264 Character Building Activities for Kids
(and the adults who love them!)

Compiled by

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Positive Psychology identifies six universal virtues and 24 character strengths that support living the virtuous life. Some of these character strengths can be reinforced with very young children, but other character strengths require developmental characteristics not yet available to very young children. For example, very young children might be funny, but they don’t routinely understand the nuances of humor as a technique to uplift, encourage and elevate others. Likewise, very young children need significant training in kindness and forgiveness before they internalize the concept of mercy (forgiveness without revenge).

While each individual has multiple character strengths, optimal well-being occurs when an individual includes an abundance of activity that activates their core character strengths. How Families Flourish provides a discussion of each of these character strengths. I have been asked to give more examples of activities and this is the beginning of a list of examples.

To take a survey to determine your top five character strengths, visit www.authentichappiness.org and complete a VIA Strengths Survey. It is free and there is version for children between the ages of 10 and 17 called VIA Strength Survey for Children and a version for adults called VIA Survey of Character Strengths.

The following examples of activities that help a person gain mastery of a core strength are suitable for most individuals over the age of eight. Focus on the top five character strengths each person possesses first, and learn more about how to build on secondary strengths by selecting some activities from the 6th to 10th top strengths identified on your survey results.

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This is by no means a comprehensive list of activities but will hopefully stimulate thought about how the reader can create highly relevant activities to exercise their own core strengths and support their children in doing the same.
The Six Universal Virtues in Positive Psychology and Associated Character Strengths

**Wisdom** – strengths to acquire and use knowledge

**Courage** – strengths to accomplish goals in the face of opposition

**Humanity and Love** – strengths to befriend and tend to others

**Justice** – strengths that build community

**Temperance** – strengths that protect against excess

**Transcendence** – strengths that connect us to the larger universe
Wisdom – acquiring and using knowledge

Love of learning – learning for learning’s sake

1.) Read a new nonfiction book every month about a subject that fascinates you.
2.) Join a local book club to insure conversation with like-minded individuals.
3.) Learn 10 new words every week and use them in your daily conversations.
4.) Go to the library every Saturday and look for new topics that might interest you.
5.) Ask a friend about a topic they’re interested in and then research that topic and have a long conversation with your friend about what you have learned.
6.) Visit a museum, zoo, park, planetarium or botanical garden every month for a year and keep a journal about the changes you observe month-to-month.
7.) Travel to new places and combine educational activity with pleasure activities.
8.) Play games like Trivial Pursuit, Jeopardy, Who Wants to be a Millionaire and other games that tease the brain.
9.) Schedule a weekly 30 minute conversation with someone who is interested and passionate about a topic that you both are interested in and passionate about.
10.) Follow a global event via newspaper, magazine, Internet and other news resources.
11.) Attend workshops, seminars, or conferences on a topic you find interesting.
12.) Start a weekly lunch and learn where you and your friends take turns teaching each other something new.
13.) Visit factories, farms or laboratories to understand production processes.
14.) Begin a personal learning journey by choosing a topic that intrigues you such as rock collecting, herbal lore, or jewelry making. Concentrate on that activity or study on the varieties, methods or characteristics of your new topic of interest.

Judgment – critical thinking and non-biased opinion

1.) Take a class in critical thinking.
2.) Play devil’s advocate on an issue that you have strong ideas or opinions about.
3.) When deciding about something important write down the pros and cons, and then put aside your list. Come back to it the next day to see if you need to make changes additions or deletions.

4.) Become a mentor to one of your friends.

5.) Observe, without comment, a friend who successfully completes a task differently from the way you would complete it. Examine your thoughts and biases related to how it should have been completed.

6.) Review something that didn’t turn out the way you wanted it to and come up with three alternative solutions.

7.) When embarking on a new venture, explore the best and worst case scenarios before beginning the project. Write as many of those scenarios down as you were able to identify. Put your list aside. After the project is completed, review your list to see what you thought could happen against what did happen.

8.) Ask a trusted peer to appraise your judgment on several significant things that you’ve accomplished.

9.) Identify the actions you took last week when you did not use judgment or think your way through the process beforehand.

10.) Look at something where you have failed again and again. Identify patterns to your approach that kept you from reaching your intended outcome.

