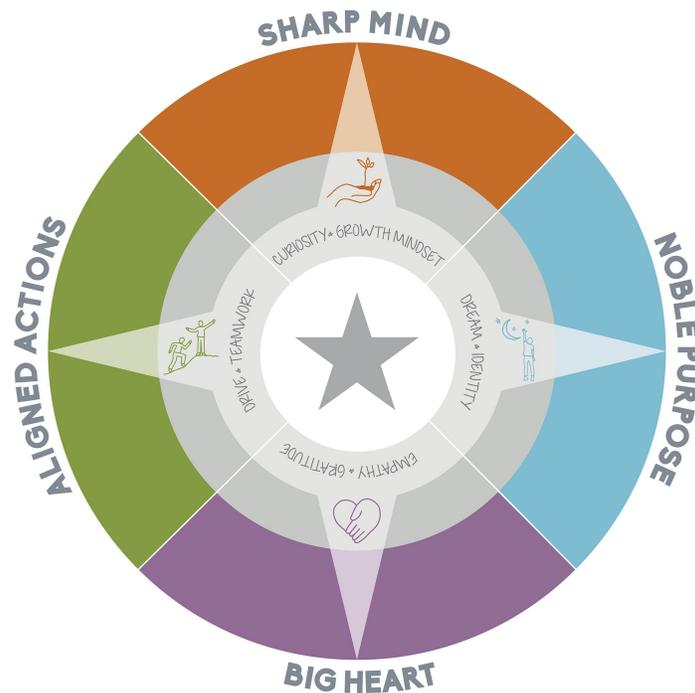


# Compass Overview

## What is the Compass?

The <sup>1</sup>Compass is a visual representation and metaphor for the approach we take to social-emotional learning with scholars and adults. At its broadest level, the Compass is comprised of four basic dimensions: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. We believe that well-being and excellence depend on balanced and integrated mastery in each of these dimensions. The Compass consists of 5 outer disciplines (e.g. Big Heart), each with its own habits (e.g. empathy). We aspire for all Achievement First community members to have a Sharp Mind, a Big Heart, and to Align their Actions to their Noble Purpose. All of this requires being able to reliably find their True North, or inner Compass.



## Why do we need Compass?

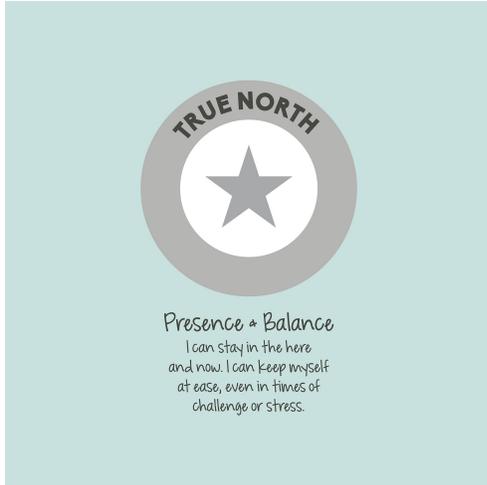
We know that for our students' long-term success, world-class academic knowledge and skills are necessary but insufficient. Our students need to independently create their own personal why and make strategic choices about how to pursue them, and they also need to be able to persist and successfully tackle challenges that come in new and unfamiliar contexts. Therefore our approach needs to cultivate these muscles as intentionally as we foster exceptional academic achievement. Research shows that lifelong habits like Drive and Growth Mindset are powerful predictors of academic and career success, health, income and well-being, and that other habits (or "character strengths") have been found to be as important as academic skills in predicting the acquisition of a bachelor's degree<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Compass framework, concept, and key descriptions are adapted from Valor Collegiate Academy with permission

<sup>2</sup> Heckman, Stixrud, Urzua, S. (2006). "The effects of cognitive and noncognitive abilities on labor market outcomes and social behavior." *Journal of Labor Economics* 24(3), 411-482.

## True North

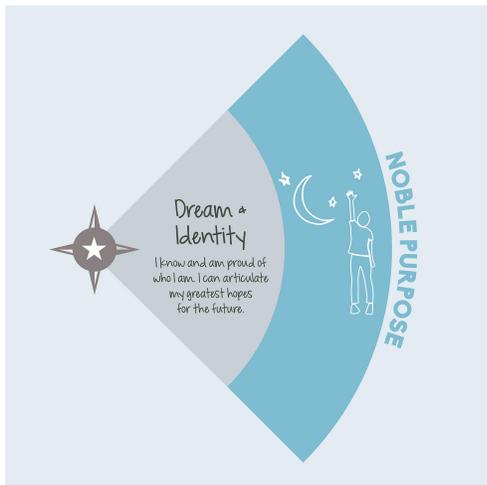
Remaining balanced and present requires that we establish a sense of center where we integrate our growth and learning in a conscious way. Within Compass, we call this center **True North**. We adopted the term True North from its use in navigation, where it is recognized that finding true north is essential for accurate navigation. We believe this is a powerful metaphor for our lives and want to encourage and nurture each person to find and know this center point and to use it to consciously set the direction of their lives.



