



CHALLENGING TRAIT WORKSHEETS

This document is designed to guide you through a series of reflective worksheets focused on identifying and strengthening your challenging traits. These traits play a crucial role in your ability to navigate challenges, build relationships, and foster personal growth. By completing each session, you will gain a deeper understanding of your unique qualities and how they can be developed to support identity, purpose, resilience, and success.

Session 1: Take the Identity Assessment

Challenging is your 'Primary' or 'Secondary' Trait (circle)

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CHALLENGING CHARACTER TRAITS WORKSHEET

You are competitive and self-interested. As an independent person, you are not motivated by getting along with the group and are even willing to upset others to pursue your own goals. You are often independent in your thoughts, and you ask questions, especially to protect your self-interest and make sure you are right. You are disinterested in compromise and do not get satisfaction out of helping others. However, God doesn't make mistakes in how He hardwires people and often asks us to stand independently and persistently against the 'wisdom' of the world.

Key Characteristics

- **Assertive and Competitive:** You tend to be more assertive and competitive in your interactions. Challenging individuals may be more willing to stand up for themselves and pursue their own goals, even if it means conflicting with others' interests.
- **Bluntness and Straightforwardness:** Challenging people are more likely to express their thoughts and opinions directly, without sugar-coating or being overly concerned about how their words might be received.
- **Less Concerned with Others' Feelings:** You may be less attuned to the emotional needs of others and may not prioritize maintaining harmony in social situations.
- **Tough-Minded:** You are often more emotionally resilient and less affected by criticism or negative feedback than some others.
- **Independence:** Challenging individuals tend to be more self-reliant and may prefer making decisions based on their own judgment rather than seeking consensus or approval.
- **Less Likely to Conform:** You may be less inclined to conform to societal norms or social expectations if they conflict with your own values or desires.

Jesus' Teachings

It's important to note that interpretations of religious teachings can vary among individuals and denominations, but here are some ways in which the above characteristics may relate to Jesus' teachings.

- **Assertiveness and Standing Up for Truth:** Jesus displayed assertiveness in His teachings, challenging religious authorities and societal norms when they conflicted with higher moral values. For example, He overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the temple, expressing His disapproval of their practices.
- **Honesty and Straightforwardness:** Jesus was known for His candidness and direct communication. He often spoke plainly and openly, using parables and stories to convey important lessons.
- **Independence and Devotion to God:** Jesus' teachings emphasized the importance of an individual's relationship with God and the pursuit of truth and righteousness. He often challenged conventional thinking, urging people to focus on their spiritual connection rather than just following societal norms.
- **Disagreements and Conflict:** Jesus did not shy away from conflict, especially when it involved addressing injustice or hypocrisy. However, He also taught the value of forgiveness and reconciliation.

CHALLENGING SPIRITUAL STRENGTHS WORKSHEET

You are competitive and self-interested. As an independent person, you are not motivated by getting along with the group and are even willing to upset others to pursue your own goals. You are often independent in your thoughts, and you ask questions, especially to protect your self-interest and make sure you are right.

While may present challenges in relational dynamics, it also brings unique spiritual strengths that can be harnessed for leadership, honesty, resilience, and advocacy within the faith community. Recognizing these strengths can help individuals embrace their unique contributions to their spiritual journeys and the communities they serve.

Spiritual Strengths

Assertiveness and Leadership:

- **Strength:** Challenging individuals often possess strong assertiveness, which can translate into effective leadership, guiding others with conviction and clarity.
- **Bible Reference:** *"Therefore, if you have not been faithful in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?"* (Luke 16:11, NIV) – This verse emphasizes the importance of responsibility and leadership.

Critical Thinking and Discernment:

- **Strength:** They may excel in critical thinking, allowing them to question norms and explore deeper theological truths, promoting growth in understanding.
- **Bible Reference:** *"Test everything; hold fast what is good."* (1 Thessalonians 5:21, ESV) – This encourages discernment and careful examination of beliefs.

Resilience and Independence:

- **Strength:** Individuals often foster resilience and self-sufficiency, helping individuals navigate challenges without relying heavily on others.
- **Bible Reference:** *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13, NKJV) – This verse highlights strength and perseverance through faith.

