



A2 Hero Challenge

Learning from Role Models



All Challenges of level A2 are also available in a printed version in German. You can find them at www.jugendstaerken.at (Jugend stärken, volume 1 - 4).

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Empowering Youth with the Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges Programme

CORE ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

 IDEA CHALLENGE I can develop an idea.	 HERO CHALLENGE I can learn from role models.
 MY PERSONAL CHALLENGE I can solve personal challenges.	 LEMONADE STAND CHALLENGE I can sell things.
 REAL MARKET CHALLENGE I can develop a business plan for the market.	 START YOUR PROJECT CHALLENGE I can plan and implement my project with a team.

ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

 EMPATHY CHALLENGE I can empathise with myself and with others.	 STORYTELLING CHALLENGE I can tell stories.	 BUDDY CHALLENGE I can support others in achieving their goals.
 PERSPECTIVES CHALLENGE I can understand I am part of my environment.	 TRASH VALUE CHALLENGE I can create something valuable out of garbage.	 OPEN DOOR CHALLENGE I can network with others.
 EXTREME CHALLENGE I can set and achieve difficult goals.	 BE A YES CHALLENGE I can say "yes" to myself and those around me.	 EXPERT CHALLENGE I can apply learning and communication techniques.

ENTREPRENEURIAL CIVIC EDUCATION

 MY COMMUNITY CHALLENGE I can do things for the community where I live.	 VOLUNTEER CHALLENGE I can engage in community service.	 DEBATE CHALLENGE I can develop and debate my opinion.
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The Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges Programme is based on the TRIO Model, which is a holistic definition of entrepreneurship that encompasses three areas:

- CORE ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION** – Supports entrepreneurial qualification in a narrow sense: developing own ideas and implementing them creatively and in a well-structured way.
- ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE** – Personal development: self-initiative, self-confidence, teamwork, empowering oneself and others.
- ENTREPRENEURIAL CIVIC EDUCATION** – Enhancing social competences as citizens: assuming responsibility for oneself, others and the environment.

"Empowering Youth" is a holistic learning programme for lower secondary school students and promotes personal initiatives and entrepreneurial spirit. It is part of the "Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges" programme. All competence levels (A1 = primary level, A2 = lower secondary level, B1+B2 = upper secondary level) can be downloaded at www.youthstart.eu in English, German and other languages. The "Mind & Body" section provides short video clips with physical "activate & concentrate" exercises and the "Youth Start mindfulness programme".



Preface

Empowering Youth ...

... refers to the title, the goal and the content of a practice-oriented, holistic learning programme which was developed for **lower secondary school students**. Bigger and smaller “**challenges**” form the key elements of the programme. They function as learning prompts from three key areas that play an important role in empowering young people:

- **entrepreneurial thinking and acting**,
- **personal development** and
- **social commitment**.

Each key area is assigned a different colour to help differentiate between them. A diagram of the entire programme is included on the previous page.

Empowering Youth is part of the “**Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges**” Programme which aims to foster personal initiative and the entrepreneurial spirit of young people. It was developed in Austria for both primary and secondary school students, and it has been translated into six languages.



The **Hero Challenge** is about **learning from role models**: the students look for role models and learn from them. This helps them to discover their own strengths and learn how to use them to reach their goals.

The “Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges” Programme supports children in developing their potential.

This was proven by a scientific field study which was carried out from 2015 to 2018 in Austria, Slovenia, Portugal and Luxembourg with about 30,000 children and teenagers.

The research results demonstrate that by working with the programme in lower secondary school, the students’ self-esteem is improved, and teamwork, creativity, and networked and critical thinking are fostered.

The students do not only learn how to communicate empathically and how to treat themselves and others with care and respect; they additionally acquire basic economic qualifications that are vital for their future working life.

We wish everyone working with this programme many inspiring learning experiences!

