

BUILDING YOUR OWN VIRTUES FIT FOR PURPOSE? PROFESSIONAL VIRTUE



TEACHERS' NOTES

Much has been written in recent years about the unprofessional behaviour of professionals. Judges have dispensed 'rough justice', or partial justice, Doctors have not shown care or compassion for their patients, teachers have betrayed trust and been impatient with their pupils and journalists have lied and covered up the truth. Accountants and bankers have exploited the gullible, to their own financial advantage, and politicians have stolen from the public purse to finance personal luxuries. But it's not just in the traditional 'professions' that virtue is required – tradesmen also need to act with virtue, especially when the reputations of the self-employed ride upon being 'of good character'.

As students begin to turn their attention to career paths, explore with them which one or two virtues they will need to cultivate to do their job well in the future. Here are some suggestions, but of course, the list is not exhaustive:

- * Those aspiring to be lawyers – would do well to act with justice, truthfulness and integrity;
- * Those aspiring to be doctors – would do well to cultivate the virtue of compassion;
- * Those aspiring to be teachers – would do well to cultivate the virtues of concern for others, humility in the pursuit of knowledge and patience;
- * Those aspiring to work in the media – would do well to cultivate the virtue of truthfulness;

To do this, use the Virtue Knowledge Template, the Virtue Reasoning Template and the Virtue Practice Template.

The materials have been adapted to help focus students on which virtue or virtues they particularly need to develop in their chosen career. Students need to:

- * Be aware of the moral demands of their chosen career path, and the ways in which one could fail morally in it;
- * Be aware of situations that could call for them to practise this virtue (realistic ones);
- * Be aware of how well they are currently practising this virtue in the differing contexts of their lives
- * Steer students towards consideration of the virtues and away from skills and values.

This would work well as a good project that students could personally own. They could present on their chosen virtue and how it relates to their career path of choice.

It should also crystallise into actions – how can students now begin practising, the virtue that may be most required in their profession?



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





VIRTUE REASONING GUIDELINES

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|----------------------|--|
| DELIBERATIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * How have your past experiences helped you think about practising this virtue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * think situations where you have used it * think through emotions * think through reasons * How well have you been practising this virtue to date? (You may use the Virtue Practice tool below to help analyse yourself, here). * What will be the key challenges, or temptations in your chosen career path? What will it look like to act wrongly in your career path? How can you apply the 'lessons of life' and principles you have learned to challenging situations in your chosen career path? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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? * Who have you drawn inspiration from? |
| EVALUATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What are the morally relevant features of the sorts of situations that call for this virtue, and how have you weighted them? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 (in your chosen field), and why? Are they good sources? * What might the implications of your decision be, both positively and negatively? |

TOWARDS THE GOLDEN MEAN

| UNDERDOING IT - DEFICIENCIES | THE GOLDEN MEAN | OVERDOING IT - EXCESSES |
|---|--|--|
| 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: | |



Complete this to show how well you are currently practicing the virtue you will need for your chosen career path.

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

