religious beliefs.
- Read about one current affairs topics from different views or sources.  
Note similarities and differences before reflecting on your view.
- Offer to mentor someone in your organization, externally or personally.
  - Instead of trying to be 'right' in a discussion, try to understand the other persons view.

- Deliberately learn 1 new word a day.  
To help the process, try to use it in your day.
- Watch an online production, museum tour or webinar.
- Read and research about a topic then discuss the learning with someone.
  - Join or start a local book club.
  - Arrange a teach-learn date with a friend – learn a skill and teach what you are best at.

# PERSPECTIVE

- Consider the possible ‘upsides’ of a recent decision or action you took that you regretted at the time.
  - Pick 3 role models & consider 1 topic from all 3 perspectives.
- When you feel a strong emotion, reflect on how you are thinking and feeling. Consider, what else could be true? How could someone else view this situation?
- Think of a controversial topic, write about an argument for both sides.
  - Ask friends or colleagues for their opinion about a current topic. Try to listen and understand theirs, rather than express yours.



# BRAVERY

- Stand up for someone who is being spoken about badly when they are not present.
- Ask difficult questions that help you and others face reality.
- Identify 10 characters from movies, books, mythology, life or art who demonstrate bravery to you.
  - Take small, practical steps for a constructive social change.
  - Identify an area you generally shy away from confrontations.

Practice how you would like to act in these moments - phrases, tones, mannerisms.

# PERSEVERANCE



- If you have a big task ahead, break this into small practical steps. Set time frames, rewards and accomplish them on time (or early).

- Select a role-model who exemplifies perseverance and determine how you can follow her/his footsteps.

- Reflect on a time you did persevere.

Write about how this made you feel & what the impact was?

- Share your goals with your loved ones and ask them to hold you accountable.
- Celebrate your success each night, not your shortcomings. Consider how this could inspire you tomorrow.

# HONESTY

- Monitor every time you tell a lie, even if it is a small one, every day for a week. Notice patterns and consider what you can do with this knowledge.
- Monitor whether your next 5 significant actions match your words & vice-versa.
  - Write for 15 minutes on an issue about which you feel a moral obligation.
  - Consider lies you have told in the past and what the outcome has been.
    - Write down the names of 10 most honest people in your life & what you can learn from them.

- Start the day by writing down the things you are MOST looking forward to. Discuss these with friends & colleagues or try this in meetings.
- Use a break in the day to do a 5-minute energizing walk, run or HIT circuit.
- Improve your sleep by avoiding work & tech after 8pm, not taking caffeine late in the evening, going to bed earlier. Notice changes in your energy level.
  - Chat to an energetic or fun friend when you are feeling less energized.
- Think of ways to make an assignment exciting and what Strengths you are using. How can you use other Strengths?



# LOVE

- Surprise someone you love by doing something for them - arrange a night to watch a favourite movie, finish a household task, write a letter
- Take 15-20 minutes to write about something or someone you love.
  - Pick an image which represents the word 'love' to you.
- Focus on the implicit motives of your loved ones, rather their behaviors.
  - Make a family tree based on everyone's Strengths.

# KINDNESS

- Do five random acts of kindness in a day.
- Try to say only kind words to people or about people all day.
- Donate some old clothes or unnecessary items to a charity shop or shelter.
  - Buy a coffee for someone behind you in line or let someone in front of you in a queue.
- Sign up to donate blood, be an organ donor or volunteer on a charity project.

- Listen to your friends or colleagues empathically.  
Acknowledge their feelings & only offering advice if they specifically ask for it.
- If someone offends you, find at least one positive element in their motives.
  - Watch a favorite program/series episode on mute.  
Write feelings observed from body language.
- Consider a role model and write about how they demonstrate social intelligence.
  - Attend an uncomfortable social situation as an 'active observer'.  
Reflect on what you notice in others & yourself, without any judgments.

# TEAMWORK

- Pick up litter on curbsides & put it in trashcans.
- Help someone to set goals & ask how you can help them to achieve these.  
This could just be checking in regularly.
- Organise a workplace fund raiser with your team.
- Acknowledge the people who support & help you and thank them.
- Facilitate a group discussion & achieve consensus on a conflicting issue.



# FAIRNESS

- The next time you make a mistake, self-monitor to see whether you admit it  
- then do!
  - Write down your 5-10 most important moral values.
    - Politely discuss the idea of fairness with a friend.
      - Watch a film/documentary or read biographies which exemplify fairness, social justice, and equality.
- Self-monitor to see whether you think about or treat people of other ethnicities and cultures stereotypically.