Honesty and Authenticity:

- **Strength:** They are likely to be direct and honest, valuing authenticity in their relationships and interactions, which can foster genuine dialogue about faith.
- **Bible Reference:** *"The lip of truth shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment."* (Proverbs 12:19, NKJV) – This emphasizes the importance of truthfulness.

Courage to Speak Truth:

- **Strength:** They may possess the courage to speak out against injustice or wrongdoing, advocating for what is right even when it is unpopular.
- **Bible Reference:** *"Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute."* (Proverbs 31:8, ESV) – This encourages advocacy for those who cannot speak for themselves.

CHALLENGING VULNERABILITIES WORKSHEET

Challenging individuals are often seen as more competitive, skeptical, and direct in their interactions. While these traits can be advantageous in certain contexts, they also come with specific vulnerabilities.

Vulnerabilities

- **Difficulty in Building Relationships:** Challenging individuals may struggle to form deep connections with others due to their bluntness or skepticism.
- **Tendency to Be Confrontational:** Their directness can sometimes come off as aggressive, leading to conflicts and misunderstandings in social interactions.
- **Resistance to Collaboration:** They may prefer working independently and can be reluctant to cooperate or compromise, making teamwork challenging.
- **Limited Empathy:** Challenging individuals may find it difficult to understand or share the feelings of others, potentially leading to perceived insensitivity.
- **Struggles with Criticism:** While they may dish out criticism, they can also be sensitive to feedback themselves, feeling threatened or defensive when faced with critique.

Jesus' Teachings

By reflecting on these teachings of Jesus, challenging individuals can find guidance in addressing their vulnerabilities. Integrating these principles into daily life can promote personal growth, enhance interpersonal relationships, and foster a deeper sense of community and connection with others.

- **Difficulty in Building Relationships:** *"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:31)*
This teaching emphasizes the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. Making an effort to show love and care for others can help in building stronger connections and breaking down barriers.
- **Tendency to Be Confrontational:** *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9)*
This verse highlights the value of seeking peace in relationships. Embracing a peacemaking attitude can help individuals approach conflicts with a mindset aimed at resolution rather than confrontation.
- **Resistance to Collaboration:** *"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18:20)*
This teaching encourages collaboration and community. Recognizing the value of working together can enhance teamwork and lead to more fruitful outcomes in both personal and professional relationships.
- **Limited Empathy:** *"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." (Matthew 7:12)*
Known as the Golden Rule, this teaching encourages individuals to consider how their actions affect others. Practicing empathy by treating others as you would like to be treated can enhance emotional connections and understanding.
- **Struggles with Criticism:** *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged." (Matthew 7:1)*
This verse serves as a reminder to approach criticism with humility. Recognizing that everyone has areas for improvement can help individuals respond to feedback more graciously, both when giving and receiving it.

Other Practical Guidance

Personal Guidance

- **Practice Active Listening:** Make a conscious effort to listen more than you speak. Use techniques like summarizing what the other person has said to show understanding.
- **Reframe Directness:** Work on softening your delivery when expressing opinions or feedback. Consider using "I" statements and providing context for your thoughts.
- **Embrace Collaboration:** Actively seek out opportunities to work with others, even if it feels uncomfortable. Set small goals for collaboration and focus on shared outcomes.
- **Develop Empathy:** Practice putting yourself in others' shoes. Take time to consider how your words and actions might impact them.
- **Manage Sensitivity to Criticism:** Reflect on feedback as a tool for growth rather than a personal attack. Consider seeking out constructive criticism from trusted sources to gain a more balanced perspective.

Relationship Guidance

- **Foster Open Communication:** Encourage open dialogues in your relationships. Ask others for their thoughts and feelings and be willing to engage in discussions about differing perspectives.
- **Be Mindful of Non-Verbal Cues:** Pay attention to body language and tone of voice, both yours and others'. Being aware of these cues can help you respond more effectively in social situations.
- **Balance Honesty with Compassion:** While it's important to be honest, strive to balance truthfulness with kindness. Consider how you would feel receiving the same feedback you are giving.
- **Encourage Constructive Feedback:** Create a feedback-friendly environment in your relationships, where both giving and receiving feedback is normalized and seen to grow together.
- **Celebrate Others' Successes:** Make a conscious effort to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of others. This can be as simple as offering a compliment or expressing appreciation for their contributions.

