

Understanding Your Design

A Guide to the Frameworks of the Mind

*"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well."*

— Psalm 139:14

This guide provides reference information for the frameworks explored in the **Made Beautiful** retreat. These are starting points—maps to help you recognize how God designed your mind. The real transformation happens when you explore what these patterns mean for your prayer, your relationships, and your calling.



***My Holy Crescendo**
fearfully & wonderfully made*

The 24 Character Strengths

Researchers identified 24 universal character strengths that exist across all cultures and throughout history. You possess all 24—but in a unique order. Your top 5 are your *signature strengths*: the qualities that feel most natural, most energizing, most *you*.

These aren't skills you learned. They're who you ARE when you're not trying to be anyone else.

Wisdom & Knowledge

Creativity — Thinking of new ways to do things; never content with the conventional

Curiosity — Taking interest in all ongoing experience; finding all subjects fascinating

Judgment — Thinking things through; examining from all sides; not jumping to conclusions

Love of Learning — Mastering new skills and topics; adding to knowledge systematically

Perspective — Being able to provide wise counsel; having ways of looking at the world that make sense

Courage

Bravery — Not shrinking from threat or challenge; speaking up for what is right

Perseverance — Finishing what you start; persisting despite obstacles

Honesty — Speaking the truth; presenting yourself genuinely; taking responsibility

Zest — Approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated

Humanity

Love — Valuing close relationships; being close to people; genuine warmth

Kindness — Doing favors and good deeds; helping others; taking care of people

Social Intelligence — Being aware of motives and feelings; knowing what makes people tick

Justice

Teamwork — Working well as a member of a group; being loyal to the group

Fairness — Treating all people the same; giving everyone a fair chance

Leadership — Organizing group activities; encouraging a group to get things done

Temperance

Forgiveness — Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' shortcomings

Humility — Letting accomplishments speak for themselves; not seeking the spotlight

Prudence — Being careful about choices; not taking undue risks; not saying things later regretted

Self-Regulation — Regulating what you feel and do; being disciplined; controlling appetites

Transcendence

Appreciation of Beauty — Noticing beauty, excellence, and skill in all domains of life

Gratitude — Being aware of and thankful for good things; expressing thanks

Hope — Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing good is possible

Humor — Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to others; seeing the light side

Spirituality — Having coherent beliefs about higher purpose and meaning; knowing where you fit

The Four Temperaments

This ancient wisdom goes back to Hippocrates and has been refined over centuries. Your temperament is your natural disposition—how you instinctively respond to the world. Most people have a primary temperament and a secondary blend.

Choleric — The Leader

Goal-oriented, decisive, and confident. Choleric are natural leaders who see what needs to be done and do it. They're energized by challenges and tend to be direct communicators. They may struggle with patience and can come across as domineering.

At their best: Visionary, productive, courageous

In prayer: Action-oriented; may connect through service and intercession

Saint example: St. Joan of Arc, St. Paul

Sanguine — The Enthusiast

Social, optimistic, and spontaneous. Sanguines love people and bring energy wherever they go. They're enthusiastic, creative, and emotionally expressive. They may struggle with follow-through and can be easily distracted.

At their best: Joyful, inspiring, connective

In prayer: Communal prayer, praise and worship, short frequent prayers throughout the day

Saint example: St. Philip Neri, St. Peter

Melancholic — The Thinker

Thoughtful, sensitive, and idealistic. Melancholics are deep thinkers who notice what others miss. They're detail-oriented, creative, and loyal. They may struggle with perfectionism and can be prone to sadness or overthinking.

At their best: Profound, artistic, faithful

In prayer: Contemplative prayer, journaling, Lectio Divina, Liturgy of the Hours

Saint example: St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Augustine

Phlegmatic — The Peacemaker

Calm, steady, and diplomatic. Phlegmatics bring peace wherever they go and are naturally gifted listeners. They're reliable, patient, and easy-going. They may struggle with passivity and can avoid conflict at all costs.

At their best: Peaceful, dependable, supportive

In prayer: Quiet meditation, Adoration, routine prayer times

Saint example: St. Francis de Sales, St. Thomas Aquinas

Remember: Your temperament isn't a flaw to fix—it's a foundation God gave you. He doesn't ask you to become someone else; He works with your natural disposition to draw you closer to Him.

Understanding Personality Type

Personality typing looks at how you naturally process information and make decisions. Rather than focusing on labels, consider these four questions:

Where Do You Get Your Energy?

Introversion (I) — You recharge through solitude. After a full day of socializing, you need quiet time to restore. You tend to think before speaking and prefer depth over breadth in relationships.

Extraversion (E) — You recharge through interaction. Being alone too long drains you. You tend to think out loud and enjoy a wide circle of connections.

How Do You Take In Information?