11.) Attend a multicultural event and evaluate your thoughts and views prior to the event and after the event.

12.) Seek out conflicting information for a viewpoint you hold so that you can expand your viewpoint and your judgment.

13.) Begin a blog on a topic you have opinions about, and then try to stay focused on the issue and what people are writing, not on what your opinions are. (DH)

14.) Choose an event or happening and think of at least two ways of looking at it – from different points of view. Consider what might have been the reasons for those points of view. (DH)

**Curiosity – openness to new experience and novelty**

1.) Choose projects where you have to find new information every day to add to your base of knowledge.

2.) Interview adults who share your area of interest and learn how he or she increases his or her expertise in that area.

3.) Attend a function of a culture that differs from yours such as a festival day.
4.) Make a list of the things you don’t know about one of your favorite topics.

5.) Go on the Internet and research details about a topic that interests you for at least half an hour three times a week.

6.) Find a school mate from a different culture and spend at least an hour each week learning about their culture and asking questions when you don’t understand something fully.

7.) Eat food from different cultures at least once a week. Be certain that you eat this food in the context of the culture such as a restaurant or a festival and become aware of your thoughts as you’re eating that food.

8.) Expand your knowledge by learning a new craft that interest you.

9.) Try things that challenge your skills to develop deeper understanding.

10.) Visit one new city, state or country every six months and learn about its history, culture, architecture, economics and politics.

11.) Spend at least an hour in nature, examining the details around you. Write down as much detail as you remember. Return to the exact same site two weeks later and after you find everything on your list, look for new details you missed during the previous visit.

12.) Visit a factory for farm to see how things are made or grown.

13.) Choose something you’ve lost interest in that you were once very curious about. Identify three new ways to learn more about that subject.

14.) Bake a yeast-based bread to understand the chemistry of baking.

**Originality – creativity and “building a better mousetrap”**

1.) Challenge your child to find one thing they could do each day to positively affect someone else’s life. (MC)

2.) Help a sibling or friend create an original solution to one of their problems.

3.) Each week choose one assignment and approach it in a different and creative manner.

4.) Create at least one original idea each week in an area you’re interested in and discuss ways to implement the idea.

5.) Redesign your room with a new color scheme or move the furniture around.

6.) Take a creative arts class and such as pottery, stained glass, sculpture, painting etc.
7.) Read about famous creative people and determine what made them unique.

8.) Make new products out of your discards such as a pillow out of an old shirt, origami from old stationary, or a collage from old magazines to represents something important to you.

9.) Brainstorm new ways of approaching a difficult problem or task.

10.) Try out for the drama club, debate club, or school chorus.

11.) Design your own cards or stationary instead of buying them.

**Perspective – wisdom and discernment**

1.) At the end of an activity, participants share something new they have learned about themselves as a result of the activity.

2.) Keep a weekly journal and each week write a brief paragraph about your perspective on life.

3.) Identify three people you consider very wise and read a book about each of their lives.

4.) Identify 20 pearls of wisdom or words of wisdom and create an action plan using these pearls of wisdom to approach a difficult situation (e.g. “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”).

5.) Once a week, review difficult emotions you have felt and what beliefs led to those emotions.

6.) Volunteer for activity that has a significant impact for the world.

7.) Seek out others who have a different perspective from yours and try to find common themes between their perspective and yours.

8.) Schedule time each week to massage and reflect on a social issue about which you remain undecided.

9.) Make a list of challenges you did not believe you would complete but remained optimistic about completing. Explore why you remained optimistic.

10.) When ask your opinion or advice, give it only after you have carefully analyzed all the possibilities.

11.) Pay attention to the moral implications and potential consequences of future behaviors.

12.) Explore a world event from many different angles including economic, social, moral and physical consequences.
**Courage – accomplishing goals in the face of opposition**

**Integrity – authenticity and honesty**

1.) When asked, tell the truth without being harmful.

2.) Avoid telling white lies, admit to it when you do and apologize to the person you lied to.

3.) Pay attention to your feelings and emotions when you’ve manipulated or been dishonest with someone.

4.) Identify your strongest moral beliefs and act on them each day, even if it makes you temporarily less popular.

5.) Avoid activities, roles or assignments that require politics over integrity.