Notes

CHALLENGING TRAIT NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

You are competitive and self-interested. As an independent person, you are not motivated by getting along with the group and are even willing to upset others to pursue your own goals. You are often independent in your thoughts, and you ask questions, especially to protect your self-interest and make sure you are right. You are disinterested in compromise and do not get satisfaction out of helping others. However, God doesn't make mistakes in how He hardwires people and often asks us to stand independently and persistently against the 'wisdom' of the world.

Challenges You May Experience from Yourself and Others

Your interpersonal skills and ability to work as part of a team can be critically important to your success at work. Companies often adopt a team approach to nearly every aspect of their business including sales, operations, administration, etc. Since you are not innately 'wired' to be a team player, you may at times come across to others as hostile, rude, aloof, self-centered, arrogant, hard-headed or combative. It's helpful to be aware of how your interpersonal style at work can be perceived by others so that you can monitor your behavior.

How to Effectively Manage Challenges

- **Assertiveness with diplomacy:** While not naturally inclined to prioritize harmony, assert yourself confidently while remaining respectful and diplomatic in your interactions with others.
- **Collaborate strategically:** Recognize the importance of teamwork in achieving common goals and actively participate in collaborative efforts when necessary, focusing on achieving objectives efficiently.
- **Practice active listening:** Demonstrate genuine interest in others' perspectives and opinions, even if you may not always agree with them. This helps build rapport and fosters effective communication.
- **Manage conflict constructively:** When disagreements arise, approach them with a problem-solving mindset rather than becoming defensive or combative. Focus on finding mutually beneficial solutions.
- **Set boundaries:** Clearly communicate your boundaries and expectations to others, and assertively uphold them when necessary. This helps prevent others from taking advantage of your assertiveness.
- **Seek feedback:** Actively solicit feedback from colleagues to ensure your assertiveness is perceived positively and to identify areas for improvement.
- **Cultivate empathy:** While not naturally empathetic, make an effort to understand others' perspectives and feelings, which can help improve your interpersonal relationships.

Jesus' Teachings

By integrating these teachings into your approach, you can navigate interpersonal challenges more effectively. Emphasizing respect, active listening, and empathy can help balance your assertiveness, leading to more positive interactions and a more cohesive team environment. This alignment with Jesus' principles not only fosters personal growth but also reflects a commitment to building harmonious relationships.

- **Assertiveness with Diplomacy:** Jesus demonstrated assertiveness with love and respect, as seen in Matthew 5:37, where He advised, "Let your yes be yes, and your no be no." Approach your interactions with clarity and confidence, ensuring that you express your thoughts while maintaining respect for others' opinions.
- **Collaborate Strategically:** Jesus emphasized teamwork among His disciples, encouraging collaboration for a common purpose (e.g., Luke 10:1). Recognize the value of working with others to achieve shared goals, and be willing to engage in collaborative efforts, even if it's not your natural inclination.
- **Practice Active Listening:** Jesus was attentive to those around Him, often asking questions and encouraging dialogue (e.g., John 4:7-26 with the Samaritan woman). Make a conscious effort to listen actively to others, demonstrating interest in their perspectives, which can help build rapport and trust.
- **Manage Conflict Constructively:** In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus provided a framework for addressing conflict directly and constructively, emphasizing reconciliation. When disagreements arise, adopt a problem-solving approach, focusing on constructive outcomes rather than defensiveness or aggression.
- **Set Boundaries:** Jesus established boundaries, often withdrawing from crowds to recharge and focus on His mission (e.g., Mark 1:35). Clearly communicate your boundaries to others, ensuring that you uphold them assertively while maintaining respect for their needs.
- **Seek Feedback:** Jesus welcomed questions and feedback from His disciples, encouraging growth and understanding (e.g., Matthew 16:13-20). Actively solicit feedback from colleagues about your communication style and assertiveness, using it as an opportunity for growth and improvement.
- **Cultivate Empathy:** Jesus showed compassion and understanding towards others, such as in Matthew 9:36, where He had compassion for the harassed and helpless. Make a concerted effort to understand the emotions and perspectives of others, which can enhance your interpersonal relationships and create a more collaborative atmosphere.

Notes

CHALLENGING LEARNING STYLES

Based on your learning styles, here are the best way to engage and learn from the Bible.

Primary Learning Style: Read/Write



Read/write learners excel when they engage with written materials. They prefer reading text, taking notes, and creating written summaries to understand and remember information.

