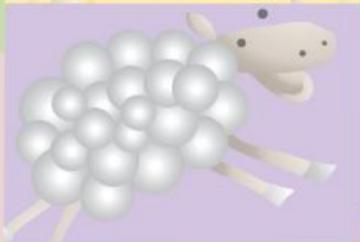


# Strength

CARDS®

DIGITAL VERSION



St Luke's  
**Innovative**  
Resources

# Welcome to the Digital Version of *Strength Cards*!



Fifty-four delightful digital images for naming, celebrating and building strengths.

For over two decades *Strength Cards* have played a vital role in building self-esteem, optimism and resilience in children, young people and adults alike. This resource is based on such a simple, yet powerful idea: EVERYONE HAS STRENGTHS! And it is through our strengths that we learn and grow. Wherever we go, whatever we do, in times of struggle and in times of ease, our strengths can lead the way.

First published as a card set and stickers, this iconic set of 54 strengths is now available in an interactive, user-friendly digital version.

You can:

- swipe through *Strength Cards* one or two at a time
- swipe through a row of thumbnail images at the bottom of the screen
- bookmark/tag images
- add and drag notes to anywhere on the image
- write, scribble or draw on the image
- highlight, draw and write in multiple colours
- take a screen shot and access the image in your photo gallery (you can't print directly from the digital images).

## Who are *Strength Cards* for?

*Strength Cards* have been used by countless children, adolescents and adults all over the world to highlight strengths. *Strength Cards* are considered the one essential resource for thousands of family workers, teachers, counsellors, trainers, facilitators, supervisors, life coaches and parents worldwide. They are also a favourite of wellbeing coordinators, social workers, managers, team leaders, supervisors and parents. They are used in classrooms, school camps, youth groups and health services. They are used extensively in social work settings including mental health, disability, out-of-home care, and community services. *Strength Cards* also make regular appearances in HR settings and in retirements and celebrations—any occasion when there is an appreciative focus on a person—including school reports!

## What are *Strength Cards* for?

*Strength Cards* can be used for many purposes including:

- Finding solutions
- Setting goals
- Building self-esteem
- Taking risks
- Creative writing
- Critical reflection
- Exploring values
- Creating affirmations
- Reframing
- Evaluation
- Personal reflection and inspiration
- One-on-one counselling
- Group work
- Staff meetings
- Team building
- Supervision
- Job interviews
- Education and training
- Coaching and mentoring
- Undoing 'stuckness' or inertia

*Strength Cards* has been used in settings as different as:

- Primary and secondary schools
- Sexual assault services
- Child protection
- Chaplaincy, sermons and funerals
- Palliative care
- Tutoring
- Disability services
- Financial counseling
- Hospitality training
- Family therapy
- Prisons
- Employment services



The cards arise out of 'strengths-based practice' which is a way of working with people that focusses primarily on strengths rather than problems, and supports 'power-with' rather than 'power-over'. Readers can learn more about this highly effective and respectful way of working by reading *The Strengths Approach* by Wayne McCashen.

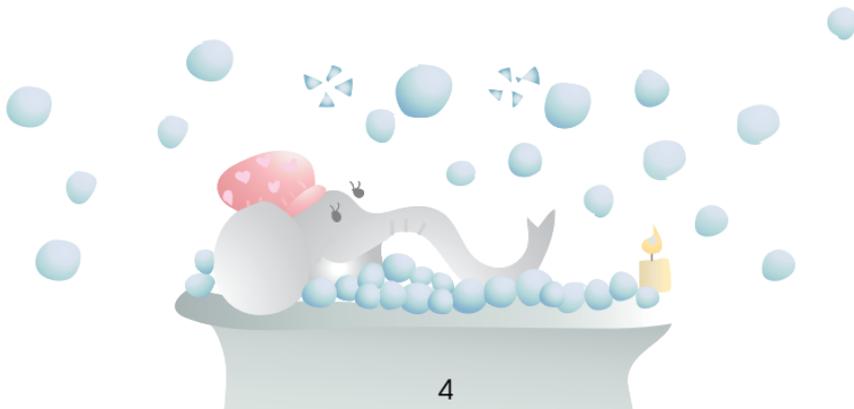
### **How many images are in the digital set?**

There are 54 strengths in the set, each one featuring a different illustration and 'strengths word'. While strengths include resources, relationships, culture, buildings, health and so on, these cards focus on strengths as qualities and capacities of an individual or group. A very powerful place to start.