6.) Write down your personal ethics and look to them to guide you in difficult situations.

7.) Work to overcome lies of omission (withholding information and not telling the whole story when asked).

8.) Consistently act on your convictions – what you say is what you do.

9.) Avoid making promises or commitments you don’t think you will be able to keep.

10.) Identify figures in history that demonstrated integrity during opposition and read biographies about their lives to gain insight on how they maintained integrity against all odds.

11.) When tempted to tell a “white lie” or bend the truth, ask yourself what feelings are behind that urge.

**Bravery – valor and goal accomplishment in the face of opposition**

1.) Speak out on causes that are meaningful to you, even if they are unpopular with your peer group.

2.) Join a social cause that is important to you and actively participate.

3.) Ask difficult questions that help focus your peer group toward a more realistic perspective.

4.) Protect or stand up for a friend who will not stand up for themselves without support.

5.) Identify three famous figures you consider brave and read a book about their lives.

6.) Report predatory behavior such as bullying.
7.) When you see someone acting courageously, comment to them that you admire their action.

8.) Face a fear head-on. Identify something you typically avoid doing and accomplish it in spite of the obstacles.

9.) Befriend someone that may not be very popular with your peers but nonetheless is a positive person.

10.) Rehearse kindly confronting a friend who consistently makes biased, prejudicial or cruel statements about a group of people and then share your thoughts with them.

**Persistence - perseverance and task completion**

1.) Share a difficult goal with your family and ask them to routinely inquire about your progress.

2.) Choose one really important project and make sure you give it 100% every day until it is complete.

3.) Create a collage about an important project you want to complete and hang it on your wall to inspire you to persist.

4.) Start a Persistence Journal. At the beginning of each week, write down five small goals you want to complete by the end of the week. Check off the goals as you complete them. At the end of 90 days, tally up how many of the 60 goals were completed. If you completed less than 50% of the goals you assigned yourself, repeat this exercise for another 90 days. If you completed less than 75% of the goals, repeat this exercise for 60 days. If you completed less than 90% of the goals you assigned yourself, repeat this exercise for 30 days.

5.) Read aloud a different inspiring quotation each day for 30 days about persistence.

6.) Select a challenging goal and finish it without assistance from others, even if they offer to help.

7.) Plan a big project and finish it ahead of the time you scheduled to have it completed.

8.) Attend a class or read a book on time management.

9.) Attend a class or read a book on project management.

10.) Choose a skill you want to learn but have failed to become proficient at yet. Write down a detailed action plan to learn the skill. Follow your written action plan, revising your action plan as required.

11.) Write down a six-month, one-year and five year life plan and how you will accomplish it.

12.) Identify three movies that demonstrate persistence and watch those movies.

**Vitality - exuberance and zest for life**
1.) Exercise at least thirty minute most days of the week for at least a month (walking, yoga, swimming etc.) and notice how your body feels stronger as you continue your exercise routine.

2.) Savor your victories, small and large. Spend time celebrating one accomplishment before taking on the next goal.

3.) Improve sleep hygiene by going to bed at the same time each night and awaking at the same time each morning, even on weekends.

4.) Visit an active older person (someone over 70 years old) and observe what “makes them tick”.

5.) Approach something you already enjoy doing with extra energy and enthusiasm.

6.) Take a long hike or bicycle ride every weekend for at least 4 weeks.

7.) Set a goal for a new personal best in a recreational activity you enjoy.

8.) Start every morning out by smiling at yourself in the mirror and producing a big “belly laugh” (especially on days you don’t want to do this exercise).

9.) Reminisce with a friend about a good time you had together.

10.) Think of a new, creative way to approach a task or chore you usually find boring and try it, no matter how silly it may seem to be.

11.) If you awaken thinking thoughts that aren’t positive or upbeat, fix that before you arise by substituting good and happy thoughts for those.
**Humanity and Love – befriending and tending to others**

**Generosity – compassion and altruism**

1.) Take teens and preteens to work with the homeless in your local community. (GB)

2.) Collect clothing donations from the community and take them to a homeless shelter to pass out. (GB)

3.) Each family member conducts one random act of kindness for a stranger and shares the experience at the weekly family meeting.

4.) Each family member conducts 3 acts of kindness to others in the family each week.

