



# FAIRNESS

VIA Survey calls this strength Fairness



**Parent virtue: Justice.** Strengths of justice refer to the optimal relationship between the individual and the group or community, rather than the more one-to-one relationships in the humanity virtue. These strengths include: teamwork/citizenship, fairness, and leadership.

## WHAT DOES FAIRNESS MEAN?

*You believe that all people have value. You approach situations with an unbiased mindset and treat everyone with respect.*

Fairness is the product of moral judgment – the process by which people determine what is morally right and what is morally wrong. Moral reasoning has been explored and analyzed in two main traditions: the justice reasoning approach and the care reasoning approach.

Justice reasoning emphasizes the use of reason and logic. In justice reasoning, fairness is determined by objectively weighing what is right or wrong, as determined by a group, society, or universal ethical principles. Care reasoning, by contrast, emphasizes care and compassion. This approach uses concepts like empathy – and understanding and accounting for the needs, interests, and well-being of another person – when making moral decisions.

Although the two approaches are different, most people use a blend of justice and care reasoning when making choices related to fairness.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

For individuals, cultivating the character strength of fairness is correlated with highly desirable developmental outcomes. It helps people to become trustworthy friends, responsible citizens, and generally moral people.

Fairness is also essential for the good of the group. As individuals develop the capacity for moral reason they often find a strengthening of: the aptitude for self-reflection; self-awareness and self-confidence; and perspective taking (i.e. the ability to “put themselves in another’s shoes”). When taken together, these skills significantly enhance a person’s ability to solve interpersonal and group relationship problems.

### *Individuals with this strength might be described as:*

- Respectful
- Empathetic
- Just
- Evenhanded
- Principled
- Moral

### *Individuals with this strength are likely to think, feel, or behave in the following way:*

- I treat people the way that I want to be treated.
- Everyone should get her fair share.
- It’s wrong to use people.
- Everyone deserves respect. No one deserves to be discriminated against because of the color of his skin.
- Even if society says it’s all right to do something, if it doesn’t match my personal sense of what’s right, I wouldn’t do it.

## QUOTES ON FAIRNESS

*“It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself.”*

**-ELEANOR ROOSEVELT**

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”*

**-U.S. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

*“From the equality of rights springs identity of our highest interests; you cannot subvert your neighbor’s rights without striking a dangerous blow at your own.”*

**-CARL SHURZ**

*“I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university.”*

**-ALBERT EINSTEIN**