## What should I consider before using digital *Strength Cards*?

Almost invariably, talking about strengths will energise and positively transform conversations with individuals, groups or teams. It is amazing to feel the whole atmosphere shift as people begin to talk about their own strengths and those of others. However, it is important to keep in mind that sometimes when talking about things that are personal (such as our identity, qualities, goals or plans) we can feel unexpectedly exposed or vulnerable. Memories or feelings can suddenly arise.

While no training is needed to use *Strength Cards*, it is important to consider such things as the timing, the setting, literacy levels, cultural relevance and privacy before you begin using this resource with others. Please consider how you will ensure that people are safe and respected, and can be supported if strong emotions arise. It is important that nobody feels 'pressured' to participate or to speak about aspects of themselves if they do not wish to.



## How do I use the digital *Strength Cards*?

There are so many fun and creative ways to use the digital *Strength Cards*. Here are a few 'go-to' questions to keep in mind; they will serve you well even if you don't remember anything else!

- Select a strength someone saw in you as a child
- Select a strength you see in yourself now
- Select a strength you see in someone else
- Select a strength you think would help you/your team/ your family/your community most at the moment.

Now, here are some other ideas to spark your imagination:

### **Random Selection**

A non-threatening way of getting started is to select strengths randomly by using activities such as:

- Ask a child or young person, 'How old are you?' You or they can then swipe through the images, counting each image as you go. Stop at the image corresponding with their age.
- Ask the person to close their eyes (or turn their back) and randomly say, 'Stop!' as the facilitator swipes through the images.
- Use a timer that has been set to a chosen interval—5 seconds, 8 seconds etc. Stop on the image that is onscreen when the timer dings.

Then you can ask questions such as the following:

- What does the word on the card mean to you?
- Are there other words you would use to describe this strength?
- What is happening in the picture?
- Can you think of other ways that this strength could be depicted?
- Can you think of a time when you have used this strength?  
(Hint: when you are learning something new, you use many strengths!)
- Is this a strength that you would like to develop more?
- If you had more of this strength in your life right now, what difference would it make? Would it help, and if so, how?
- Of all the people you know, who is really good at this strength?  
(It may be someone you know personally or a famous person).

### **Strength of the Day/Week**

- Teachers or parents can swipe through and pick a 'Strength of the Day or Week', or have a child pick one. The child or class can then focus on that strength using some of the questions above to explore it more. This will help build children's 'strengths vocabularies'. Very soon everyone will be speaking the 'language of strengths'!



## Creative Writing

Teachers can project selected digital strengths onto a large screen or spread the cards out and ask each class member to choose one or more cards. Then ask the class the following:

- Pick the strength that means the most to you. Write about this.
- Look up the word and find its meaning and origins.
- Write a list of other words that could be used for this strength. How do each of these words bring a different nuance to this strength?
- Write a poem based on this strength.
- Write a biography of a person you know (could be a public figure or someone from history) who has this strength in abundance.
- Find inspirational quotes about this strength.
- Imagine a brand new society. Write a profile of what that society would be like if these strengths were very strong.
- Write a story based on one or more of these strengths. It may be a memory you have of a time when this strength came to the fore in you or in someone else.
- Imagine you are writing your autobiography. Create a book title that includes the name of a strength you use a lot in your life.