Eva Jambor and Johannes Lindner, editors

www.youthstart.eu / www.jedeskindstärken.at / www.ifte.at

These symbols will guide you through the challenge. They have the following meaning:



Instructions for an exercise



Extra tip for you



Bonus task



Talk to someone about it



Think about it



More information can be found in the teacher guide









A2 Hero Challenge

Learning from Role Models

In the **Hero Challenge** you will discover how heroes use their strengths successfully. This will help you realise that you can achieve similar things. Go on a search for your strengths and learn how to use them to reach your goals.

Explanatory video: www.youthstartchallenges.eu/A2HeroEN

6 steps to the finish line:

-  **Step 1** - Learning from Superheroes _____ **4**
-  **Step 2** - Learning from Real-Life Heroes _____ **6**
-  **Step 3** - Being a Hero in Everyday Life _____ **9**
-  **Step 4** - Recognising Your Own Strengths _____ **12**
-  **Step 5** - Looking to the Future _____ **16**
-  **Step 6** - Thinking Things Over _____ **18**

Aim

I can learn from
role models.





1.1. Hero bingo

Superheroes are made-up characters.
They use their strengths and superpowers to help people.



Make up your own superhero! Choose four characteristics from the list of strengths (see Step 4) that describe your superhero and add them to the “hero bingo”.
Also think about which superpower they have.

just	smart
.....	modest
brave	kind



Fill in the profile on the following page and draw your superhero.



Think up a story about your superhero and tell it in a text, as a comic, film strip or photo novella. Make sure that your story clearly illustrates at least three characteristics from the hero bingo.



Film clips can be found in the Teacher Guide.



Collect all the hero stories and create a hero book together. You can design mini books for instance at www.minibuch.ch which you can then print or publish on their page.

