



VIRTUES

Virtues are character traits humans need in order to flourish individually and as members of a community.

The Institute for the Study of Human Flourishing is founded on the belief that humans flourish when they develop to their fullest potential as rational and moral creatures living in healthy communities.

We focus on nine key virtues that reflect the moral identity and educational mission of the University of Oklahoma. They fall into three categories: *Intellectual*, *Executive* and *Civic*.

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES

Love of Learning, Intellectual Humility,
Open-mindedness

EXECUTIVE VIRTUES

Self-Regulation, Perseverance, Honesty

CIVIC VIRTUES

Civility, Compassion, and Fairness

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES



LOVE OF LEARNING

Love of learning includes both the desire to get new knowledge and delight in achieving it. It includes curiosity about the world and a proper regard for the difficulty in achieving genuine knowledge. (Thus it is connected to intellectual humility). Love of learning leads to a desire to learn the standards of particular fields of study, and a desire to expand the fields of knowledge one has already acquired.

INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY

Humility in general is the virtue of facing up to the truth about oneself, neither overvaluing nor undervaluing one's abilities and accomplishments. Intellectual humility is facing up to the truth about one's intellectual abilities, and admitting the limits of one's perspective. The intellectually humble person does not deny her accomplishments, but shows a lack of concern about intellectual status, and is sensitive to the ways in which one's beliefs can go wrong even though they seem right.



OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Open-mindedness is the readiness to step outside one's own point of view to consider the merits of alternative perspectives, with a willingness to change one's beliefs when that is warranted. Open-mindedness follows from a genuine love of truth, and the humility to admit that one might be mistaken in one's beliefs.

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN FLOURISHING

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EXECUTIVE VIRTUES



SELF-REGULATION

Self-regulation is one of the most basic virtues, in the sense that some degree of it is necessary for the acquisition of any other virtue. It is the capacity to regulate and restrain one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors for the sake of achieving good ends. Self-regulation especially includes the ability to regulate the desires, and it includes the ability to direct one's thoughts and attention to one's goals.

PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance is the ability to pursue one's goals despite obstacles, the discouragement of failure, and the distracting effect of temptations. It is crucial for the achievement of long-term goals, the pursuit of which presents so many opportunities to veer off course or abandon one's aims. The persevering person does not lose sight of her purpose even when it takes a considerable amount of time to reach it, and she does not give up easily.



HONESTY

In general, honesty is a deep and pervasive commitment to truth — seeking it out, holding oneself and others accountable to it, and conforming one's conduct to it. Honesty is closely related to integrity, which is the virtue of being true to oneself, of having one's beliefs, feelings, and behavior in harmony. People of integrity do not say one thing and do another. So they can be counted on to follow and uphold the rules of the community. Honesty is therefore also closely connected to respecting others in the community.

CIVIC VIRTUES



CIVILITY

Civility is a social virtue that is indispensable to open political discourse and reasoned disagreement. This virtue manifests itself as a feeling of care and concern for one's society. A civil person is willing to engage others in respectful dialogue, without scorn or insult, even when the issues are intensely important or disagreement runs deep. Civility has especially strong connections with intellectual humility and self-control.

COMPASSION

Compassion is the ability to feel sorrow over another person's suffering, and to express that sorrow in a way that is intended to alleviate that suffering. Unlike pity, compassion does not suggest any feeling of superiority to the suffering person, but is instead a virtue that forms a bond with the sufferer. Compassion is closely connected with empathy, the ability to see things from someone else's emotional perspective. Empathy helps us recognize when compassion is needed and how best to alleviate the suffering.



FAIRNESS

Fairness is a central virtue both of individuals and of social institutions. Fairness is characterized by impartiality (a lack of favoritism). When people exhibit fairness, they consistently apply standards and rules to everyone and insist that others do the same, regardless of people's power or prestige, and whatever the consequences for the self or a preferred group. Fairness is thus an essential element of justice.

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