<b>Habits</b>	<b>Presence:</b> I am able to stay in the here and now.
	<b>Balance:</b> I can keep myself at ease, even in times of challenges or stress.

## Noble Purpose

The Compass Discipline of **Noble Purpose** is defined by being connected to one's deepest values, living from one's best, authored self-story, and building one's personal why. This discipline is brought to life through **the habits of Dream and Identity**.

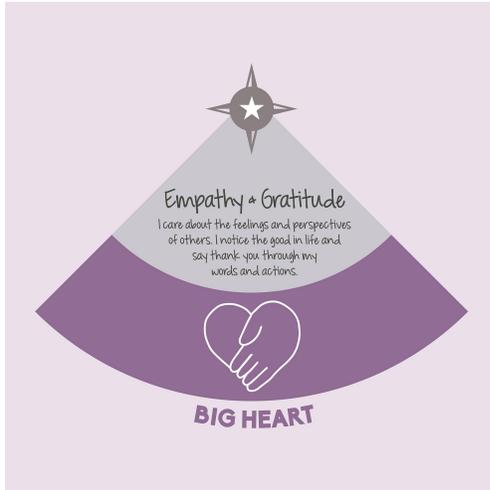


<b>Habits</b>	<b>Identity:</b> I know and am proud of who I am.
	<b>Dream:</b> I can articulate my greatest hopes for the future.

## Big Heart

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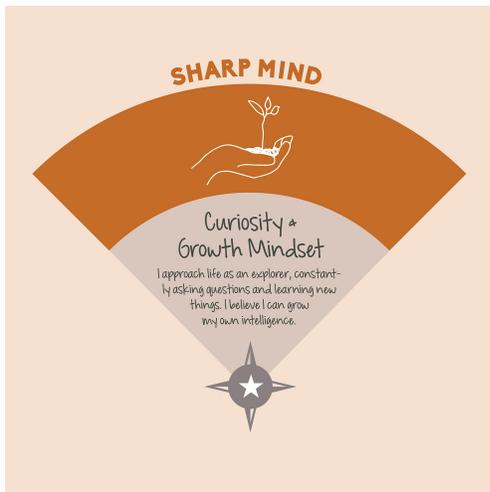
The Compass Discipline of **Big Heart** is defined by having compassion for one’s self, the needs of others, and the world at large. This discipline is brought to life through the habits of **Empathy** and **Gratitude**.



<b>Habits</b>	<b>Empathy:</b> I care about the feelings and perspectives of others.
	<b>Gratitude:</b> I notice the good in life and say thank you through my words and actions.

### Sharp Mind

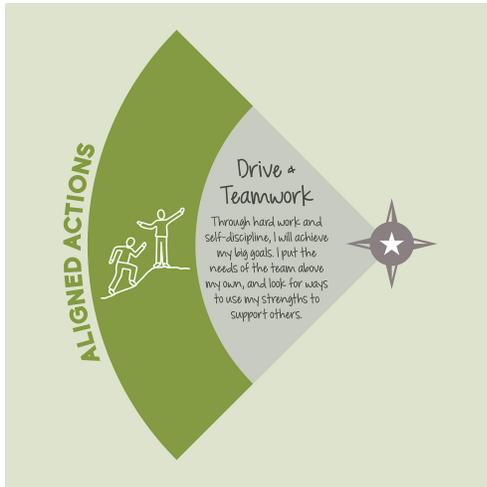
The Compass Discipline of **Sharp Mind** is defined by the pursuit of knowledge and skills, individually, within a group, or within the larger community. This discipline is brought to life through the habits of **Curiosity** and **Growth Mindset**. Honing the discipline of a Sharp Mind requires finding the balance between understanding you have the power to grow your own intelligence, while remaining humble about what is still left to be learned.



<b>Habits</b>	<b>Curiosity:</b> I approach life as an explorer, constantly asking questions and learning new things.
	<b>Growth Mindset:</b> I approach life as an explorer, constantly asking questions and learning new things.

## Aligned Actions

The Compass Discipline of **Aligned Actions** is defined by working steadfastly towards action/intention alignment, being engaged and supportive of one's community, and showing a willingness to contribute, through actions, to the greater good. This Compass Discipline is brought to life through the habits of **Drive** and **Teamwork**. Honing this discipline requires finding a balance between achieving at one's highest level while ensuring those around you succeed too.



<b>Habits</b>	<b>Drive:</b> Through hard work and self-discipline, I will achieve my big goals.
	<b>Teamwork:</b> I put the needs of the team above my own, and I look for ways to use my strengths to support others.

