



pray the way you are

by Vic Black, National Prayer Director

God, in His magnificent creativity, made us with His fingerprint marking each of our lives. Each person is a masterpiece of the Great Artist. Consider this paraphrase of Psalm 139:13-14 as God speaks to you in the first person about your design: "For I formed your inward parts; I wove you in your mother's womb. Give thanks to Me, for you are fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are My works, and your soul knows it very well." It seems consistent with such an expression regarding our unique design from the Master Himself that we would connect with God and express ourselves to Him in keeping with our design.

Fundamentally, prayer is connecting with God in a conversational way. We all express requests to God. We all worship. We all meditate on His written Word. But if we explore communicating with God beyond these basic means, how might that look? I asked my daughter, a gifted ballerina, "Honey, if you could worship God anyway you wanted, how would you worship Him?" She immediately said, "Oh Daddy, I would dance for Him!"

Some of us are dancers, writers, perhaps even poets, or songwriters. Others are artists, sculptors, designers, or inventors. Some see the big picture, while others see the details. Some are stimulated by their environment, and there are those who process most of life deep within their hearts. Some are moms,



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some dads, some singles. What would it look like if these people expressed themselves to their Master Designer reflecting their exclusive style?

I know an artist who finds freedom to express himself to God in his paintings. I've watched as an artist painted a fresh canvas while a speaker unfolded his message. Both "spoke" to God in their unique ways.

When my wife and I compare notes on our plans to spend time alone with God, we have very different approaches. She loves to reserve a room in the World Prayer Center where she will be alone in her quiet spot with the Lord for the day. My preference would be to walk in the woods with my backpack full of my Bible, journal, maybe a special book, and my lunch. I would change locations throughout the day, engaging with nature, and enjoying the creation with the Creator.

God doesn't put us in a box in terms of how we should pray. So why should we put ourselves in a box? Allow yourself new freedom. Try different ways of praying. Discuss with the Lord how His design on your life could open new avenues of communicating between the two of you. Listen to what He wants to say to you about this; listening to Him is part of a two-way conversation. Express your true self to the Creator. Feel free to pray the way you are.

UpFront

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faithful stewardship

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fill roles with little or no negotiation. In the long term, these dynamics tend to result not in loyal service but in an unhealthy dependence on the organization and a loss of initiative. Those negatively impacted by these views can find themselves in their 40s and 50s weary, discouraged, disillusioned, and resentful. Being compelled to operate according to someone else's design over a long period of time is an exhausting denial of our God-given gifts. As Parker Palmer states it in *Let Your Life Speak*, "True self, when violated, will always resist us, sometimes at great cost, holding our lives in check until we honor its truth."

Discovering our design and developing our best contribution will result in improved ministry. It will become a ministry that values the individual, motivates laborers for a lifetime, and takes on a breadth of expression of God's Kingdom.

Our approach to discovering and developing our design must be simple. I am convinced that the need is not for more or newer assessment tools, but for a few useful and reproducible ones. Even the right tools poorly processed and understood are not helpful. Focusing on personalizing the results from assessment tools and discussing the implications together aids our shared sense of mission. Mutually owning one another's results within a team is essential to long-term effectiveness. Otherwise we find our hearts and efforts pulling in opposing directions, which was the case with Tom and Jill. If they had been better equipped to manage their God-given design, they could have positioned themselves in ministry in ways that energized them and called out their best work.

Confirmation and affirmation from others related to our God-given design and contribution is a powerful motivator. May God grant each of us profound motivation as together we seek to maximize our contributions to the advancement of His Kingdom!

**This story is very close to the actual situation of a staff couple, and illustrates many staff stories.*



real talk about real stuff . . . upfront

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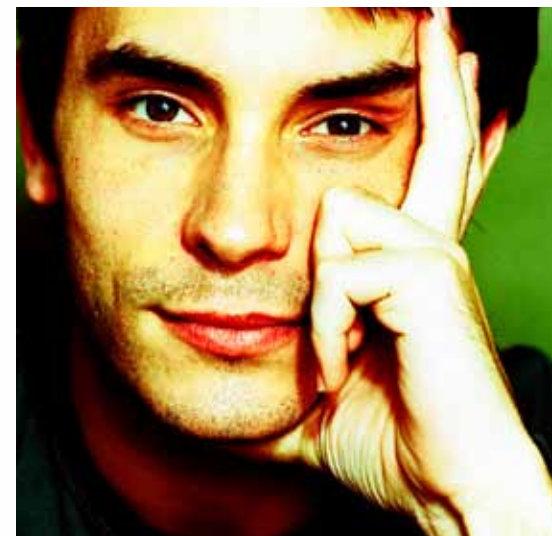
faithful stewardship of your God-given design and desires

Jim Mock, People Resources Team

. . . we must learn to live and minister more consistently with our God-given design and desires if we are to labor well for a lifetime.

Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that.

—Galatians 6:4 (MSG)



"Tom" and "Jill," a couple with young children, became involved in a Navigator ministry where they grew spiritually and began helping others come to Christ and grow in their walk with God. They were invited to join staff and soon were leading a thriving ministry. Today, despite their successful experience in ministry, the couple is spiritually and emotionally drained, and Tom is considering leaving his position in The Navigators.* The issue isn't sin, donor support, conflict, or even calling. What happened?



Jim Mock

In his book *What Should I Do with My Life?*, Po Bronson interviews 900 people and relates 50 stories of their search for meaning in vocation. As I read the book I realized that, no matter our race, economic status, or religion, we all have a driving desire to live a life of significance.

This strong desire is God-given, part of being created in the image of God. We have an innate sense that we were created for eternal purposes, whether we acknowledge it or not. The wisest man who has ever lived said that God has put eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). From our teen years until death, we long for eternal significance. Asking "What should I do with my life?" reveals that we are always seeking but never fully arriving in this broken earthly experience.

This reality has tremendous implications for us as we seek to build meaningful relationships with the lost. They, too, have this longing for purpose and meaning. This can be a great topic of meaningful discussion which opens doors for the Gospel.

This understanding also has profound implications for us as a ministry organization. Hopefully each of us desires to be a sacrificial servant and a team player. But this is held in dynamic tension with our desire to make a unique and significant contribution and to be a faithful steward of God's purposeful gift of our design.

As an organization we have a sacred responsibility to fulfill our God-given calling while providing servant-leadership to those who work with us. Fulfilling our calling requires that we develop strategies and approaches consistent with our mission, while servant-leadership demands that we care for and develop the potential of each precious laborer. This creates a tension that is a *good* struggle.

When we are younger, we need opportunities to extend ourselves into unknown potential. But as we grow older and more experienced, we must learn to live and minister more consistently with our God-given design and desires if we are to labor well for a lifetime. In coaching our senior staff toward maximizing their contribution to the Kingdom, our constant message is, "Increase your focus. Slow your pace."

When promoting these ideas, pushback is inevitable. Those of us who have labored faithfully over many years sometimes view the discovery of personal design as self-centered. Those of us who lead with well-defined strategies need players to

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God's design

Dave Legg
People Resources Team Director


Because we believe God gifted and designed us to contribute in specific ways in His Kingdom, we have dedicated this issue of *UpFront* to exploring the benefits and biblical



concepts of knowing who God created you to be. Jim Mock oversees the PRT's Personal Contribution Assessment. In his article, Jim shares

what he has learned from staff teams and individuals about the importance of knowing who God designed you to be.

Also in this issue Thobe Diamuka, who is staff in South Africa and a PRT intern, tells about her calling and contribution. We hope our "tool section" will be helpful and that you will be encouraged by Vic Black's reflections.

God has given us a great calling and has granted us stewardship of significant resources. Let's ask Him to help us steward His gifts in order to advance the Gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom into the nations. 

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 7-9

Relational Healing Seminar

May 13-15

Personal Contribution Workshop

May 18-19

Listening and Healing Prayer Seminar

July 16-18

Personal Contribution Workshop

September (TBA)

Listening and Healing Prayer Seminar

September 16-18

Personal Contribution Workshop

October 6-9

Sabbatical Orientation Workshop

November 11-13

Personal Contribution Workshop

All events will be held in Colorado Springs
For more information contact (719) 594-2555

alignment assessment

by Dave Legg, People Resources Team Leader

How much of your longing for significance is related to a need to align your gifts and personal bent with your work? Place an X by the picture indicating how well your role aligns with your design.



Maximum Alignment: God has moved me into a good role fit that matches my contribution and vision to my ministry responsibility in such a way that my contribution is maximized. What I do matches the environment (people and place) where I serve.



Satisfactory Alignment: There is growing agreement between my design, life vision, ministry task, and the expectations of others. I am aware of my weaknesses and am learning to compensate for them in partnership with others.




Moving Towards Alignment: I have a good grasp of my design and life vision, and I am learning to utilize my God-given strengths in my ministry responsibilities. My confidence continues to need reinforcement through life experience and the input of others.



Barely Aligned: I am aware of my design, and I am taking some steps to minister from my strengths. However, urgencies are crowding out the priorities of my vision in my schedule and ministry. I sense that I am not being utilized in several areas of my contribution.



Out of Alignment: I am vaguely aware of my God-given design and potential contribution. If I draw upon my strengths, it is almost by accident. I seldom apply my design and passions to my ministry. I often experience frustration in my ministry tasks and responsibilities.

