**Ways to Use VIA Character Strengths**

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**CORE VIRTUE: TRANSCENDANCE**

**forging connections to the larger universe and providing meaning**

**III. Hope [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]:** Hope is the expectation that good things will happen in the future. Hopeful individuals are confident that their efforts toward future goals will lead to their fruition. This strength leads people to expect the best from themselves and others.

**Too much:** panglossism

**Too little:** present orientation

**Movies:**

1. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (2007)* -The film tells the remarkable tale of Jean-Dominique Bauby, a French editor, who suffered a stroke and was paralyzed by the inexplicable "locked in" syndrome when he was 43. Bauby's only way of communicating with the outside world was by blinking with one eye, and after several dedicated helpers, he was able to speak through his seemingly irrelevant gestures and began to produce word. The movie depicts strengths of hopefulness and optimism despite significant challenges.

2. *Cinderella Man (2005)-* is an inspiring by the life of legendary athlete Jim Braddock, a once-promising light heavyweight boxer forced into retirement after a string of losses in the ring. As America plunges into the Great Depression of 1930s, Braddock accepts a string of dead-end jobs to support his family. A last minute cancellation finds Braddock in the ring against the second-ranked world contender--and to everyone's amazement, Braddock wins in the third round. Despite being pounds lighter than his opponents and repeated injuries to his hands, Braddock continues to fight against challengers and win. The movie is an excellent illustration of hopes and dreams of the disenfranchised masses which dubs Braddock as “Cinderella Man."

3. *Gone with the Wind* (1939) – Scarlett O’Hara is living during the tumultuous years of the Civil War in a society torn by every sort of strife. In addition, she must contend with the trials of unrequited love and romantic frustration. In spite of all these obstacles, Scarlett maintains her sense of hope and continues to strive toward a better future for herself.

4. *Life is Beautiful* (1998-Italian) – Guido is a charming Jewish man living in Italy during the rise of Fascism. His natural qualities allow him to put together a beautiful family, but soon he and his loved ones are shipped to a concentration camp and put into mortal danger. Guido never loses his cleverness, humor, or hope, protecting his young son from the horrors of the Holocaust by pretending that the whole affair is a game. The movie’s title sums up Guido’s approach to life.

5. *Good Will Hunting* (1997) – Will Hunting works as a janitor at MIT while recovering his life from a difficult past. His natural ability with math leads to his discovery by an award-winning professor, but also leads to conflict between different groups of friends and associates. Will’s hope that he can improve his future allows him to face his obstacles with strength and resolve.

6. *Field of Dreams (1989)* This is gentle touching movie, filled with baseball but indeed, it is not about baseball - instead it is about a man (Kavin Costner) realizing his dreams and learning that sometimes you have to take a chance in life. The film depicts hope and optimism amidst highly improbable seemingly unrealistic odds.

**Songs:** Strength, Courage, Wisdom, The Rose (Bette Midler), Somewhere Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World (Israel Kamakawiwo'ole)

***Suggested Actions***

1. Recall a situation when you or someone close to you overcame a difficult obstacle and succeeded. Remember this precedent when you are faced with a similar situation

2. List all the bad things that happened to you in the previous day. Then find at least two positive aspects for each.

3. Visualize where and what you want to be after one, five and ten years. Sketch a pathway that you can follow to get there. Include manageable steps and ways to chart your progress.

4. Record your negative and positive thought patterns and notice how they affect your future performance. Experiment with making your thoughts more positive and see if your performance improves.

5. Read about someone who succeeded despite difficulties and setbacks. Look for similar obstacles that both of you faced.

6. Recall bad decisions you made, forgive yourself, and see how you can make better decisions in the future. Learn from your mistakes rather than being haunted by them.

7. When facing adversity, focus on how you overcame a similar adversity in the past. Let your successes set the precedent for your future endeavors.

8. Mentally rehearse your next anticipated challenge. Build perspective by managing obstacles rather than trying to eliminate all of them.

9. For the next three challenging tasks, identify what would work best for you: thinking your way into right action or acting your way into right thinking. Influence your future in a way that plays to your strengths.

10. Document three of your past accomplishments in detail and let them inspire your future. Keep your descriptions in a place where you typically deal with adversity, such as in desk drawer.

11. Surround yourself with optimistic and future-minded friends, particularly when you face a setback. Accept their encouragement and help, and let them know that you will do the same for them when they face obstacles.

12. Schedule at least fifteen minutes twice a week to spend generating optimistic ideas. Write them down and list actions you can take to realize your ideas. Discuss your ideas with your friends and make them partners in your endeavors.