



# PRUDENCE

VIA Survey calls this strength Prudence

**Parent virtue: Temperance.** Strengths of temperance protect us from excess. Strengths comprised in this virtue are forgiveness, humility/modesty, prudence, and self-control.



## WHAT DOES PRUDENCE MEAN?

***You plan for the future and achieve your goals by making careful everyday choices.***

Prudence is the ability to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason. It's a future-oriented way of thinking that helps a person set goals, make plans, and have the discipline to accomplish them. It is cognitive – more a strength of the head than of the heart.

Prudence is not simply being excessively cautious or self-restrained. And, while it is often exemplified through individual financial savings, prudence applies to all parts of life. Philosophers have discussed the strength for millennia. Aristotle wrote about *phronesis* or “practical wisdom” which allows us to properly use other character strengths. And, According to Dr. Chris Peterson, the Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas “named prudence as the principle wisdom, with bravery subordinate to it. It is prudence that provides the wisdom to assess danger; bravery then allows reason to prevail despite fear.”

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Prudence supports effective individual self-management. Whether aspiring for an athletic record, academic grade, or purchasing a car, foresight and planning are necessary. However, long-term goals – even with a plan – can only be obtained by overcoming those impulses and desires that steer you away from your goals. Prudence provides the wisdom to know which character strength to leverage, at which time, to achieve your desired end state.

On a group level, prudence is crucial – especially today, as shortsightedness has crept into many parts of life. Prudent individuals will produce a prudent society. And, as always, we need leaders who can think long-term and create the world we want our descendants to inherit. This is why the Roman senator and historian Tacitus said, “Forethought and prudence are the proper qualities of a leader.”

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

- Farsighted
- Judicious
- Sensible
- Practical
- Careful
- Discerning

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

- I have goals that I will achieve.
- I think long term and plan for the future.
- To have success in the future, I must prepare and act now.
- I can overcome impulses that take me away from my larger goals.
- It's important to have balance and moderation in life.
- When faced with an obstacle, I have confidence that I will overcome it.
- It is critical to have a plan – but also to remain flexible.

## “ QUOTES ON PRUDENCE

*“Prudence is the knowledge of things to be sought, and those to be shunned.”*

**-CICERO**

*“If we continue to develop our technology without wisdom or prudence, our servant may prove to be our executioner.”*

**-GEN OMAR N. BRADLEY**

*“A man exercising no forethought will soon experience present sorrow.”*

**-CONFUCIOUS**

*“Discipline is what gives you freedom in life.”*

**-JOCKO WILLINK, NAVY SEAL**