5.) Examine ways to say something in a kinder and gentler tone.

6.) Visit someone in a nursing home, hospice or assisted living facility.

7.) Volunteer for a pet adoption event.

8.) When at a fair or festival, look for a vendor with a unique product and strike up a conversation about how much you like what they are selling.

9.) Regularly give small monetary donations at grocery store or roadside fund raising activities.

10.) Spend a day greeting everyone with a smile as you pass by them.

**Loving and being loved – reciprocal tending to others and being tended to**

1.) Express to others that no matter what happens in the future, your love is unconditional.

2.) Verbally acknowledge the strengths and virtues of those you love.

3.) Routinely attend activities and events with those you love.

4.) Use unconventional ways to express love such as writing a note, fixing a special food or beverage, doing a chore assigned to another, writing a poem of appreciation.

5.) Celebrate important days like birthdays, graduations, anniversaries.

6.) Teach the importance of “date night” in two parent households (alone time for the adults to nurture one another).
7.) Help children identify their core character strengths and construct activities that allow them to exercise their core strengths.

8.) Construct a family focused gratitude journal that each family contributes to every week.

9.) Let your children interview their grandparents about the grandparent’s earliest family related recollections.

10.) Prepare a family meal once each week where every family member participates in creating their favorite dish.

Social/emotional intelligence - awareness of not just your social and emotional needs but the needs of others as well

1.) At the end of a group activity participants quote “what is something new you learned here” or “tell me something new you learned today/this week”. Ask participants to write down the “Gems” in a notebook or journal and at the end of the month (or however long this activity will be used) read through all the “Gems” and see what new things the participants learned. (SK)

2.) Avoid arguing with others just for the sake of winning the argument.

3.) Once a week for four weeks, watch a TV program or movie in a language you don’t know (or mute the volume) and observe the non-verbal cues that let you know the emotions and feelings of the actors.

4.) Explore with a safe friend or family member a time when you did not understand their feelings and it led to disappointment or anger from them. Ask the other how you should have responded and how they want you to respond in the future.

5.) Attend an uncomfortable social event and observe all your thoughts and feelings as you observe the event.

6.) If you have a tendency to be passive or aggressive, practice assertiveness skills at every opportunity.

7.) Once a week, actively listen to a peer, without judgment and without adding comments. Reflect back what you heard them say and ask if your observation is accurate.

8.) Acknowledge out loud 3 acts of kindness from peers each week.

9.) If you feel offended by someone, look for a positive motivation from them.

10.) Practice your “street smarts”, making decisions as new experience unfolds around you.
**Justice – building community and harmony**

**Teamwork – working with others to build community**

1.) Volunteer for a community service project.
2.) Sign up for a team in sports, the arts (drama or music), or intellectual pursuits (chess team, debate team etc.).
3.) Mediate a conflict between opposing sides until the sides reach consensus.
4.) Attend at least one social function each month.
5.) Volunteer to be on a holiday planning, prom or vacation event committee.
6.) Become a part of a community garden or co-op.
7.) Volunteer to help build a Habitat for Humanity house.
8.) Join a scouting, Y or Big Brother Big Sister type organization.
9.) Contribute to the school newspaper or yearbook.
10.) Participate in the youth program at your place of worship.
11.) Become a part of a fund drive for the charity of your choice.
12.) Organize a team to help elderly or disabled persons keeping their yard up or their home fixed up.
13.) Offer to shop for a person who is homebound.
14.) Participate in welcoming committee activities for new neighbors.

**Fairness – equality and justice for all**

1.) Encourage others, especially those who feel left out, to participate in a discussion and ask for their ideas.
2.) Identify 3 times when you were unfair to another and look at your motives for being unfair.
3.) Write a letter to the editor of your school or community newspaper concerning an issue you find socially unjust.
4.) Volunteer at an organization that works for equal rights.
5.) Interview a local expert on equality and how individuals can help fight for social justice.

6.) Confront a friend gently and lovingly about their bias against certain classes of people.

7.) Identify 3 famous people that stand for social justice and equality and read a biography on each of them.

8.) Lead your family in a discussion about an event that you believe is unjust and explore how to create equality around that issue.

