



## **AI's Video Chat (AVC)**

### **The Intent of the AVC**

What is the intended purpose behind the AVCs? As we stated in the first AVC, I receive a number of emails from students asking me how I do or would approach a particular issue. To the extent it would require stating or revealing a personal preference, I would be very reluctant to answer such an inquiry in class or a classroom setting. Think of the number of preferences possible for virtually any controversial topic. Those preferences, including mine, should be the starting point for a discussion and not its endpoint. In fact, I make a special effort in classes to avoid expressing such personal preferences for reasons I believe are at the very core of the teaching profession. I believe as a teaching professional it is my responsibility to focus not on “what” a student believes or prefers, but rather on “why” they believe it. Focusing on the “why” is about the student’s thinking and involves a teachable process of knowing where to look for the relevant data and information, how to analyze them, and how to reason logically to a conclusion. While the decision criteria and how they are weighted will certainly be influenced by a person’s assumptive world, the thinking process should be largely rational and objective. You all remember the KT decision making process which asks you to define the decision criteria and weight them. The goal is to make an effort to see that we are not jumping to conclusions based on biases, stereotypes, preconceived ideas, and prejudices, and therefore placing an unsupportable weight on one or more criteria, or ignoring one altogether. “What” inquires can be comparative, subjective, and judgmental. Whether implicitly or explicitly, controversial “What” inquiries all too frequently end up being some form of comparison of positions, one position being (assumed) better or preferred, the others less so. My fear has always been that if I express my personal preference a student will somehow believe that my preference is the “correct” viewpoint and thus should be their preference. And that is just simply not true. Examining a student’s thinking process is about learning; telling, or even strongly suggesting, a student what they should (or must) believe is about coercing. From this standpoint, I have never felt comfortable sharing my personal preferences or beliefs in a classroom, or other learning environment. That said, I can certainly understand the curiosity students might have and I think it is only fair that they ask: "Does the professor actually practice what he teaches?" Francesca, Fabrizia, and Deborah all pushed me to do the AVC’s for that reason and so here we are. I agreed as long as we all recognize it as a Chat, and not a teaching, or worse, a preaching, platform.



## **AI's Video Chat - March 2021**

### **"My Five Best Character Traits for Life"**

In our last AVC together, we talked about my Bigger-than-Self goals and the Basic Beliefs and Values that support them. For many, including myself, the logical question that follows is "What could I do in my professional and personal lives to satisfy those Bigger than Self goals?" That question will lead us to the necessary development goals, both Professional (degrees, certificates, other trainings) and Character (critical thinking, decision-making, and behavior, particularly behavior important in our social environments). I would like us to focus on Character Goals because, in contrast to Professional Goals, we have more to share in common.

In my years of working with people in forming their character development journeys, I have observed an interesting pattern in that development among successful professionals. Those observations have guided me in focusing on what I have called "My Five Best Character Traits for Life." In this Chat, I would like to focus on those five-character traits and why they are on my list. Based on the diversity of the successful people from whom they are derived, I believe they be the most fundamental for personal development regardless of one's chosen profession.

My motivation for this topic arises from several emails I have received from former students and alumni. One group typically states that they would really like to continue working on character goals, but do not know where to best put their energies. In several cases, they have gone through our coaching program and would like to continue their personal development journey. For others, a Character issue did not become apparent or of interest until they found themselves in a leadership/management role and realized that the most difficult part of the job was dealing with people. As they begin to explore what it might take to improve those skills, they had become overwhelmed with the possibilities. In this case, the question is generally something like "What should I work on first?" In that spirit, I would like to share with you what, for me, are "My Five Best Character Traits for Life."



## **“My Five Best Character Traits for Life”**

And which five do you think are on my list?

Accountability	Extraversion	Problem Solving
Adaptability	Flexibility	Purposefulness
Affiliation Management	Focus	Questioning
Agreeableness	Gratitude	Resilience
Authenticity	Genuineness	Respectfulness
Charisma	Honesty	Responsible
Communicative	Humility	Results Orientation
Compassion	Independence	Risk Tolerance
Conscientiousness	Influence	Self-Awareness
Consistency	Inspiration	Self-confidence
Cooperativeness	Internal locus of control	Self-Control
Courage	Intuitive	Self-Discipline
Creative	Listening	Self-Motivation
Curiosity	Loyalty	Self-Regulation
Decision Making	Motivation	Sense of Humor
Decisiveness	Open-mindedness	Sensitivity
Delegation	Optimism	Skepticism
Dependability	Originality	Sociability
Determination	Passion	Social-Awareness
Dominance	Patience	Tenacity
Drive	Persistence	Transparency
Emotional balance	Persuasiveness	Visionary
Empathy	Positivity	Vulnerability
Empowerment	People-Orientation	
Enthusiasm	Presence	