Read/Write Learner Resources

As a 'read/write' learner, here are some resources to help you better understand the bible and other concepts.

- **YouVersion reading plans at <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans>**
YouVersion has the most comprehensive reading plans and daily devotionals available in multiple bible versions and languages.
- **Where to start from Spoken Gospel at <https://www.spokengospel.com/quiz>**
Not sure where to start? Take our short quiz, and we'll find the perfect book for you.
- **BibleProject reading plans at <https://bibleproject.com/explore/>**
BibleProject has over thirty reading plans available on YouVersion's Bible app.

Secondary Learning Style: Visual



These learners prefer to use visual aids like diagrams, charts, graphs, and videos to understand and remember information. They learn best when they can see visual representations of concepts.

Visual Learner Resources

As a 'visual' learner, here are some resources to help you better understand the bible and other concepts.

- **BibleProject videos at <https://bibleproject.com/explore/>**
All of BibleProject videos are short visual explanations that show how the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus.
- **YouVersion videos at <https://www.bible.com/videos>**
YouVersion / Bible.com has a large inventory of videos for books in the bible and many other themes.
- **Spoken Gospel videos at <https://www.spokengospel.com/library>**
Watch 'The Bible Explained' video series with an overview for many books of the bible.

CHALLENGING RELATIONAL STRENGTHS WORKSHEET

Challenging individuals bring unique relational strengths to both community settings and conversations. These strengths often manifest in their directness, independence, and willingness to challenge norms, which can be valuable in driving honest communication, critical thinking, and accountability.

Relational Strengths in a Community

- **Honest and Direct Communication:** Challenging individuals are often straightforward and honest. They don't shy away from saying what needs to be said, even if it's uncomfortable. This directness can be valuable in community settings where clarity and truthfulness are needed to address problems or inefficiencies.
- **Promoting Critical Thinking:** They often encourage others to question assumptions and think critically. In communities, they challenge ideas and approaches, which can help prevent group thinking and lead to more innovative and well-considered decisions.
- **Strong Sense of Independence:** Challenging individuals tend to be more independent and self-reliant. This independence can inspire others in the community to take initiative and be less dependent on consensus or group approval, fostering a culture of autonomy and self-sufficiency.
- **Encouraging Accountability:** They are likely to hold others accountable for their actions and commitments, ensuring that people don't simply "go along" with things to maintain harmony. This can create a community where individuals are expected to follow through on their responsibilities.
- **Unwavering Commitment to Principles:** They are less likely to compromise their values or principles for the sake of pleasing others. In a community, this can be a strength when there is a need for someone to stand firm on important issues, even in the face of opposition.
- **Willingness to Address Difficult Issues:** Challenging individuals are often more comfortable addressing difficult or controversial issues that others might avoid. This helps communities confront and resolve underlying problems rather than allowing them to fester.
- **Resilience in Conflict:** They are generally more comfortable with conflict and can handle tense situations without being easily upset. This resilience allows them to deal with disputes directly, which can be helpful in resolving deeper issues within a community.

Jesus' Teachings

Challenging individuals, while sometimes more direct, assertive, and less concerned with social harmony, has relational strengths that reflect honesty, courage to speak the truth, and a commitment to justice. These qualities are often necessary for standing firm in one's beliefs, addressing difficult issues, and ensuring accountability in relationships. Jesus' teachings also reflect these strengths, especially in His call for truthfulness and righteous judgment.

Teaching on Honesty, Truth, and Justice

Jesus taught about the importance of truth and righteousness, even when it's difficult or uncomfortable. One key teaching is found in Matthew 5:37:

Matthew 5:37: *"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."*

This teaching emphasizes clarity, honesty, and directness in communication—strengths associated with challenging individuals. Jesus highlights the importance of speaking truthfully and being straightforward, even when it may not be the easiest or most socially acceptable path.

Teaching on Confronting Wrong:

Jesus also modeled confrontation when it was necessary for justice and righteousness. For example, in Matthew 23, Jesus boldly confronted the Pharisees about their hypocrisy, which reflects the strength of being willing to challenge wrongs, even at the risk of creating conflict:

Matthew 23:27: *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.”*

This demonstrates the relational strength of challenging individuals: confronting injustice and being unafraid to speak the truth, even when it's uncomfortable.