## Family Sculpting

A popular activity for family counsellors or classroom teachers (especially for students beginning school) is to create a poster about their family using *Strength Cards*. Invite children to choose a strength to represent each person in their family (or friendship group or team). Using the digital *Strength Cards* you can write the relative's name on the image. You can take screen shots and print the images from your photo gallery and then the child can stick them on a poster. (*Strength Cards* Stickers are great for this too.) Useful questions might include:

- What is it about this particular strength that reminds you of this person?
- What do you benefit from that person having that strength? Does it help you in any way?
- Have you learnt anything about how to 'do' that strength from watching them?
- Does 'person X' have other strengths as well?
- Which strength would you put next to your name?
- Do others in your family have this strength as well?
- Do they notice this strength in you?
- Have you always been good at it or did you have to learn it?



## **When Times are Tough: Other Activities for Families and Parents**

Sometimes, families are so overwhelmed by issues that they lose touch with their strengths—and forget that strengths provide possible solutions to difficulties. *Strength Cards* can be used to:

- offer reminders that we all have strengths and that it helps if we can identify and name our strengths
- create conversations about using our strengths to address particular problems
- highlight the importance of sharing and celebrating our strengths.

Swipe through the images and ask an individual or family:

- What strengths do you have as a family?
- What different strengths do individuals members bring to the family?
- Have you told each other lately what strengths you see in each other?
- What strengths have you used in the past to get through difficult times?
- What strengths do you have right now that you can call on even more?
- If you were to put these strengths into action, what would you be doing differently?
- What's stopping you?
- What other strengths could your family use at present?
- How might you go about searching for these strengths?

## The Iceberg

For every strength you might see in yourself or another person, you can be sure that many more strengths are hidden beneath the surface—a bit like the hidden part of an iceberg. The idea that everyone has strengths even if they are not clearly visible is invaluable and can be enriched by building the iceberg metaphor. We all have hidden strengths, if only we can look and listen closely enough. Swiping through the cards, you can try questions such as:

- Strengths are like icebergs; we all have strengths below the surface that we may not be fully aware of. Would you like to explore what these hidden strengths might be for you?
- You said that your only strength is ... But as you talk about your situation, I also see other strengths such as ... Can you see how these other strengths are vital to enable you to enact the strength you named?

An activity that can reinforce this metaphor in a small group situation is to have each group member talk about their situation and their key strengths while the other members listen intently attempting to identify any submerged strengths they notice in the conversation.



## **Borrowing Strengths from Others**

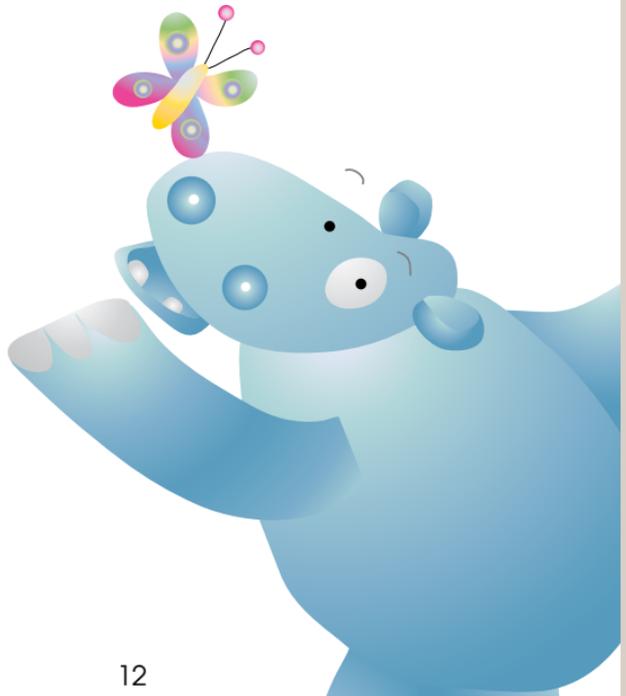
We all have times when we need to draw on the strengths of others—our partners, families, friends, neighbours, colleagues and specialist professionals—to complement our own array of strengths. Ask the person to swipe through the cards with the following questions in mind (Remember, you can tag particular images, write comments on them, take a screen shot and save them for 'records'):

- What particular strengths, skills and resources would be most helpful right now?
- Can you think of a person who might have some of these strengths, skills and resources? (You can write the name of the person directly onto the image, if you wish)
- How might you go about seeking their help?
- How could you 'borrow' these strengths and make them your own?
- You may not feel like you have these strengths right now but what if you decided to act as if you did have them?
- Do you think you would feel different?
- Do you think others might notice a difference?
- If you imagined having a new useful strength right now, which one would you choose?
- If you simply started acting as if you had it, what would you start doing?