9.) Monitor your thoughts about stereotyping certain classes of people. Learn all you can about the group you are stereotyping.

10.) Speak up kindly but assertively for a group you belong to when others are expressing bias or prejudice.

Leadership – guiding and inspiring others toward accomplishment and excellence

1.) Run for office at your school.

2.) Volunteer to chair a committee for a school event.

3.) Volunteer to lead your group in completing a group assignment.

4.) Host a summer block party to celebrate the end of the school year. Ask others to help you organize the event, prepare the food and clean up after the party.

5.) Organize a volunteer group to pick up trash on the side of the road, clean up a park or cemetery.

6.) Start a bicycling or hiking club for once a month outings.

7.) Ask 3 to 5 like-minded friends to start a book club to read about famous leaders and lead a discussion on the first book the group reads. Then ask others to lead the discussion on the other books the group has chosen to read. After everyone has had an opportunity to lead the discussion, lead a discussion about the different leadership style of the group members. Alternatively, watch films together about inspiring leaders.

8.) Start a micro business; hire others to help you with the business as it grows.

9.) Ask family members to each make a list of the qualities of a good leader, a list of the qualities of a good manager and a list of the qualities of a good follower. Then facilitate a family discussion comparing and contrasting the qualities each person has written down.

10.) Identify two films with the theme of a strong leader and one with the theme of a poor leader and watch the films with the family. While watching the films, write down the qualities you see in the leaders and ask yourself why these qualities make a good or a poor leader. Discuss your findings with the family after watching the movies.
Temperance – protecting yourself against excess

Forgiveness and mercy – letting go of grudges that harm your well-being and refusing to seek revenge

1.) Practice a Loving Kindness meditation daily, directed toward someone who has offended you.

2.) Forgive someone and monitor your emotions toward that person before and after you forgave them.

3.) Make a list of the possible motives why someone did something offensive to you.

4.) Make a list of everyone you hold a grudge toward and why holding the grudge remains important to you.

5.) Make a list of 5 times you needed forgiveness from someone, and why they chose to forgive you. Repeat this process every six months.

6.) After you forgive someone, be certain to tell that person (or another person if you can’t tell the person directly) that you have forgiven the offender.

7.) Identify someone you are holding a grudge against. Explore your feelings when you think about the offense and observe how this impacts your behavior toward the offender and toward others.

8.) Begin a conversation with someone who you are having trouble forgiving in order for both of you to understand what happened and move forward. (DH)

9.) Rehearse in your mind how you will behave differently in the future with someone who repeatedly offends you. When they next offend you, behave exactly as you rehearsed it in your mind. Observe their behavioral changes when they see you react differently from usual.

10.) Ask your higher power to help you forgive someone if you are having difficulty.

Self-control – knowing when you have enough and when you should avoid something that is harmful

1.) Talk with your children and tell them that they are like electrical computers i.e. garbage in garbage out. Before they overindulge in too much sugar or indulge in drugs or alcohol for example, they can remember that metaphor and realize they control the outcome of their lives, step-by-step, choice by choice. (CB)

2.) Twice a month when you eat out, order dessert but only eat one quarter of it. Share the remainder with friends or family or leave it on the table (ask the server to remove it if you feel tempted to continue eating it).
3.) Post a daily list of chores and be certain each item is completed before you go to bed. Add additional chores that are not daily and determine a time you will have them finished. For every chore not completed, you will increase your daily exercise by five minutes.

4.) No games, TV, music or other distractions may occur while doing homework or chores.

5.) Keep tempting junk foods or drinks out of the household. If you decide you want these, you must make a special trip to the store and only get enough for today.

6.) Do homework, exercise and meditate (pray) at the same time every day. Don’t bargain for completing these activities at a different time each day.

7.) Practice emotional self-regulation. If you find yourself getting anxious or angry, tighten all your muscles and hold them for a count of five, take 5 deep breaths and then tighten your muscles and count to five again. Feel the relaxation washing over your body. Identify five self soothing activities and engage in one of them when you feel like your emotions are overwhelming you.

8. Fast one day each month (take in only water and fruit or vegetable juice).

9.) Go shopping and find five things under $5.00 you want to purchase. Don’t buy any of those items for two weeks, then go back and determine which of the five items you most want to possess. Choose only one. Think about how the item you purchased improves your life more than the other four would have improved your life.

