Personality characteristics of wisdom
These characteristics and the accompanying behaviors are believed to be vital to facing life challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Operationalization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>A deep and clear understanding of life and a desire to know the truth. To comprehend the significance and deeper meaning of phenomena and events, particularly with regard to intrapersonal and interpersonal matters. Includes knowledge and acceptance of the positive and negative aspects of human nature, of the inherent limits of knowledge, and of life’s unpredictability and uncertainties.</td>
<td>• The ability and willingness to understand a situation or phenomenon thoroughly • Knowledge of the positive and negative aspects of human nature • Acknowledgement of ambiguity and uncertainty in life • The ability to make important decisions despite life’s unpredictability and uncertainty.</td>
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<td>Reflective</td>
<td>A perception and phenomena of events from multiple perspectives. Requires self-examination, self-reflection and self-insight.</td>
<td>• The ability and willingness to look at phenomena and events from different perspectives • The absence of attributing blame to other people or circumstances for one’s own situation or feelings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Sympathetic and compassionate love for others. An ability to understand and manage one’s emotions and relationships in the face of adversity.</td>
<td>• The presence of positive emotions and behavior towards others • The absence of indifferent or negative behaviors toward others.</td>
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The three Cs
Studies show that people who manage stress and adversity best have three Cs in common:
Control: A belief in their ability to take charge of the controllable aspects of the situation and “influence a more positive outcome”
Challenge: A view of mistakes as opportunities for new learning, and change as potential for growth
Commitment: An active engagement in work and other pursuits that gives meaning to their lives

Resilience: The secret weapon
A resilient view is characterized by accurate and flexible thinking, and consists of:
• Creative problem solving
• The capacity to see other points of view and challenge one’s own views the ability to move on with daily life despite obstacles

There are other factors that can help you increase your resilience as well, including:
• Having a positive view of yourself (self-image) and confidence in your strengths and abilities (self-knowledge)
• Being able to regularly make realistic plans, and then being able to regularly carry out your plans
• Being able to effectively, and in a healthy manner, manage your feelings and impulses
• Having really good communication skills (or you’re actively working to improve them)
• Having really good problem-solving skills (or you’re actively working to improve them)
Coping mechanisms

- **Adaptive mechanisms**
  These are positive mechanisms that help people effectively deal with their stress.
- **Attack mechanisms**
  These mechanisms attempt to displace the stress or discomfort a person is feeling onto others.
- **Avoidance mechanisms**
  These mechanisms involve avoiding the issues that are causing stress.
- **Behavioral mechanisms**
  Behavioral coping mechanisms are attempts to change what the person does to more effectively deal with his or her stress.
- **Cognitive mechanisms**
  Unlike behavioral mechanisms, cognitive mechanisms involve a person trying to change the way he or she thinks to deal with stress.
- **Conversion mechanisms**
  These coping mechanisms are attempts to change or transform the problem into something else (for example, focusing on the positive to make it a positive situation instead of a stressful one).
- **Defense mechanisms**
  These refer to the original set of defense mechanisms outlined by Freud. Some of these mechanisms are generally agreed to be accurate descriptions of the mechanisms people use, while others have little evidence to support them.
- **Self-harm mechanisms**
  These are the least effective of coping mechanisms, as they result in harm to ourselves.
Positive coping activities include:

- Meditating
- Stretching
- Engaging in progressive muscle relaxation
- Listening to music
- Aerobic exercise
- Watching television
- Going to the movies
- Reading
- Working on puzzles or playing games
- Going for a leisurely walk
- Going to a health club
- Relaxing in a steam room or sauna
- Spending time alone
- Going fishing or hunting
- Participating in some form of recreational activity you enjoy
- Doing yard work
- Socializing with friends
- Sitting outside and relaxing
- Engaging in a hobby you enjoy
- Asking a trusted friend or family member for help and support, or sharing your thoughts with someone you trust
- Writing down or journaling how you feel
- Prioritizing self-care (like exercising, meditating and listening to music)
- Taking time out from situations that make you feel stressed or angry
- Using positive self-talk to overcome negative thought patterns
- Reducing your load, whether that load is physical, mental or both
- Considering the big picture — will the situation you’re dealing with really matter in the long run
- Learning to forgive, which will help you move on from negative feelings like resentment, hurt and anger
- Honing your communication skills to halt conflict from escalating
- Building your optimism to focus on the positive
- Practicing gratitude, even if it’s only five minutes a day to identify three good things from your day
Self-care activities for good and tough times

Sensory self-care
- Getting a breath of fresh air
- Snuggling under a cozy blanket
- Listening to running water
- Sitting outdoors by a fire pit
- Taking a hot shower or a warm bath
- Getting a massage
- Cuddling with a pet
- Paying attention to your breathing (practicing mindfulness/meditation)
- Burning a scented candle
- Walking through tall grass in bare feet
- Staring at the sky
- Lying down where the afternoon sun streams in through a window
- Listening to music
- Doing a word search
- Reading something on a topic you normally wouldn’t

Spiritual
- Attending church
- Reading poetry or inspiring quotes
- Lighting a candle
- Meditating
- Writing in a journal
- Spending time in nature
- Praying
- Listing five things you’re grateful for

Pleasure
- Taking yourself out to eat
- Being a tourist in your own city
- Gardening
- Watching a movie
- Making art, or doing a craft project
- Journaling
- Walking your dogs (or going to a shelter to walk dogs without a family)
- Going for a photo walk (taking photos on your walk)
- Accepting or being okay with your feelings
- Writing your feelings down
- Crying when you need to
- Laughing when you can
- Practicing self-compassion

Mental / Mastery
- Cleaning out a junk drawer or a closet
- Taking action (one small step) on something you’ve been avoiding
- Trying a new activity
- Driving to a new place
- Making a list
- Immersing yourself in a crossword puzzle

Physical
- Trying yoga
- Going for a walk or a run
- Dancing
- Stretching
- Going for a bike ride
- Ensuring you get enough sleep
- Taking a nap

Emotional
- Going to lunch with a good friend
- Calling a friend on the phone
- Participating in a book club
- Joining a support group

Source: New Directions