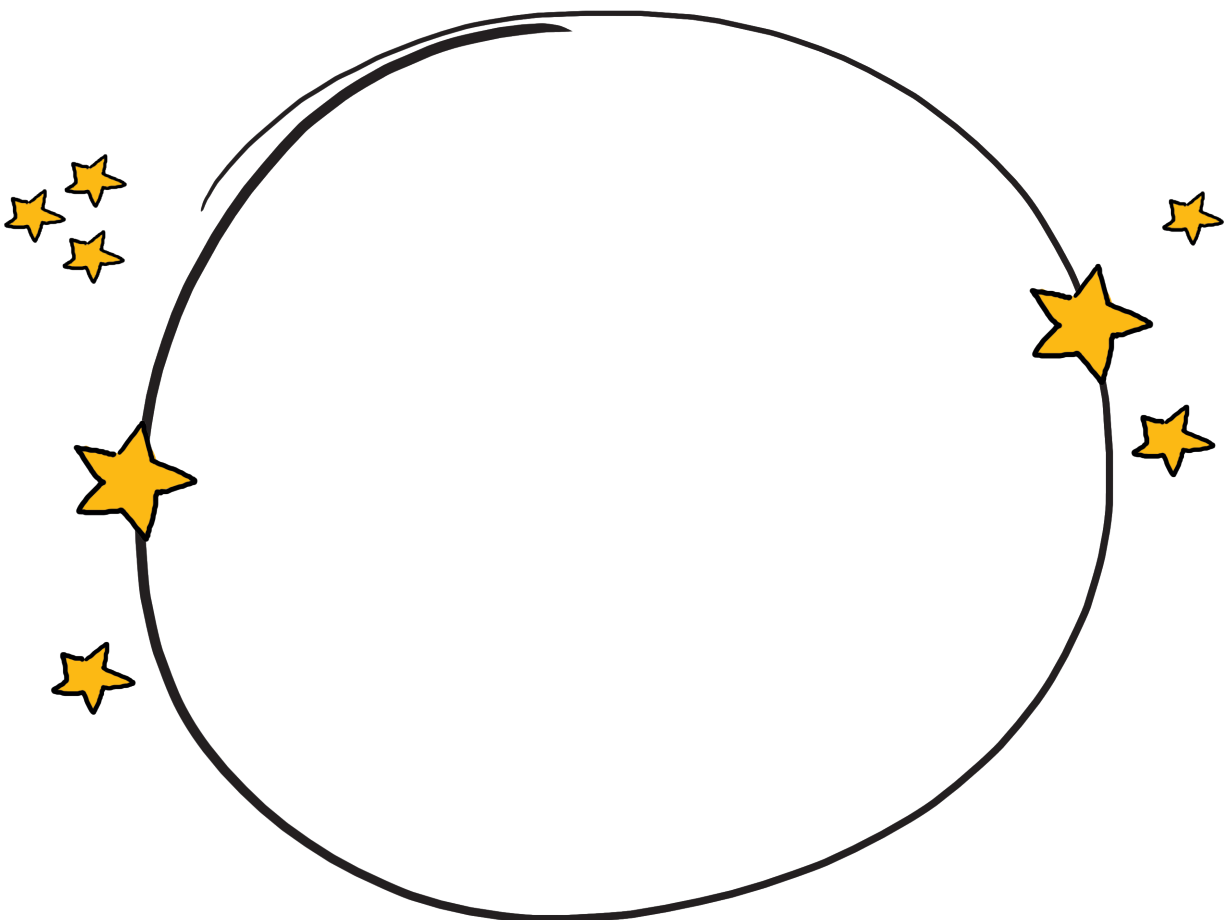


1.2. Hero profile

The name of my superhero is:

Superpower:	
Strengths:	
Weaknesses:	
Lives in:	
Fights for:	
Allies:	
Adversaries:	

1.3. This is what my superhero looks like





2.1. Three exceptional people

Get to know three exceptional people. Choose one and learn more about them. This is how you get more information: read the story about them, research them on the internet or watch a video about them.



Consider the life and activities of the person you have chosen.

Think about which strengths and characteristics they use to reach their goals.

GRETA THUNBERG Swedish climate activist 	BOYAN SLAT Dutch inventor 	SIMONE BILES US gymnast 
<i>"I have learnt that you are never too small to make a difference."</i>	<i>"People assume that a complex problem requires a complex solution. But I believe that a simple solution can be better."</i>	<i>"I was built this way for a reason, so I want to make the most of it."</i>
Read the story on the following page.	Research information on the project at the website www.theoceancleanup.com .	Enter the word "gymnastics" into a search engine and watch a video about it.



Answer the questions below about your chosen person verbally or in writing.

Talk to someone about your answers.

- > What impresses you about this person?
- > What are their outstanding characteristics?
- > Which difficulties did they have to overcome and how did they manage to do so?
- > Which strengths did they use to do this?
- > Did they use their strengths for a specific event? What was it?
- > Are they a role model to you? If so, what would you like to learn from them?
- > Imagine you met them. What would you like to ask them?



Greta Thunberg – Teenager Starts Worldwide Climate Movement

You have probably heard about the Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg and the protest movement “Fridays for Future”. In 2018 the then 16-year-old still protested all by herself in front of the parliament building in Stockholm. Since then, students from numerous countries have joined these Friday rallies using the hashtag #fridaysforfuture.

When Greta was eight years old, she learnt about climate change at school and began fighting for the environment. She started by making an effort to save electricity. At the age of 15 she won a well-known newspaper’s writing contest, and her article on environmental policy was published. From August 2018, she would stand in front of the parliament every Friday to raise awareness for climate change. She made up for the lessons she missed at school on her own.

“My whole life I was invisible, the invisible girl in the background who doesn’t say anything. Then, from one day to the next, people started listening to me. This is a strange contrast. It is difficult”, Greta Thunberg has said in interviews, adding “of course, this takes a lot of energy. I don’t have a lot of spare time. But I keep reminding myself why I am doing this, and then I just try to do as much as I can.”