# LEADERSHIP

- Rotate leadership of an event or activity, giving others the chance to be leaders.
- Make a list of possible ways that you could improve your leadership style.
  - Stand up for someone who is being spoken about badly when they are not present.
  - Read a biography and/or watch film of your favorite leader. Evaluate how he/she inspires you in practical ways.
- Organize a family event that includes both young and old relatives.

# FORGIVENESS

- Remember times when you were forgiven, then extend this gift to others.
  - Consider how you can give yourself a break today.  
Perhaps forgiving yourself for not doing something you planned to do.
  - Identify how a grudge impacts you. Does it make you feel angry, fear, sadness, jealousy? How does this affect your behavior.
- Identify a person who offended you. Try to be kind in your interaction with them.
  - Plan out a balanced response for the next time someone offends you.

# HUMILITY

- Resist showing off accomplishments for a week and notice any changes in your relationships.
- Use environmental resources modestly (use recycled products, limit use of products which harm the environment, etc.)
  - Rather than trying to ‘win’ an argument, see if you can accept a difference of opinion.
  - Praise a competitor or colleague for their accomplishments.
- At the end of each day, identify something you did to impress or show off. How would you have liked to act instead?



# PRUDENCE

- When walking/cycling, stop at all red lights on crossings and wait.
- Evaluate the quality, efficiency, and wisdom of your next three projects.  
Write down methods of improvement or people to speak to.
- Visualize the consequences of your decisions in one, five, and ten years' time.
  - Make a pros and cons list before making your next decision.
- Consult with your significant others before making a final decision or ask a colleague to sense check your work before sending.

# SELF REGULATION

- Limit your technology time, perhaps shutting your phone off between 8pm and 8am.
  - Give up one 'vice' for a week (chocolate, alcohol, cigarettes, meals out...) It will help to eliminate objects of temptation from your home.
    - Avoid talking about others in their absence, even if it is positive.
    - Congratulate yourself when you successfully resist an indulgence. How can you celebrate?
- Establish a regular time and a place to commit to trying a new activity for a week. Try to keep it up for a least a week, even if you don't enjoy it.

- Express your gratitude to someone whom haven't told before, maybe by letter or a personal visit.
- Notice 1 point of natural beauty each day for a week (sunrise, clouds, leaves, etc).
  - Explore expression of art or excellence in different cultures. Discuss and explore why you like it with someone else.
- Reminisce about your best moments of achievement, connection & joy.
- Notice how many times you say thanks and whether you mean it every time.

# HOPE

- Recall a situation when you overcame an obstacle & succeeded.

- Visualize where & what you want your life to be in 2 years.

Write about it & a pathway to get there. Remember, there is no 'right' answer.

- Read about someone who succeeded despite difficulties and setbacks
  - Mandela, Gandhi, Martin Luther King

- Reflect on a decision you made which you regretted at the time.  
What did you learn? How could this inspire and help your future?

- Think about a challenge ahead, focusing on how you can manage obstacles rather than trying to eliminate all of them.

# HUMOUR

- Learn 3 new jokes and tell them 3 times this week.
- The next time you face a challenge or disappointment, try to see the funny or lighter side.
- Watch a sitcom, funny show/movie, or read a comic daily.
  - Remember the funniest movie you have ever watched. Tell someone about it & ask for their recommendation for yourself.
- Call a friend who has great sense of humor & tell them you appreciate it.

# SPIRITUALITY

- Spend 10-minutes contemplating the thing or power that you gives you a sense of spiritual connection. Try to do so each day for a week.
  - Read a new spiritual or religious book that is meaningful to you.
    - Spend half an hour learning about an area of your belief that you know less about.
  - Talk to someone with different spiritual beliefs & learn about theirs.
- Consider how you would want to be remembered, perhaps thinking about your eulogy. Explore how you can embody those qualities today.

# TRUST

- Make a recipe without looking for the recipe – trust yourself.

- When you get change in a shop, don't check if it is right.

- Identify someone you see as trustworthy. How do they embody this?

- Consider some of the secrets which others have told you.

How you have maintained their trust? What has this meant for them and for you?

- Ask someone to help you out & don't check if they have done it – trust them.



A high-angle, top-down photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark top and teal climbing shoes, as she ascends a dark, textured rock face. Her hands are firmly gripping the rock, and her legs are extended to find footholds. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the rock and the climber's form.

