

**Worksheet 4.17 Family Tree of Strengths Homework Assignment Instructions (Rashid, 2008)**

One way to enhance meaning in your life is through realizing the importance of understanding and acknowledging the highest strengths of your family members and how you fit into your larger family network (Rashid, 2008). When you recognize the strengths of your family members, you are more likely to better appreciate one another and to build stronger connections. In addition, learning about one another's strengths may potentially help you to gain new insights into behaviors of your family members that you previously misunderstood. For example, when a wife discovers that several of the top strengths for her husband are honesty, justice, and fairness, she is better able to understand why he drives all the way across town to return the extra dollar he was accidentally given when checking out at the grocery store, even though he will spend over a dollar in gas in the process of returning this money. Rather than seeing his behavior as illogical, she can see that he is simply acting according to his strengths of character. Likewise, parents who come to understand that a signature strength for their child is curiosity and interest in the world are better able to tolerate and even come to enjoy the abundance of questions posed by their child about how and why things work the way that they do.

This family tree of strengths assignment is designed to help you and your family members gain greater insight into each other's strengths. In order to complete this homework, please ask your family members to complete the VIA Strengths Inventory or the Children's Strength Survey on-line at [www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org) or [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org) and to use the results to create a strengths family tree. After the family tree is complete, arrange for a family meeting in which you discuss one another's strengths. The following questions may be useful for guiding this family discussion:

1. Can we find any patterns in terms of the strengths in our family?
2. Can you identify the people in our family who have helped you to develop your strengths?
3. Do you have any strengths that no one else in the family has among their top five?
4. How can we use our strengths together in order to make our family relationships stronger?
5. Are there any behaviors that you understand differently about your mom, dad, sister, brother, etc...now that you know what his or her strengths are?