Bible Verse that Represents These Relational Strengths

A Bible verse that aligns with the strengths of a challenging individual, particularly the courage to speak truth and stand for justice, is:

Ephesians 4:15: *“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”*

This verse encourages speaking truth, but doing so in love. It reflects the balance between honesty and compassion, a trait often seen in challenging individuals, who may not shy away from difficult conversations but are encouraged to frame their truth-telling with love and care for others.

Notes

CHALLENGING CONVERSATION STRENGTHS WORKSHEET

Challenging individuals bring unique relational strengths to both community settings and conversations. These strengths often manifest in their directness, independence, and willingness to challenge norms, which can be valuable in driving honest communication, critical thinking, and accountability.

Conversational Strengths

- **Honesty and Candor:** In conversations, challenging individuals are typically candid and unafraid to express their opinions. This honesty fosters transparent communication, where issues are addressed head-on rather than being sugar-coated or avoided.
- **Willingness to Challenge Ideas:** They often challenge others' ideas and perspectives, pushing for more robust discussions. Their ability to play "devil's advocate" encourages deeper thinking and can lead to more well-rounded conclusions in group conversations.
- **Confidence in Self-Expression:** Challenging individuals are typically confident in expressing their thoughts and feelings, even if those views are unpopular. Their self-assuredness can inspire others to be more open and direct in conversations as well.
- **Independence of Thought:** They are less influenced by others' opinions or the desire to conform, which brings unique and fresh perspectives to conversations. This independent thinking can help others see different sides of an issue that they might have missed.
- **Clear Boundaries in Dialogue:** They are more likely to assert boundaries in conversations and are clear about what they are comfortable with. This clarity can foster healthier communication by ensuring that discussions remain respectful and don't cross into areas they find inappropriate or unproductive.
- **Unbiased Feedback:** When giving feedback, challenging individuals are more likely to be direct and honest, without worrying about how the feedback will be received. This can lead to more actionable insights and constructive criticism, which others can use to improve.
- **Resilience to Criticism:** They are generally less sensitive to criticism and less likely to take things personally, which allows for more open and frank exchanges. Their resilience helps keep conversations focused on the issues rather than emotional reactions.
- **Persistence in Argumentation:** When they believe strongly in something, they are persistent in defending their viewpoint. This tenacity can lead to more thorough exploration of a topic, ensuring that all aspects are considered before reaching a conclusion.

Jesus' Teachings

Challenging individuals tend to be more direct, assertive, and less concerned with maintaining harmony at all costs. Their communication style is often characterized by honesty, straightforwardness, and a willingness to engage in difficult conversations that others might avoid. These strengths can bring clarity and truth to conversations, helping to address underlying issues or challenge unhelpful perspectives. Jesus' teachings also emphasize the importance of truth, integrity, and courage in speech, even when it may lead to uncomfortable or challenging interactions.

Teaching on Honesty, Directness, and Speaking Truth

One of Jesus' teachings that reflects the strengths of individuals with low Agreeableness in conversations is His emphasis on speaking the truth, even when it is difficult or may cause conflict. In Matthew 5:37, Jesus teaches about the importance of being straightforward and honest in communication:

Matthew 5:37: *“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”*

This teaching highlights the value of clear, direct communication—qualities often seen in individuals with low Agreeableness. They prioritize being honest and precise in their words, ensuring that there is no ambiguity or manipulation in their communication.

Teaching on Boldness in Speech:

Jesus also modeled boldness in speech, especially when addressing injustice or hypocrisy. In Matthew 23:27, He spoke directly to the Pharisees, calling out their hypocrisy, despite the tension it caused:

Matthew 23:27: *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.”*

This teaching demonstrates Jesus' willingness to confront difficult truths head-on, much like challenging individuals who are not afraid to address issues directly. Their courage in speaking the truth, even when it is uncomfortable, brings needed clarity and challenges people to think critically about their actions.

Bible Verse that Represents These Conversation Strengths

A Bible verse that reflects a challenging individual's strengths in communication, especially their commitment to truth and directness, is:

Ephesians 4:15: *“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”*

This verse emphasizes the importance of speaking the truth, but doing so in love. It acknowledges the need for honesty and directness, while also encouraging individuals to temper their words with care and consideration for others. Challenging individuals often embody this balance by speaking openly while aiming to maintain respect and integrity.

Notes