# TOOLS TO BUILD STRENGTH

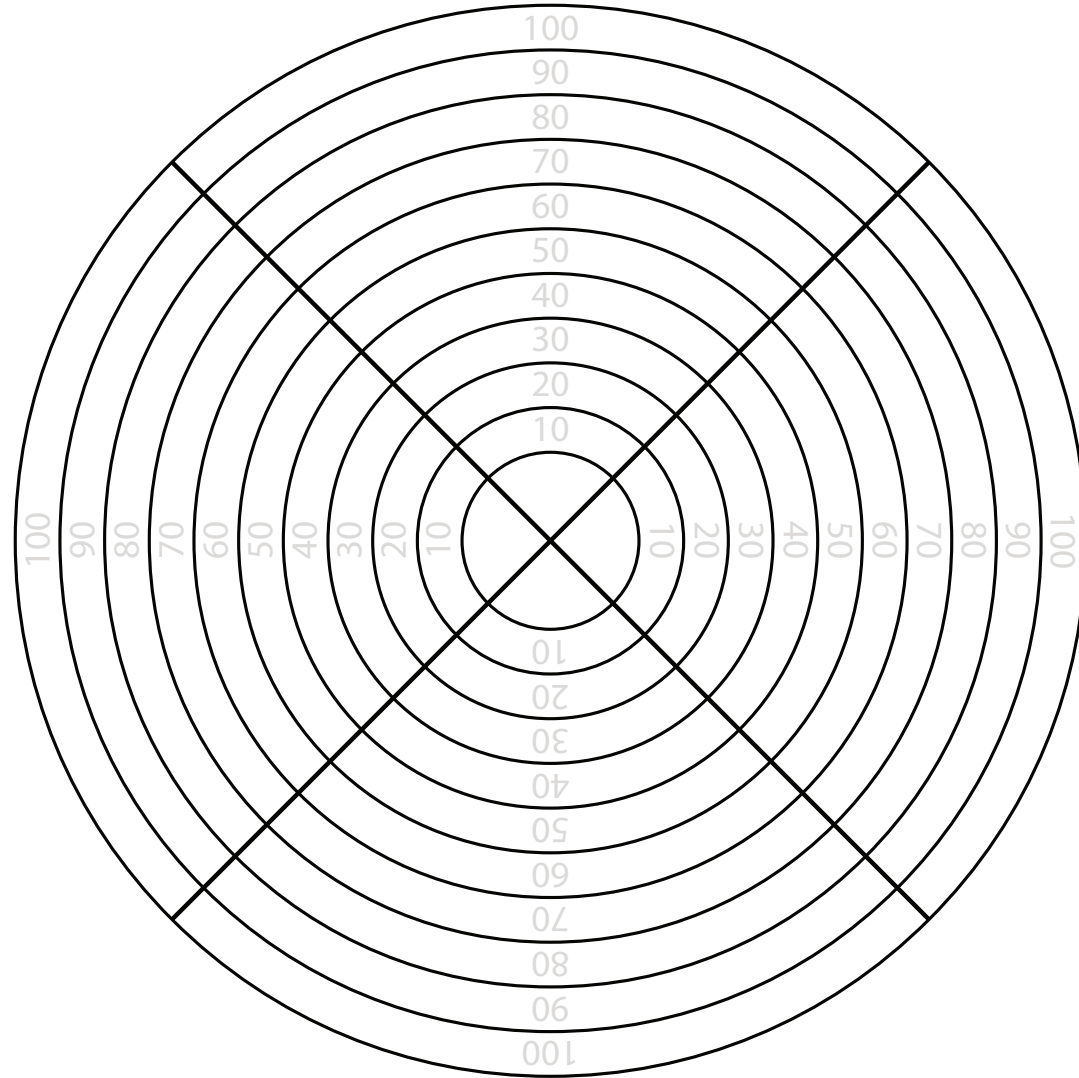
# STENGTHS DISK



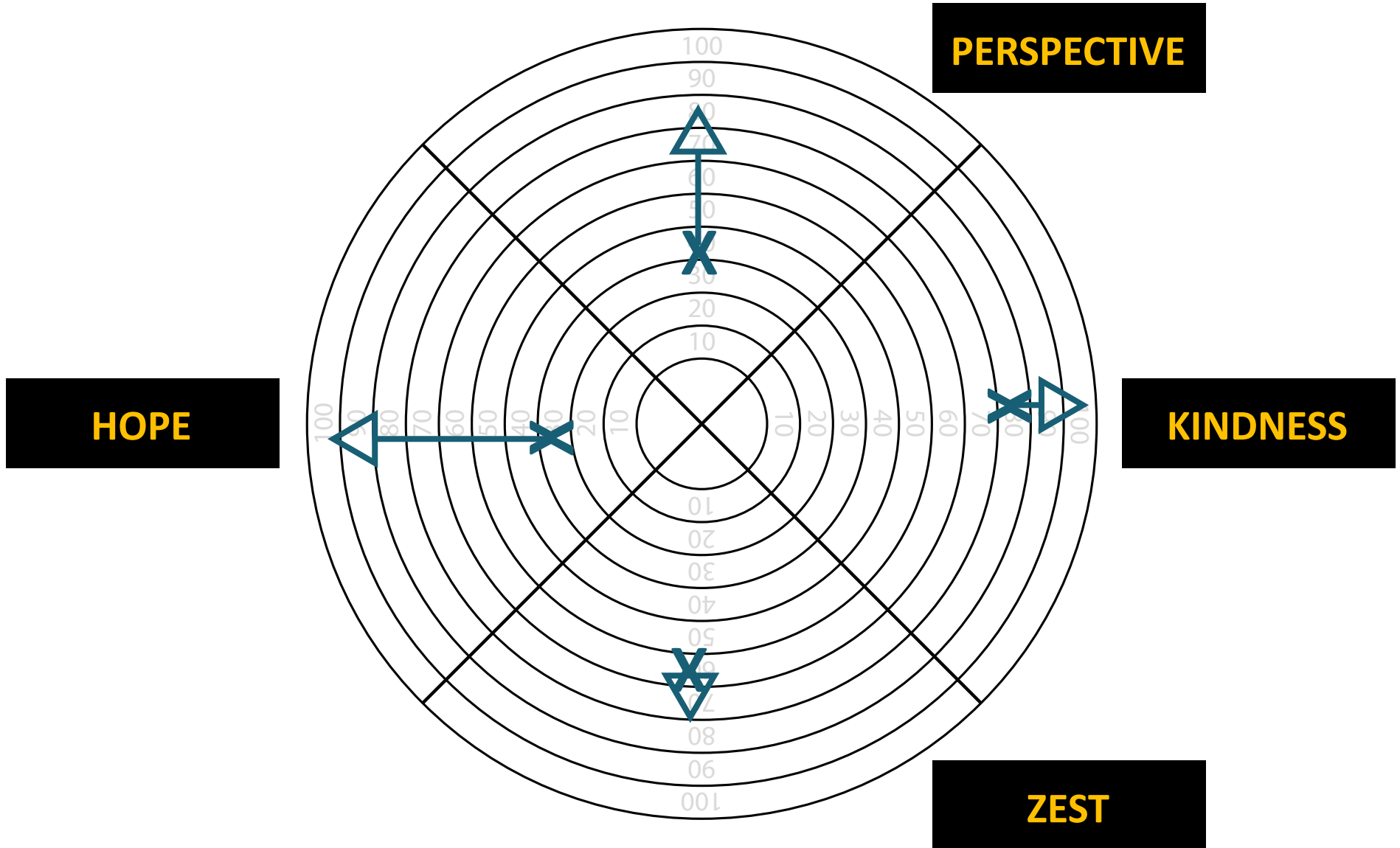
To dive further into your **STRENGTHS** and **explore how much you are using them**, you can use the **STRENGTHS DISK** on the next page (p.34).

1. Pick **4 STRENGTHS to work with**. Write one above the disk, one below, one to the right and one to the left.
2. Then **following the 0-100% guide on the disk, mark with an X how much you are currently using this STRENGTH**. 20%? 30%? 60 or 70%? Consider all areas of your life, work and home, and also consider how you practice this towards yourself as well as others.
3. Now mark, **in an ideal world, how much you would use that STRENGTH**. Note that it might not be suitable to use it 100% time. For example, it might not be appropriate to use HUMOUR in all contexts or to practice SELF-REGULATION all the time. What is the ideal for you right now? Mark this with a triangle pointing towards the outer ring of the disk.
4. Some X's and triangles may be very close or on top of each other - that is absolutely fine. For this where there is a gap, **draw a line from the centre of the X to the base of the triangle**. (There is an example on p. 35).
5. This is your opportunity to **build your INNER STRENGTHS**. Pick a **STRENGTH** you want to develop and use the activity on pages (p. 7-32). Alternatively, **turn to page 36-37 to explore this DISK further**.

# STENGTHS DISK



# STENGTHS DISK



# STENGTHS DISK

Using your **STRENGTHS DISK**, think about the questions on the following 2 pages;

▶ What do you first notice when you look at your **STRENGTHS DISK**?

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▶ How do you consider these **STRENGTHS** to be useful or less useful in different areas of your life?

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▶ Which **STRENGTHS** are being used to an optimal level. What is helping you to do that?

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# STENGTHS DISK

▶ Which **STRENGTHS** could you be over or underusing? Is this particular to any specific contexts?

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▶ Which other **STRENGTHS** could help you balance the over or underused **STRENGTHS**?

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▶ How can you learn from this to bring your **STRENGTHS** back into balance?

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