What steps do I need to take to move toward a greater alignment of my design and my work? How can I maximize God's gifts for the advancement of His Kingdom? 



sharing the message of hope

my God-given design
by Thobe Diamuka, Navigator staff in South Africa


Before I started my internship with PRT this September, I had been battling restlessness deep inside of me. Questions related to my identity and purpose in life plagued my mind and led to a profound dissatisfaction with life. I began remembering a little girl (me) whose favorite pastime was chasing butterflies. She would dream about learning how to fly; and she really believed she could, if she just watched the birds flying across the big blue African sky.

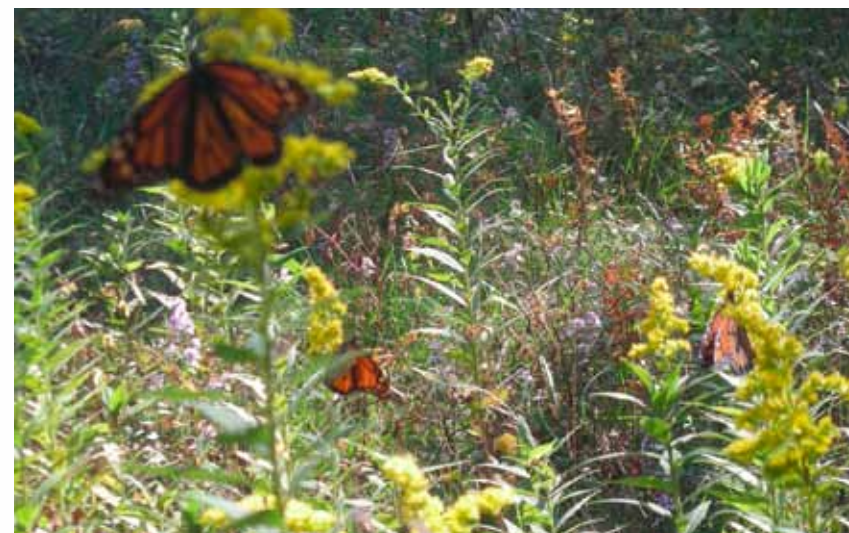
Over the last six months I have been on a quest to try to recapture some of that little girl's dreams. Attending the Personal Contribution Assessment (PCA) workshop made me realize that I would not find fulfillment apart from my relationship with God. I could have the best job with perfect surroundings, but apart from Him I would still be empty on the inside.

Through the process of sorting through the values cards, I learned that when my personal values—like getting rest and nurturing relationships—are violated for prolonged periods of time, I do not thrive. It was also great fun to identify how I prefer to gather and process information, relate to the world,

and make decisions. This realization will not only enhance my self-awareness but will also improve my understanding of how I interact in a team and in my other interpersonal relationships.

At the end of the PCA workshop, we each got to share what we felt our personal mission statements were, based on what was emerging as our God-given design as individuals, our primary roles, spiritual gifts, and our life lessons. The message of "hope" emerged clearly as a theme for my mission in life. Before accepting Christ, I lived in a hopeless and dark place internally, and one profound change that my relationship with Christ brought about was a feeling that life was worth living. This message of hope is what I want to continue sharing with those who have no hope.

I will cherish the affirmation the other workshop attendees gave me in this area. I have also recognized that I am not alone, that the Lord uses fellow believers to encourage us in discovering our God-given design. I was touched by how vulnerably people shared about their lifelong journeys of self-discovery, and I am eager to help others discover their preferences, primary roles, and spiritual gifts. 



broken_images, flickr.com

what is a personal contribution assessment?

PRT offers a Personal Contribution Assessment Workshop to help Navigator staff discover who they are and how they can best serve God's Kingdom.

The Assessment Workshop is divided into three parts:

Part 1—Discovering Your Design: *Forming a Personally Useful Profile of Your Design.*

This session addresses the question, "How has God designed me?" and results in a personal design profile.

Part 2—Defining Your Contribution: *Relating Your Design, Desires, and Experiences to Contribution.*

This session addresses the question, "How can I best contribute to God's Kingdom?" and results in a ministry contribution summary.

Part 3—Developing Your Capacity: *Applying the Implications of Your Design and Desires.*

This session addresses the question, "How do I develop my capacity?" and helps apply the assessment to all areas of life—interpersonal relationships, ministry, vocation . . .

Several Personal Contribution Assessment Workshops are scheduled in Colorado Springs for 2009 (see *Upcoming Events* on the previous page). To schedule a workshop in your area, contact Jim Mock: jim.mock@navigator.org or (719) 594-2309.

