

40 Virtues Worth Considering and Cultivating

Try distinguishing or categorizing each of these as a resume virtue or a eulogy virtue.

Orderliness: Achieving our goals by doing the things we should do, when we should do them, and how we should do them. This involves keeping oneself physically clean and neat and one's belongings in good order. It also means being on time.

Generosity: Giving good things to others freely and abundantly—not just money, but also time, knowledge, and skills. It's also the way in which we give...willingly and cheerfully.

Courage: Standing up for what is right, even in the face of pressure. In the Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point."

Wisdom: This virtue allows us to determine what's right and what's wrong, stop and consider the consequences of our decisions before acting or speaking and then act accordingly. Developing this virtue allows one to differentiate between right and wrong in situations where different values might collide or there are no clear guidelines.

Justice: Giving to others what they are rightly due. A just person is distinguished by habitual right thinking and treating others fairly, and is someone who promotes equity. Justice involves standing up against unfair practices, defending the innocent, not blaming the victim, and giving to those in need.

Self-control: Managing our desires and wants in order to achieve a greater good and meet our life goals. Building self-control not only gives us willpower, but it also grows self-esteem.

Assertiveness: Achieving goals by setting appropriate and positive boundaries, asking for help when we need it, and being confident and positive about our abilities. Assertiveness also builds confidence, self-esteem, and ability to form and maintain stronger relationships.

Helpfulness: Being of service to others and doing thoughtful things that make a difference in the lives of others, as well as our own. This virtue begins with observation and awareness. Through the virtue of helpfulness, we give of ourselves and grow in love. It does not mean taking over and doing everything ourselves.

Modesty: Purity of heart in action, especially in regards to dress and speech. Modesty helps us dress in a way that safeguards our dignity. While we usually think of immodesty as not wearing enough clothing, one can also be guilty of being excessively modest or prudish. Modesty in speech encourages patience and moderation in relationships.

Peacefulness: Having a sense of inner calm, no matter what is happening around us. It's about being satisfied and content wherever we are or whatever is happening around us, and being in harmony with our goals and desires. This virtue allows us to be calm and poised in the midst of our crazy-busy lives and the stress that comes with it.

Service: Being helpful to the entire family of humankind. This can also be called beneficence, which means helping the greater community for the common good. A well-rounded person is someone who gives of himself/herself and recognizes the needs of the greater community.

Forgiveness: Handling disobedience, poor choices, and disputes in a reasonable and consistent manner by not being too strict, but not being too lax either. Forgiveness isn't just saying sorry. It must be sincere and come from the heart. When we know how to forgive, we're able to let go of resentment and allow ourselves to heal.

Purposefulness: Having a clear vision, strong focus, and concentration on goals where we do one thing at a time without wasted thoughts or energy. Being purposeful means having a clear focus and a vision.

Good Counsel: Seeking advice from a reasonable person. This virtue enables us to know who we can trust to have our best interest at heart, as well as when to ask for help.

Responsibility: Fulfilling one's duties and accepting the consequences of one's words and actions—intentional and unintentional. The world needs more people who are willing to take personal responsibility for their thoughts, words, actions, and their associated consequences.

Kindness: Expressing genuine concern about the well-being of others--anticipating their needs. As parents, we want our children to thrive in kindness, no matter their age. Kindness helps infuse self-control, gratitude, and generosity.

Honesty: Sincerity, openness, and truthfulness in one's words and actions. Honesty helps foster strong, meaningful, and happy relationships throughout our lives. Much of the suffering in families, in relationships, and even in society is due to dishonesty. This virtue helps us resist the temptation of instant gratification and cutting corners for our own self-interest. It also helps us understand discretion.

Respect: Recognizing the worth and dignity of every single human person. The virtue of respect allows us to live in harmony with others. When we respect our parents, we respect authority figures like teachers, our bosses, and even our neighbors. Respect can mean admiration for a person's qualities or abilities as well as being courteous to or allowing others their rights. Respect can also mean a healthy regard for one's self.

Tolerance: Allowing other people to have their opinions about non-essential things and accepting the preferences and ideas that are different from ours without compromising our own beliefs.

Perseverance: Taking the steps necessary to carry out objectives in spite of difficulties. Developing this virtue helps us be successful in life--no matter our goals or obstacles we face. This virtue allows us to look adversity in the eye, overcome temptation to quit or be distracted, and continue giving 100 percent to achieve our goals.

Good judgment: Thinking rightly about a decision and making a sound decision. The virtue of good judgement is developed through experiences both good and bad, as well as reflection on those decisions.