## Compass Habits Vision of Excellence

*What does it look like when Scholars live out the Compass habits?*

<b>Presence</b>	<b>I am able to stay in the here and now.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I take the time to assess how I am feeling in a new context or situation.</li> <li>● I understand that it is common to feel the pull toward distraction.</li> <li>● I can identify distractors that make it difficult to remain present.</li> <li>● I use a variety of practices to help me stay “in the moment” when distractions or challenges arise.</li> </ul>	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>I can keep myself at ease, even in times of challenges or stress.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I notice my feelings and emotions.</li> <li>● I know that nobody but me has power over my emotions.</li> <li>● I recognize that everyone gets “out of balance” sometimes, but know I have tools to help myself reset.</li> <li>● I know what actions are most important for me to feel personally balanced (e.g. rest, physical activity, time with loved ones).</li> </ul>	
<b>Identity</b>	<b>I know myself and am proud of who I am.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I am proud of my identity.</li> <li>● I understand that who I am / what is special about me is shaped by my family, culture, and community.</li> <li>● I believe in myself.</li> <li>● I’ve examined my personal values (what they are, why they matter to me).</li> </ul>	
<b>Dream</b>	<b>I can articulate my greatest hopes for the future.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I know my “sparks” or deep interests.</li> <li>● I can explain my strengths and why those are powerful.</li> <li>● I’ve explored my greatest dreams for the future.</li> <li>● I’ve shared my hopes for the future with those who matter most to me.</li> </ul>	
<b>Empathy</b>	<b>I care about the feelings and perspectives of others.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I pay attention to the needs of my friends by observing their behaviors and expressions to understand what they might be feeling.</li> <li>● I approach others with an open heart and mind.</li> <li>● I proactively ask others what they are thinking and feeling.</li> <li>● When someone is angry, mean, or rude to me, I realize this is about them- not me. I approach them with kindness instead of defensiveness.</li> <li>● I recognize that people feel differently about the same thing.</li> <li>● I know that my actions affect other people.</li> <li>● I apologize when I make mistakes and take action to restore trust.</li> <li>● I try to view and experience the world from others point of view.</li> <li>● I can identify and explain multiple points of view.</li> </ul>	

<b>Gratitude</b>	<b>I notice the good in life and say thank you through my words and actions.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I look for beauty and goodness in others.</li> <li>• I reflect on the good in my life on a regular basis, even when I'm having a tough day.</li> <li>• When a tough situation happens, I intentionally try to find the good in the situation -- or how the situation can make me stronger.</li> <li>• I recognize what other people do for me.</li> <li>• I notice and am grateful for opportunities when they arise.</li> <li>• I take the time to express my appreciation by saying thank you or doing nice things for people.</li> </ul>	
<b>Curiosity</b>	<b>I approach life as an explorer, constantly asking questions and learning new things.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I approach the world and others with a sense of wonder. I am fascinated by people and the world - and want to learn more about them.</li> <li>• I challenge myself to step out of my comfort zone and try new things. I seek out opportunities to learn and grow.</li> <li>• I find joy in learning new things, even if it is difficult.</li> <li>• I avoid jumping to conclusions or judgments too quickly.</li> <li>• I ask questions that deepen my understanding.</li> <li>• I know where I can go to further explore my interests and wonderings.</li> </ul>	
<b>Growth Mindset</b>	<b>I believe I can grow my own intelligence.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know that success or being "good" at something has far more to do with dedication and practice than natural skills or talents.</li> <li>• I know that I can get better at anything with practice.</li> <li>• I see mistakes as opportunities to learn.</li> <li>• I proactively seek out feedback from others.</li> <li>• I can identify my greatest strengths and share those gifts with others.</li> <li>• I can name the skills or behaviors that I want to improve</li> </ul>	
<b>Drive</b>	<b>Through hard work and self-discipline, I will achieve my big goals.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have BIG dreams and goals for my life and can explain why I have them.</li> <li>• I set regular goals to help keep me focused each day, week, and quarter.</li> <li>• I understand how I work best and set myself up to produce my highest quality work.</li> <li>• I don't settle for just getting work done. I aim to do my best quality work every day.</li> <li>• I reflect and learn from successes and set-backs.</li> <li>• When things don't go well, I implement strategies that help me stay motivated (e.g. positive self-talk, reflecting on times you've overcome challenges in the past, asking a friend for encouragement).</li> <li>• I proactively reach out for help when I need it.</li> </ul>	

<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>I put the needs of the team above my own, and I look for ways to use my strengths to support others.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● I understand the power of a team and believe that working together makes success easier for me and others.</li><li>● When making a decision, I put the needs of the team above my own glory or needs.</li><li>● I value the strengths and assets of my teammates (peers, teachers, Dream Team members, etc).</li><li>● I share my gifts and strengths with my teammates.</li><li>● When there is a challenge working in a group, I give constructive feedback, speak my truth, and look for compromise.</li><li>● I celebrate team accomplishments.</li></ul>	