Greta Thunberg was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, a mild form of autism. The teenager doesn’t see her diagnosis as an obstacle, rather, she has said: “My diagnosis helped me. Without it, I would have probably just kept living like many other people.” In her activism, the teenager has a radically black-and-white way of thinking. This is a characteristic of people with Asperger syndrome. “Either our human civilization survives – or it doesn’t”, the climate activist has stated, clarifying: “I think that if I didn’t have Asperger’s, this would not have been possible. I see the world from a different perspective.”

Her initiative “School Strike for Climate” received media attention from all over the world. She has become a role model to thousands of young people, and students from across the globe have joined her movement.

Abridged, changed and translated from an article originally published as “Acht Fakten: Was man über Greta wissen sollte”.
Original article available online at <https://kurier.at/leben/wussten-sie-dass-acht-fakten-ueber-greta-thunberg/400508065> (29th May 2019).



Tired from all the reading?

The “cross-over exercise” will activate you:

Lift your right leg, bringing your knee in front of your left leg. Touch your right knee with your left hand. Repeat the exercise with your left leg. Repeat each side four times.

For an instruction video on the “cross-over exercise” and further exercises for activation & concentration, visit the “Mind & Body” section at www.youthstart.eu.



2.2. Competition “Meet & Greet”




Imagine that the person you have chosen is hosting a competition on their profile page on social media. Those who enter the competition can win a personal meeting with them and will be able to talk to them. Such an encounter with a famous person is known as a **“meet & greet”**.



Create a post on the website of your chosen person to enter the competition. The post should include the following information:

- > What fascinates you about this person?
- > Why should YOU be the one winning the competition?

Here are three possibilities for your post:

		
Take a photo and write a short description of it.	Take a short video with your mobile.	Write a personal message.



Present your post in class. Assess your classmates’ posts using the checklist. If at least four requirements are met, the post gets a “like” from you.

- > I think your post is very well made.
- > I think your post was designed with great care.
- > I find your post creative and original.
- > I think that your post could be published as it is.
- > Your post shows what you admire about the person.
- > Your post shows why you should be the one to win the competition.
- > I liked how you presented your post.

Which post will win the most **likes**?





3.1. Moral courage

People can be heroic in everyday life – they are brave and stand up for people in situations when others might not do the same. This is known as **moral courage**.



Look for newspaper articles about events in which people have shown moral courage and have acted on behalf of others in difficult situations. Cut or print out an article and paste it here:



Talk to others about it.



3.2. Everyone can be a hero!

No one is born a hero, but everyone can learn to do the right thing in a difficult situation. You don't need to be a superhero with superpowers, just an everyday hero. The famous psychology professor Philip Zimbardo says: "Every one of you can be a hero. Heroes create a domino effect in society and increase what's good in the world."

You want to learn to be a hero in everyday life? Take on the challenge!



In the list below you will find exercises for practising heroic behaviour. Choose something with which you would like to start. If you succeed, talk to someone about it and choose your next challenge. Will you be able to do all the exercises before the end of the school year?

Be kind to yourself	✓
Try something new that you think you won't be good at. Maybe you will discover new strengths.	
Over a longer period of time, set a new goal for yourself every week and stick to it.	
Pay attention and try to identify if you are dwelling on negative thoughts or lose yourself in negative conversations. Try to think and talk about solutions instead.	
Be kind to friends, family members and acquaintances	✓
Write a letter of thanks to someone who helped you with something important.	
Don't sit back if someone is treated badly, for instance at school. Get involved and support the person.	
Give someone a small gift and tell them why you like or admire them.	
Be kind to strangers	✓
Be attentive so you might notice if a person – for instance someone who is visually impaired or has difficulty walking – needs help crossing the road. Offer to help them.	
Visit people in an old people's home and talk to them about their life.	
Give people you pass in the street a friendly smile.	
Donate food and clothes you no longer need to a charitable institution.	
Be kind to animals	✓
Spend time with animals at an animal shelter.	
Donate animal food to an animal shelter.	
Be kind to the environment	✓
If you don't already recycle, start now.	
Convince your parents to mostly buy regional and organic produce, for instance from a farmer's market.	
Pay attention to how much waste you produce and try and reduce it significantly, for instance by using a glass bottle instead of buying plastic ones.	