Gratitude: Gratitude is also called thankfulness, but it's not the same thing as saying "thank you." It is having a thankful disposition of mind and heart. If we have gratitude, it can transform our entire outlook on life.

Humility: A humble person can be confident without being arrogant and maintain self-respect despite what others think. Humility is a virtue that helps kids be a better team player at school or in sports and own their mistakes. In the face of criticism, this virtue helps us fully consider what is being said instead of instantly defending ourselves.

Obedience: Assenting to rightful authority without hesitation or resistance. In today's world, individual freedom and thoughts are put above all else, and obeying authority is seen as weak and a threat to personal freedom. However, the virtue of obedience is what keeps society from disintegrating into chaos and teaches us how to shed our pride and ego and be more humble for the greater societal good.

Patience: Remaining calm and not becoming annoyed when dealing with problems or difficult people. This could also mean paying attention to something for a long time without becoming bored or losing interest.

Leadership/Command: Directly acting upon a sound decision. Instilling this virtue in ourselves will prevent us from saying cruel things and helps them use their words wisely rather than resorting to fighting. It will also help them be better leaders.

Truthfulness: Acting in a way that inspires confidence and trust. Being a person whom others cannot count on blocks powerful and effective relationships from being built. Being reliable is a virtue that will take us far in school, at work, and in our relationships.

Moderation: Controlling our desires and wants in order to achieve a greater good and meet life's goals. Self-denial can be difficult today because our culture promotes indulgence and self-gratification. This virtue is a combination of moderation and self-control that permits us to live a rich and rewarding life filled with good things that really matter. It can be challenging because it requires us to use self-discipline to limit (or even to deny ourselves) some pleasures.

Loyalty: Accepting the bond implicit in relationships and defending the virtues upheld by church, family, and country. The virtue of loyalty is critical to every relationship we have in life that matters. Learning this virtue helps us build better relationships with friends, colleagues, and, family.

Courtesy: Treating other people with respect and recognizing that all people are worthy of love and acceptance. When we speak and act courteously, we let others know we value and respect them. Developing this virtue helps us think about others before we act and makes our interactions with others more pleasant. It also helps our kids to ask rather than demand.

Friendliness: Being easy to approach and easy to talk to; being a friend during the best of times and worst of times. Being friendly is a virtue that will get us far in life, as it shows interest in other people and makes them feel seen and heard. When we invite people into a relationship, when we are curious about them, we have a more fulfilled life.

Sincerity: Trustfulness in words and actions; honesty and enthusiasm toward others. In today's world, it can be difficult to express ourselves and be who we really are because we're afraid of ridicule or backlash online. Sincerity is a virtue that allows us to be who we really are and freely express ourselves. When we are who we really are, rather than trying to be someone else, we have more self-love and self-respect. This, in turn, makes us happier and more fulfilled human beings.

Prayerfulness/Meditation: Creating time each day for prayer, meditation, or mindfulness helps us connect with a higher power. Connecting with a higher power helps us have hope, especially in tough times.

Greatness: Seeking with confidence to do great things; literally "having a large soul." Otherwise referred to as the virtue of magnanimity, greatness is about pursuing what is great and honorable no matter how difficult. It means stepping out of our comfort zones and doing what will benefit ourselves and others the most.

Docility: Willingness to be taught, to learn, and to grow. The Latin root *docere* means to teach, and it's where we get the words doctor and doctrine. Docility is the virtue of obedience and the openness to be taught. It's about being open to new ideas and gaining truthful knowledge and applying it in our lives.

Industriousness: Being diligent and working energetically and devoutly, especially in work that leads to natural and supernatural maturity. It's not about working to acquire more money, things, or status. This virtue helps us find self-worth and dignity in our work--whether personal or professional.

Foresight: Consideration of the consequences of one's action and thinking ahead. This virtue allows us to think about today while being mindful of the past and conscious of the future. Instilling this virtue in ourselves helps us think before they act and make better decisions throughout life.

Patriotism: Paying due honor and respect to one's country, with a willingness to serve. Patriotism is the feeling of love, devotion, and sense of attachment to a homeland and alliance with other citizens who share the same sentiment.

Meekness: Having a serenity of spirit while focusing on the needs of others. True meekness is part of the virtue of self-control and remaining calm and not allowing oneself to be quick to anger. With today's 24/7 news cycle and social posting, learning the virtue of meekness will help us not react out of malice or anger, but rather pausing and reflecting before acting.

Tact: Careful consideration of circumstances and consequences. A person with tact is understanding, sensitive, and empathetic to others. They think before they speak and act and often keep critical and upsetting thoughts to themselves.