## Sharing Strengths with Others

As well as borrowing strengths from others, we can also share our strengths with them. Some ways of thinking about 'gifting' with strengths are:

- What strengths do I have that could assist this other person in their struggles?
- How can I share my strengths in a way that enhances their strengths?
- How can I ensure I am being respectful? Is the timing right?
- What might the consequences be, for each of us, if I don't share my strengths?



## Shadow Questions

What may be a strength in one situation, may be a deficit in another. What we may think of as an important strength for us, may be experienced differently by others. And sometimes we can overuse—or inappropriately use—certain strengths. ‘Shadow questions’ provide a way to explore the tipping points that can turn strengths into deficits. Some powerful shadow questions to include as people swipe through the images are:

- Do you overly rely on a few strengths?
- What strengths might you have that could get in the way of other people developing their own strengths?
- What strengths might you have that can get in the way of you developing other strengths?
- Do you have strengths that sometimes do battle with each other? Which strengths tend to ‘win’?
- Which of the strengths named on *Strength Cards* are challenging, confronting or the hardest to enact in your life? Are there any that you avoid using?
- Are there strengths that you once used but no longer do so? Why? How might you reclaim these into your repertoire?



## Boosting Self-esteem with 'Audience' Questions

When times are tough or when self-esteem is low, it can be difficult to identify our own strengths. Sometimes people are reluctant to talk about their strengths in front of others for fear they are 'big-noting' themselves. An 'audience question' can be a very useful place to start:

- What would those people who know you well say were your greatest strengths?
- Think of someone positive from your present or past (such as your best friend at school, favourite teacher, neighbour or relative). What would they say were your strengths?
- What would your dog/cat/goldfish or pot plant say were your greatest strengths?
- Imagine a newspaper article praising you, or an award that you win. What strength would you most want to be known for?
- Imagine an angel is sitting on your shoulder. What would they say is a strength of yours?



## Team Building or Supervision

Swipe through the images on your device or project them onto a screen:

- What strengths do you as an individual bring to your team?
- Everyone in this team has strengths, how do we maximise everyone's contribution?
- What strengths are the hallmarks of your business, organisation or school?
- What would observers or other teams say were our strengths?
- What are the strengths we do well or easily?
- What are the strengths we need to work on?
- Thinking of your work at the moment, or coming up soon, what strengths do you think you will need the most?
- How will you start applying these strengths in your work?
- What strengths should we be aiming to celebrate in 12-months' time?



# The Complete Set of Cards



adventurous



attentive



capable



co-operative



committed



confident



contented



creative



determined



different



encouraging



energetic



enthusiastic



fair



flexible



forgiving



generous



hardworking



helpful



hopeful



humble



humorous



independent



loving



organised



practical



purposeful



relaxed



reliable



resilient



respectful



responsible



understanding



assertive



brave



careful



caring



curious



friendly



gentle



happy



honest



kind



loyal



open



patient



peaceful



playful



protective



resourceful



skillful



strong



thoughtful



wise





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**THE ONE INDISPENSABLE RESOURCE FOR OVER 20 YEARS!**

54 delightful images for naming, building  
and celebrating strengths

**NOW AVAILABLE DIGITALLY!**

Wherever we go, whatever we do, in times of struggle  
and in times of ease, our strengths can lead the way.

Use these 54 digital images with children, young  
people, adults, families, and communities to:

**build strengths, find solutions, achieve goals,  
enhance self-esteem.**

Want to shift the dynamics of your team, organisation  
or school? Use this resource to build a culture where  
strengths are noticed, valued, and celebrated.

*Swipe through the 54 digital Strength Cards—write  
on them, draw on them, highlight and tag them, take  
screen shots and save them in your gallery.*



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