10.) For one week, make a list each day of the temptations you resisted. At the end of the week, choose one of the temptations and indulge yourself with it.

**Humility – being humble and demonstrating modesty**

1.) Resist showing off your talents if you have superior skills or knowledge.

2.) Avoid “one-up” behavior or dialogue.

3.) Avoid taking center stage for one week to see how others treat you differently.

4.) Each day for two weeks at the end of the day, think about anytime you showed off in front of others. Tell yourself you will avoid showing off in the future.

5.) With an open mind, ask a friend or family member to describe what they see as your weaknesses. Resolve to work on one weakness each week until you complete your weakness list. Don’t brag about your accomplishments regarding this exercise.

6.) Frequently compliment others who are demonstrating superior skills to yours.

7.) When you make a mistake, immediately apologize for it.
8.) Dress and speak modestly. If you are a “clothes horse”, dress modestly and go out in public in modest clothing at least once every week.

9.) Rather than routinely boasting about accomplishments, allow others to acknowledge your good work.

10.) Volunteer to sort clothing at a Goodwill or Shelter. As you sort, identify which items of clothing you would have worn to some event or occasion. If you don’t find anything, think about your own biases or prejudices related to a lack of humility and modesty.

11.) Recycle and use recycled products whenever possible. Avoid harmful products that damage the environment. Don’t put more food on your plate than you plan to eat and find creative ways to use food leftovers.

Prudence – solid planning for the future and examining alternatives before taking action

1.) When you have big decisions to make, plan a time to explore the consequences. Then practice a relaxation exercise before approaching the problem. Avoid making big decisions when you are angry, tired, hungry, depressed or anxious.

2.) Remind yourself that most decisions require careful analysis. Don’t feel pressured by time or by others when making those decisions.

3.) Think before you speak, look before you leap. Monitor your activity every day for two weeks to determine how frequently you make snap decisions and practice ways to slow the decision making process down.

4.) Before making a big decision, create a pros and cons list and construct a benefit risk analysis or SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). Write it down; don’t just think about it in your mind. Put your analysis aside and review it the following day.

5.) Consult with a wise trusted friend or family member before making a final decision.

6.) Make a list of potential outcomes and consequence to a life changing decision and project those out for six months, one year and five years.

7.) Avoid situations where there is a clear emotional winner and loser or everybody loses if you take a certain action.

8.) Review your last three big decisions and determine if the outcome was what you had hoped for. If not, what could you have done differently?

9.) When working on projects, make a detailed list of what you need to succeed. If anything is missing, obtain it before continuing work on the project (measure twice, cut once).
10.) If you are going to tell a lie, evaluate how many more lies you will need to tell to cover up the first lie, and who else will be impacted by the lie.
**Transcendence – connecting with a larger universe**

**Appreciation of beauty and ideas – awe, inspiration, elevation and excellence**

1.) Stop and take notice of a sunset and ask yourself what you are thinking as you observe that sunset. Then ask yourself why you are thinking that about this sunset. Approach the sunset as mindfully as you are able. (DP)

2.) Visit a museum and identify five favorite works of art and why.

3.) Discover classical music together and determine which composers each family member likes. At the end of the month, each member votes on their favorite piece of the month. If there is no winner, play a new piece the family has not yet heard. If there is a winner, play the piece again for the family.

4.) Read poetry aloud. Each family member takes a turn reading a poem they have discovered and then tells the family why this poem moved them enough that they wanted to share it with the family.

5.) Visit an artisan studio to appreciate the talents of the artists.

6.) Throw a cheese tasting party. With each variety of cheese, see how many adjectives you can up with to describe the cheese (nutty, creamy, salty etc.).

7.) Identify three films with the theme of virtue or morality and watch them.

8.) Take a trip to a spectacular natural setting (such as a canyon, waterfall, old growth forest, cave) and savor a quiet hour exploring it.

9.) Ask each family member to identify 5 amazing buildings. Using photographs or computer printouts to construct a collage of the buildings and have a discussion about why each person chose those buildings to represent beauty, inspiration, awe or excellence.

10.) Go to the same park or botanical garden the first week of each month for a year. Examine the subtle and dramatic changes each season offers.