3.3. My everyday hero

Surely, there are “everyday heroes” in your own life, perhaps even in your family. People who know how to use their strengths can be our role models. Role models can show us the way if we are unsure about how to behave or what to decide.



Choose a person from your acquaintances who is a role model to you.
Answer the same questions about them as you did in Step 2 about the exceptional person.

- > What impresses you about this person?
- > What are their outstanding characteristics?
- > Which difficulties did they have to overcome and how did they manage to do so?
- > Which strengths did they use to do this?
- > Did they use their strengths for a specific event? What was it?
- > What would like to learn from them?



Talk to others about this and exchange your opinions.



Listen attentively to the person you are talking to. Keep eye contact and show that you are listening by nodding. If there is something you haven't fully understood, ask them about it.



Summarise the information about your role model in a text. Add a photo or drawing of the person and – if you want to – present your role model in class.



4.1. Finding your strengths



You have been thinking a lot about heroes and have learnt about their strengths. Now think about yourself and try to find your own strengths. Choose the strengths from the list that you recognise in yourself and mark them. Use the empty columns to add strengths that do not appear in the list.

I am good at this:		✓
being attentive		
cheering someone up, consoling someone		
building and crafting		
apologising		
researching information on the internet		
being active (doing gymnastics, running, climbing, dancing, ...)		
decorating and embellishing		
telling jokes, making others laugh		
working together with others		
building relationships, making friends		
being curious and taking an interest		
watching animals and knowing a lot about them		
getting involved, standing up for something		
tidying and arranging things		
learning from mistakes, accepting criticism		
sticking to your own opinion		
telling / writing stories		
planning and organising		
being happy about little things		
thinking about a lot of issues		
being inventive, having a lot of ideas		



Step 4 – Recognising Your Own Strengths

Hero
Challenge



I am good at this:	✓	I am good at this:	✓
being honest		singing	
thinking logically		being friendly	
motivating others		settling disputes	
working diligently		explaining	
making music		tinkering	
reflecting		sharing	
looking after plants		being reliable	
solving problems		reading aloud	
helping others		sticking things out	
presenting		drawing	
being optimistic		listening	
advising		debating, speaking	
repairing things		learning new things	



