

PART I

Starting Off

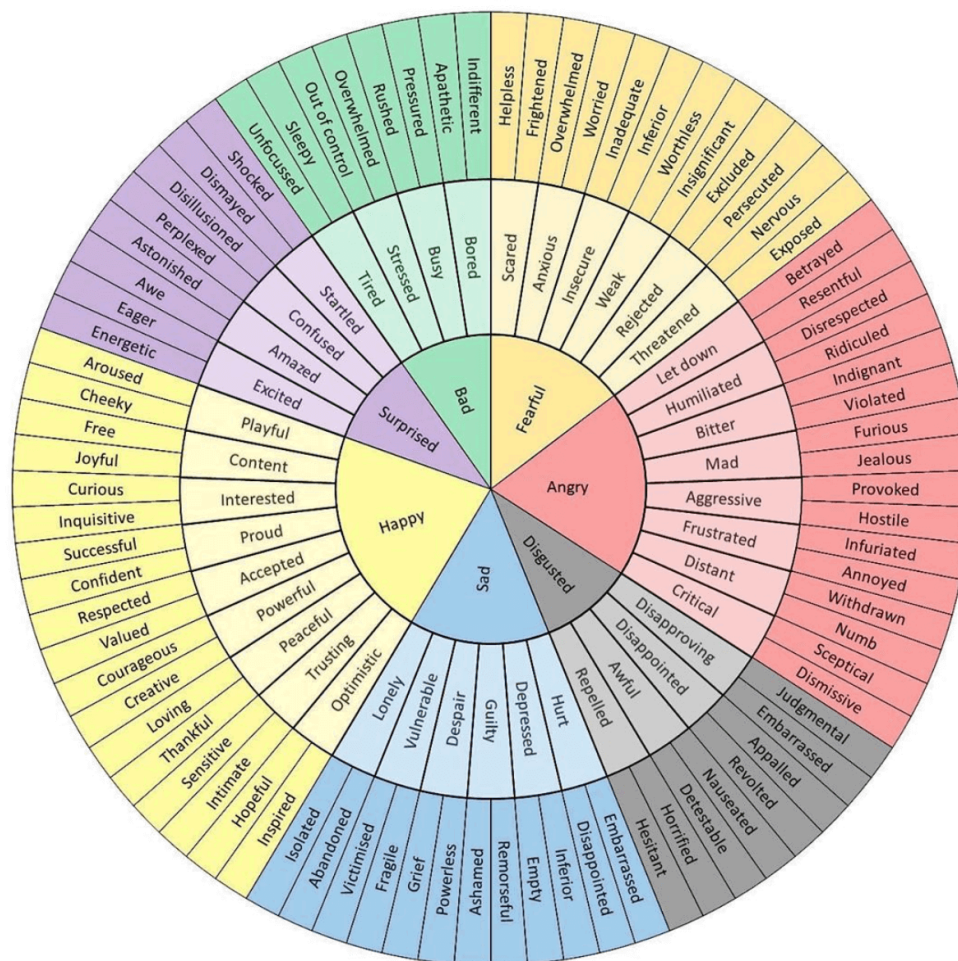
Bring this guide and something to write with. Find a quiet space to meet with the Creator.

Take a few deep, oxygenating breaths and simply welcome the presence of The Holy Spirit into this time to guide and bless you. Become aware of your surroundings by noticing specifically: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

- Take a moment to thank God for revealing His divine nature through creation and for how He has made us with the ability to experience His goodness here and now through our senses...

Emotional Presence

Become present to yourself through pinpointing what emotions you are currently feeling.



Brain Dump

On the lines below, take note of everything that is currently on your mind (worries, desires, plans, people, truths, lies, things, hopes, obligations, fears, distractions, etc.):

... Laying all this before God, speak to your soul: be still, and surrender your thoughts to Him.

Centering

Slowly read John 3:16 a few times over:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

The Gospel never gets old... How is this Good News able to meet you where you are today?

- Center yourself on God through thanking Him for The Gospel...

- *Carry this posture of gratitude throughout the rest of the retreat. If your mind starts to wander at any point, do not feel condemned. Simply take a deep breath, surrender your thoughts to God, and thank Him again for the truth of the Gospel.*

Meditate on Luke 24:1-12



James Tissot, The Magdalene Runs to the Cenacle to Tell the Apostles that the Body of Jesus is No Longer in the Tomb, 1886–1894 Location: Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Reflect

- Where do you see yourself in this passage?
- What specific parts of the passage stand out to you and why?
- What challenge or encouragement might God be speaking to you through this passage?

Respond

Journal a prayer in response to what God is showing you:

Receive

Like the women who had plans to care for the dead body of Jesus, maybe things have not turned out as you expected. Maybe God has brought to mind words He has spoken to you in the past, but you are seeking clarity. Maybe God has surprised you recently. Maybe things are not making sense, and you feel the need for proof to hold on to. Wherever you find yourself, God is using all things to fulfill His perfect plans, and He is actively working to reframe what you have considered “failure” into something beautiful.

Take an open posture and, in your own words, receive from Jesus...

- His Plans
- His Clarity
- His Redemption

Feel free to remain in this posture of receiving as long as you would like.

Rest and Recreation

Whenever you are ready, end your time with the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.*

Amen.

Now, feel free to engage by yourself or with others in whatever activities you would like as a way of worshiping your Creator in all that you do (examples: napping, exploring, playing, dancing, singing, drawing, stretching, exercising, etc.).

PART II

Looking Back

Bring this guide and something to write with. Find a quiet space to meet with the Creator.

Start again by taking some deep, oxygenating breaths and simply welcome the presence of The Holy Spirit into this time to guide and bless you.

- How did you experience God in the midst of rest and recreation?

Listening

Take a moment to just be silent before The Lord and ask Him to speak to you whatever He would like to share with you at this moment. Write anything you sense He may be saying to you below. Be aware of any images, sights, words, phrases, or feelings that arise...

Centering

Slowly read 1 Corinthians 15:55 a few times over:

*"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"*

The Gospel NEVER gets old... Where in your life have you seen victory through Jesus Christ?

- Center yourself on God through thanking Him for The Gospel...

- *Carry this posture of gratitude throughout the rest of the retreat. If your mind starts to wander at any point, do not feel condemned. Simply take a deep breath, surrender your thoughts to God, and thank Him again for the truth of the Gospel.*

Meditate on Luke 24:36-53



Ebenezer Ozue, *Our Victory*, 2020

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third

day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Reflect

- How would you feel if you were one of the disciples of Jesus in this passage?
- What specific parts of the passage stand out to you and why?
- What challenge or encouragement might God be speaking to you through this passage?

Respond

Journal a prayer in response to what God is showing you:

Receive

In the midst of our realistic fears, Jesus stands before us and speaks peace to us. He welcomes us to come close to Him and to touch Him and to eat with Him. He opens our minds beyond what we on our own could comprehend and He assures us that every victory is found in Him. Christ is commissioning us to be His witnesses to the world, and He reminds us to wait for His power to do so. Be blessed, and go forward in joyful worship, even as you wait.

Take an open posture and, in your own words, receive from Jesus...

- His Peace
- His Victory
- His Power

Feel free to remain in this posture of receiving as long as you would like.

Rest and Recreation

Whenever you are ready, end your time with the Serenity Prayer:

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
the courage to change the things I can;
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

*Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is;
not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His will;
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever and ever in the next.*

Amen.

Now, feel free to engage by yourself or with others in whatever activities you would like as a way of worshiping your Creator in all that you do (examples: napping, exploring, playing, dancing, singing, drawing, stretching, exercising, etc.).