

# BUILD YOUR OWN VIRTUE: GRATITUDE



Students are to use the Virtue Knowledge, Virtue Reasoning and Virtue Practice Tools below to think through what, when and how to practise the virtue of gratitude. Think also, about how it relates to the other virtues they have studied, especially generosity.

An excellent website for materials is here: <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/452/about/gratitude-britain> [available 02/15]

Use the Virtue Practice Tool to help examine yourself. The Templates for completing this are over the page.

Here are some negative emotions related to rivalry that the virtue of gratitude can tackle. They are taken directly from *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*, Robert C. Roberts, 2003, CUP:

## JEALOUSY: when my *personal attachments* are undermined

1. It really matters to me that you have a special **personal attachment** to me. *This person or animal is an important part of who I am.*
2. Another is taking/has taken/may take away this special **personal attachment**. *But, this person, or animal, is transferring its attention or affections to another.*
3. The person or animal to whom I am especially **attached** is colluding and consenting to this. *I note that your attentions and affections are tending towards that other person, or animal.*
4. My rival for your affections will become specially **attached** to you. *I feel threatened by this and vulnerable about it.*
5. *If I lose this special attachment, then I will be diminished in some way, and have to redefine who I am.*
  - \* If my jealousy generates fear of loss, then I will seek to protect the one to whom I am attached.
  - \* If my jealousy generates anger, then I will seek to punish the one to whom I am attached and/or my rival.
  - \* If my jealousy generates grief, then I may mope and yearn to have my special attachment back.

## ENVY: when my *personal worth* in relation to the things I define as reinforcing it, is undermined by your superiority in relation to those things.

1. We are in competition. I want to be equal to, or better than you. This will enhance my sense of **personal worth**. *My sense of self and personal worth will be reinforced if I am equal or superior to so and so, in respect of x.*
2. But I am not. *I am, or appear to be inferior to so and so, in respect of x.*
3. My sense of **personal worth** will be enhanced by your degradation. *I hope so and so is, or appears to be, degraded in respect of x.*
4. My sense of **personal worth** will be re-embossed by my triumph. *I wish to lord it over so and so.*



<b>THE VIRTUE KNOWLEDGE TEMPLATE</b>	
<b>WHAT CAN THOSE WHO HAVE THIS VIRTUE DO PARTICULARLY WELL?</b>	
<b>WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ACTING OUT THIS VIRTUE?</b>	For me:  For situation/others when this virtue is called for:  If I don't act out this virtue in this situation then:
<b>WHEN MIGHT I HAVE TO PRACTISE THIS VIRTUE IN MY LIFE?</b>	
<b>WHICH EMOTIONS ALERT ME TO THE NEED TO PRACTISE THIS VIRTUE? HOW DO THESE EMOTIONS EXPRESS THEMSELVES?</b>	
<b>WHICH DILEMMAS OR SCENARIOS ILLUMINATE THE PRINCIPLES AND STRUCTURE OF THE VIRTUE?</b>	





**VIRTUE REASONING GUIDELINES**

**DELIBERATIONS**

- \* How have your past experiences helped you think about this situation?
  - \* think through similar situations
  - \* think through emotions
  - \* think through reasons
- \* How can you apply the ‘lessons of life’ and principles you have learned to this situation?
  - \* what have you learned about acting well and thinking well, and how can you do this in this particular situation?
- \* What kind of person do you hope to become in this situation?
  - \* given a commitment to being a person who chooses wisely, as opposed to foolishly, to being courageous rather than cowardly, or rash, to being fairer, rather than unfair, to being self-controlled rather than indulgent, how can you give expression to these aspirations in your circumstances?

**EVALUATION**

- \* What are the morally relevant features of the situation and how have you weighted them?
  - \* Of what (or whom) do you need to be aware, or sensitive to?
  - \* Which features are in competition?
  - \* Which features contradict?
  - \* How will you reconcile these tensions?
- \* To whom have you looked for advice, and/or inspiration, and why? Are they good sources?
- \* What might the implications of your decision be, both positive and negative?

**TOWARDS THE GOLDEN MEAN**

<b>UNDERDOING IT - DEFICIENCIES</b>	<b>THE GOLDEN MEAN</b>	<b>OVERDOING IT - EXCESSES</b>
Which emotions, desires, and actions would be expressive of underdoing it in relation to the issue?	Which emotions, desires and actions would be spot on, in giving expression to the virtue(s) required to handle this situation?	Which emotions, desires, and actions would be expressive of overdoing it in relation to the issue?
	What will you do to give expression to this?  I will:	





	<b>STATES OF CHARACTER</b>	<b>MY EMOTIONS</b>	<b>MY OPTIONS AND MY CHOICES</b>	<b>MY ACTIONS</b>
<b>STAGE 4</b>	<b>VIRTUOUS: SPOT ON</b>	RIGHT	RIGHT	RIGHT
<b>STAGE 3</b>	<b>CONTINENT: I DID THE RIGHT THING, BUT THROUGH GRITTED TEETH</b>	WRONG	RIGHT	RIGHT
<b>STAGE 2</b>	<b>INCONTINENT: I KNEW WHAT THE RIGHT THING TO DO WAS, BUT GOT CARRIED AWAY BY MY EMOTIONS AND DIDN'T DO IT!</b>	WRONG	RIGHT	WRONG
<b>STAGE 1</b>	<b>UNWISE: I NEED A RETHINK HERE</b>	WRONG	WRONG	WRONG

**A GOOD SENSE CHECKLIST**

**I understand the moral point and purpose called for by the activity – I know which virtues the situation, or activity is calling me to practise and promote.**

**I understand how to balance out, or prioritise the clashing virtues.**

**I understand how to apply the guidelines I have learnt from experience and reflection.**

**I understand how my actions will be perceived by others.**

**I can specify what my emotions are alerting me to do.**

**I know how to practise the appropriate virtues to express the moral point of this activity.**