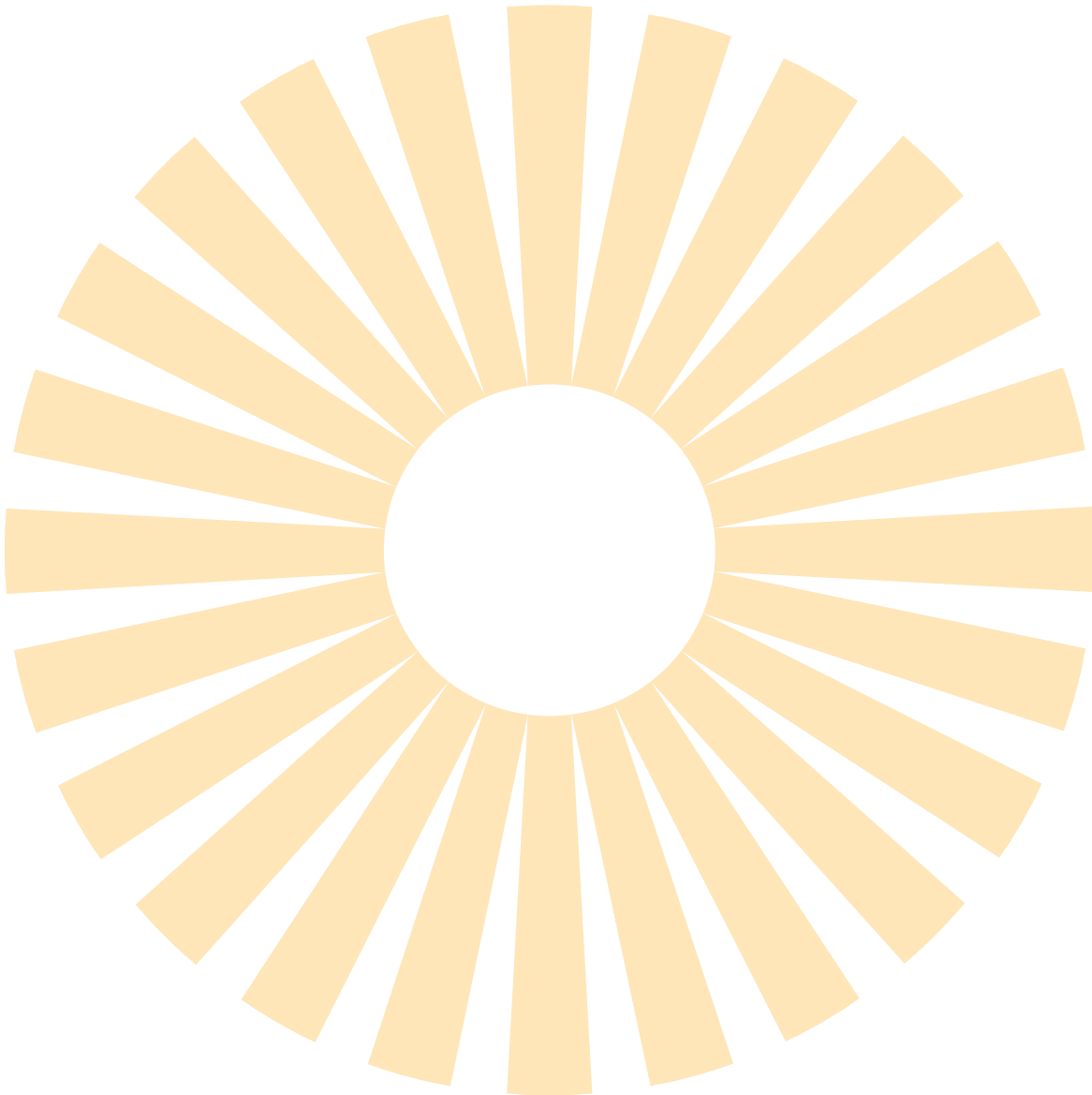
The **A2 Be A YES Challenge** offers tests that will help you discover even more of your strengths. You will also find many suggestions as to how to use your strengths. The challenge is available for free at http://www.youthstart.eu/en/challenges/a_path_in_flourishing/.



4.2. The strengths sun



Design your “strengths sun” by writing your name in the middle and adding your strengths to the sunrays.



Look at the strengths suns of at least three of your fellow students. Think about additional strengths that you like or appreciate about them. Write them into free rays in their strengths suns or on beautifully designed cards and give them to them.



Craft your own strengths sun. You can cut the rays from yellow construction paper and use a yellow paper plate as your sun disc. Write the strengths you have found yourself and those your fellow students have discovered in you into the sunrays. You can decorate your classroom with your strengths suns.



4.3. Strengths interview



Swap your strengths sun with someone. Read the strengths written on it attentively. Find out even more about their strengths.

What are your greatest strengths?	
Which of your strengths do you use often in everyday life? How do you do that exactly?	
How could you use your other strengths more often (e.g. at school, at home, with friends)?	
In which situation have others recognised one of your strengths and mentioned it to you?	
Which of your strengths would you like to work on some more?	
Which strength would you like to have?	



You have now learnt a lot about one of your fellow student's strengths. Read your notes carefully and prepare a presentation. Find another team of two and present your partner's strengths sun in groups of four. Those who like can present their own or someone else's strengths sun to the entire class.



Your strengths will help you find a job that suits you. Learn more about this in the "A2 Perspectives Challenge *"Paths leading to your (dream)job"*", which you will find at http://www.youthstart.eu/en/challenges/paths_leading_to_your_dream_job/.