Sensing (S) — You focus on concrete details and present realities. You trust what you can see, touch, and verify. You prefer practical, step-by-step approaches.

Intuition (N) — You focus on patterns, possibilities, and meanings. You're drawn to the big picture and future implications. You trust hunches and make connections others miss.

How Do You Make Decisions?

Thinking (T) — You start with logic and objective analysis. You value fairness and truth, even when it's uncomfortable. You may seem detached but you deeply care about getting things right.

Feeling (F) — You start with values and how decisions affect people. You value harmony and compassion. You're attuned to others' needs but may struggle with tough decisions that hurt someone.

How Do You Approach Structure?

Judging (J) — You prefer plans, schedules, and closure. An open-ended day feels unsettling. You like to decide and move on rather than keep options open.

Perceiving (P) — You prefer flexibility and spontaneity. Too much structure feels like a cage. You like to stay open to new information and options.

These aren't boxes—they're patterns. You likely see yourself in both sides of some dichotomies. The point isn't to label yourself; it's to notice how God wired you to experience the world.

The 16 Personality Types

When you combine your preferences in each area, you get one of 16 patterns. Here's a brief overview of each:

ISTJ — The Inspector: Responsible, thorough, dependable. Values tradition and loyalty.

ISFJ — The Protector: Warm, considerate, devoted. Quietly cares for others' practical needs.

INFJ — The Counselor: Insightful, principled, compassionate. Seeks meaning and connection.

INTJ — The Mastermind: Strategic, determined, independent. Sees the big picture and plans accordingly.

ISTP — The Craftsman: Practical, observant, analytical. Solves problems with quiet efficiency.

ISFP — The Composer: Gentle, sensitive, artistic. Lives by deeply held values.

INFP — The Healer: Idealistic, empathetic, creative. Seeks to understand and help others.

INTP — The Architect: Logical, original, curious. Loves ideas and theoretical understanding.

ESTP — The Dynamo: Energetic, pragmatic, observant. Lives in the moment and takes action.

ESFP — The Performer: Spontaneous, energetic, friendly. Brings fun and practicality together.

ENFP — The Champion: Enthusiastic, creative, sociable. Sees possibilities in everyone.

ENTP — The Visionary: Inventive, strategic, enterprising. Loves intellectual challenges.

ESTJ — The Supervisor: Organized, logical, assertive. Creates order and gets things done.

ESFJ — The Provider: Caring, sociable, traditional. Nurtures others and builds community.

ENFJ — The Teacher: Charismatic, empathetic, organized. Inspires others toward growth.

ENTJ — The Commander: Strategic, logical, ambitious. Leads with vision and confidence.

The Five Love Languages

Gary Chapman identified five primary ways people give and receive love. Your primary love language is how you most naturally feel loved—and often how you instinctively show love to others.

Words of Affirmation

You feel loved through verbal expressions: compliments, encouragement, spoken appreciation, written notes. Criticism or harsh words cut deeply. You treasure cards and letters.

God speaks this language: Scripture is God's love letter. "You are my beloved." "I have called you by name." Praying with verses of affirmation can be deeply nourishing.

Quality Time

You feel loved through undivided attention: being fully present, active listening, shared activities. Distraction or cancelled plans hurt deeply. You treasure uninterrupted conversation.

God speaks this language: Eucharistic Adoration. He's not *doing* anything—He's simply *with* you. Quiet prayer, sitting in His presence, is where you meet Him.

Acts of Service

You feel loved when someone does something for you: helping with tasks, easing your burden, practical support. Laziness or broken commitments feel like rejection. You notice when someone goes out of their way.

God speaks this language: "He makes me lie down in green pastures." God as shepherd—providing, protecting, guiding. Notice how He cares for your practical needs.

Receiving Gifts

You feel loved through thoughtful gifts: not expensive things, but tokens that say "I was thinking of you." A forgotten birthday or thoughtless gift stings. You keep meaningful mementos.

God speaks this language: The Eucharist—the ultimate gift, given daily. Every sunset, every answered prayer, every small grace is a gift from His hand.

Physical Touch

You feel loved through physical presence: hugs, a hand on the shoulder, sitting close. Physical distance or neglect feels like emotional distance. You're comforted by appropriate touch.

God speaks this language: The Incarnation—God took on a body to *touch* us. Receiving the Eucharist, anointing with oil, the sign of peace—the Church is full of holy touch.

This Is Just the Beginning

These frameworks are maps, not destinations. Knowing your personality type doesn't change your life. Understanding how God *designed* your mind—and why—does.

In the **15-week A Symphony of Grace journey**, we explore each of these frameworks deeply and discover how they connect to your body, your spirit, and your calling. We don't just learn about ourselves—we learn to see ourselves through God's eyes.

"You are a once-in-a-universe masterpiece."

Learn more at myholycrescendo.com



My Holy Crescendo
fearfully & wonderfully made