**Gratitude – expressing appreciation and thankfulness**

1.) Keep a gratitude journal and each night list at least three things you were grateful for today.

2.) Express gratitude to someone for something they did for you in past that you have not thanked them for.

3.) Express gratitude to public officials (e.g. bake cookies for the nearest fire department or police precinct).
4.) Frequently thank everyone who contributes to your success, no matter how small the contribution.

5.) Express gratitude during prayer or meditation.

6.) Write down three small things you are worried about each morning, and three good things that happened to you during that day before you go to sleep each night. Continue this exercise every day for four weeks.

7.) One day a week, think about all the people who grew, processed and prepared the food you are about to eat. Think about the people who made the plates, glasses and silverware you are using. Think about the people who made the furniture you are eating on. Think about the plants and animals that died so you can enjoy this meal. Offer a silent moment of thanks before eating.

8.) Thank your siblings and parents for one thing every day that they did to make your life easier.

9.) Everyday identify one small thing you take for granted and express your appreciation to the person who made it possible.

10.) Recall accomplishments, recognitions and acknowledgements of your past good deeds and send a thought of gratitude to those who helped make them possible.

**Hope – overcoming setbacks and looking toward a promising future**

1.) Make a list of three bad things that happened to you and the positives that came out of those bad things.

2.) Identify three people who succeeded “against all odds” and watch a film or read a book about each of them.

3.) When facing a challenge that seems overwhelming, think about a similar challenge and how you were able to overcome the challenge.

4.) Grow a garden. To plant a seed is to have hope for future growth.

5.) Write an autobiographical essay about three major accomplishments. If you begin to feel hopeless in the future, read the essay for inspiration.

6.) Build an optimism journal. Write down all your pessimistic thoughts each day for one week. Then, during the second week, construct corresponding optimistic thoughts to counter each of the pessimistic statements.

7.) When you are beginning to feel hopeless about completing a project, examine if you are really helpless to change the outcome, no matter what you do.

8.) Write a one year, five year and ten year plan for your future. Use as much detail as you can.
9.) Surround yourself with optimistic, hopeful people - especially during times of setback.

10.) Remind yourself frequently that disappointments and setbacks are temporary and that good things are all around you. The more you pay attention to the good things happening in your life, the more good things will happen in your life.

**Spirituality – connecting to the broader universe or higher consciousness**

1.) Spend time every day in prayer, meditation or connecting with your higher power.

2.) Read a religious, spiritual or inspirational passage each day.

3.) Learn about different religions and philosophies to explore how devotional experience manifests.

4.) Write an essay on the meaning and purpose for your life as you know it today.

5.) Get involved in activities with people and groups that share your core strengths.

6.) Begin a weekly reflection on how your spiritual beliefs guide your daily activities.

7.) Make a list of people who are most uplifting in your life and schedule time to spend with them each week.

8.) If you belong to a religious congregation, attend regularly but avoid politics and gossip. Limit the social experience and focus mindfully on the religious support and guidance the congregation offers you.

9.) Spend four hours in silence each week, focusing on how you connect to the greater universe through sight, hearing, touch and taste.

10.) Create a collage of photos that represent your connection to the universe and your egoless self.

**Humor – elevating others in times of stress or need through finding humor in all things**

1.) Observe anytime you are being cynical or sarcastic and resolve to eliminate that (while funny to some, it is hurtful to others).

2.) Use playfulness, jokes and gestures to uplift those around you.

3.) Identify the 5 funniest movies you have seen and watch them again.

4.) Look for the humor in every situation.

5.) Learn three new jokes each week and share them with friends.

6.) Do activities with friends every week that make you laugh and feel happy.
7.) Start a humor club with friends who are funny, playful and upbeat. Meet each week for an hour to share amusing stories with each other.

8.) Share cartoons and captioned illustrations on Facebook with friends. Choose ones that make you laugh out loud when you see them.

9.) Learn to impersonate well known people and perform these impersonations for your friends.

10.) Laugh out loud each morning before you brush your teeth.

We know there are hundreds of activities that build character we failed to include in this list. Danna and I invite you to send your activities to us at

howfamiliesflourish@gmail.com

We will keep compiling this list of activities and email you a revised version every six months if you wish.