5.1. Where will my strengths take me?



Imagine where your strengths might take you in the coming years, for instance by the time you reach your 18th birthday. Which goals at school and/or in your professional life would you like to reach with your strengths? How will your role models influence you on your path?

Take notes here or in your exercise book:

How do you imagine the coming years?	
Which goals would you like to reach over the coming years (educational, professional and others)?	
Which of your strengths will help you along the way?	
What could be difficult?	
Who could support you?	
Which new strengths would you like to develop?	
How do your role models help you reach your goals?	

Have you ever written a letter to yourself? Give it a try! It is exciting to read the letter again after a year or more. It will give you the opportunity to see how you have changed and what you have achieved.



5.2. Letter to myself



Write a letter to yourself using your notes from the previous exercise. Use the template below or design the letter according to your own ideas. Put the letter into an envelope, on which you write your name and when you are allowed to open it (for instance your 18th birthday).



Put the letter into a box together with souvenirs and symbols that give you strength, for instance photos, motivational sayings, a picture of your strengths sun, something that reminds you of your heroes, newspaper cuttings from today ...

Dear !

Happy Birthday!

How wonderful that you have reached the goal you set for yourself on (date).

You were determined to,

.....

.....

Some things along your journey were difficult, such as

.....

.....

Thanks to these strengths you made it:

.....

.....

You are great because

.....

.....

I have added a few things that are important to me at the moment:

.....

.....

I am sending you a big hug!

Yours



6.1. Questionnaire for the Hero Challenge

You have explored the subject of heroes and you know now who your role models are and what you can learn from them. You have become aware of your own strengths and those of others. Learning how to use your strengths will help you in many areas of your life.

1. What have you learnt from your role models?	
2. In which situations does it help you to think about your role models?	
3. Which strengths have you discovered about yourself?	
4. Which of your strengths would you like to use more in the future?	
5. In which situations could you try to do that?	
6. Which strengths do you need in order to implement your plans for the future?	



Talk to someone about your answers.



6.2. How well can you do that already?



Carefully read the sentences below and think about how well you can do these things.
Mark the field under the symbol that fits best.

Here is what the four symbols mean:



I can do that in most cases.



I can do that in some cases.



I can rarely do that.



I need a lot more practice for that.

I research interesting information about exceptional people.				
I can describe what it is that makes exceptional people or heroes special.				
I take people who impress me as an example and learn from them.				
I recognise which of their strengths people use to reach their goals.				
I recognise how people use their strengths to overcome difficulties.				
I practise being kind to myself.				
I practise being kind to others.				
I stand up for others in my everyday life and show moral courage.				
I practise being kind to animals.				
I practise being kind to the environment.				
I recognise my own strengths.				
I can describe my strengths to others.				
I am working on developing new strengths.				
I tell others about their strengths.				
I think about how I can use my strengths to accomplish something positive.				
I think about my future.				
I use my strengths to reach my educational, professional and private goals.				



6.3. Step by step towards your personal goal ...



Choose something from the table in the previous exercise that you don't always manage to do but that you would like to achieve more often. Pursue your goal step by step.

Step 1	Write down what you want to achieve.
Step 2	Imagine with all your senses what it will be like when you reach your goal. Write down or paint a picture of your future: How are you going to feel? What will you see, hear, smell, taste and touch?
Step 3	Tell someone of your plan. Write down who you want to tell about it.
Step 4	Practise your new strength every day.
Step 5	At the end of each day, remember how you practised your new strength and be happy about it. If you find it difficult to stick to your plans: Imagine how it will be when you reach your goal and look forward to it!



You made it! Write down how others notice that you have reached your goal.

Celebrate your success!

Now choose a new goal and also pursue it step by step.



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The "**Mind & Body**" section provides short video clips with physical "activate & concentrate" exercises and the *Youth Start mindfulness programme*.



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