The Intellectual Virtues:

Taken from the book Critical Thinking By Richard Paul & Linda Elder

**Intellectual Humility:** Having Knowledge of Ignorance

Intellectual humility may be defined as having a consciousness of the limits of one’s knowledge, including a sensitivity to circumstances in which one’s native egocentrism is likely to function self-deceptively. This entails being aware of one’s biases, one’s prejudices, the limitations of one’s viewpoint, and the extent of one’s ignorance.

**Intellectual Courage:** Being Willing to Challenge Beliefs

Intellectual courage may be defined as having a consciousness of the need to face and fairly address ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints toward which one has strong negative emotions and to which one has not given serious hearing. To determine for oneself what makes sense, one must not passively and uncritically accept what one has learned.

**Intellectual Empathy:** Entering Opposing Views

Intellectual empathy is an awareness of the need to imaginatively put oneself in the place of others so as to genuinely understand them. To have intellectual empathy is to be able to accurately reconstruct the viewpoints and reasoning of others and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than one’s own.

**Intellectual Integrity:** Holding Ourselves to the Same Standards to Which We Hold Others

Intellectual integrity is defined as recognition of the need to be true to one’s own thinking and to hold oneself to the same standards of evidence one expects others to meet. It means to practice what one advocates for others.
**Intellectual Perseverance:** Working Through Complexity and Frustration

Intellectual perseverance can be defined as the disposition to work ones way through intellectual complexities despite the frustration inherent in the task. Some intellectual problems are complex and cannot be easily solved. The intellectually perseverant person displays firm adherence to rational principles despite the irrational opposition of others, and has a realistic sense of the need to struggle with confusion or unsettled questions over an extended time to achieve understanding or insight.

**Confidence in Reason:** Recognize that Good Reasoning Has Proven Its Worth

Confidence in reason, in the long run, is based on the belief that ones own higher interests and those of mankind at large will be best served by giving freest play to reason, by encouraging people to come to their own conclusions by developing their own rational faculties; faith that, with proper encouragement and cultivation, people can learn to think for themselves, form insightful viewpoints, draw reasonable conclusions, think clearly, accurately, relevantly, and logically and persuade each other by appeal to good reason and sound evidence.

**Intellectual Autonomy:** Being an Independent Thinker

Intellectual autonomy may be defined as internal motivation based on the ideal of thinking for oneself; having rational self-authorship of one’s beliefs, values, and way of thinking; not being dependent on others for the direction and control of ones thinking.

“*I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, not to bewail, not to scorn human actions, but to understand them*”  

--Baruch Spinoza