



Why We Relate So Differently

Understanding Connection, Direction, and Closeness

Two people can care about each other deeply and still relate very differently. What feels natural and comfortable for one person may feel uncomfortable or even confusing for another. This doesn't mean something is wrong — it means you were designed differently.

The By D.E.S.I.G.N. Method™ gives us a shared language for three important relational areas: Connection — Inclusion, Direction — Control, and Closeness — Affection. Understanding these areas can help us relate with greater awareness, kindness, and intention — both with others and within ourselves.

“Different by design. Not better or worse. Just uniquely you.”



Live by D.E.S.I.G.N., not by default.

Connection — Inclusion

How we experience people and belonging.

People naturally differ in how they approach social interaction, involvement, and belonging. Some are energized by a wide circle of friends and frequent interaction, while others prefer a smaller circle and more intentional time together. Some feel most alive when included in group activities, while others are content with one-on-one connection or even significant alone time.

These differences don't mean one person is more friendly, more spiritual, or more loving than another. They simply reflect how each person is uniquely designed. When we understand these differences, we can honor each other's needs rather than take them personally.

Direction — Control

How we approach responsibility and decision-making.

People naturally differ in how they approach responsibility, decision-making, structure, and influence. Some prefer to take the lead, make decisions, and create structure, while others are more comfortable following, supporting, or sharing the decision-making process. Some like clear plans and defined roles, while others prefer flexibility and freedom to adapt.

These differences don't mean one person is more capable, more mature, or more right than another. They simply reflect different temperament designs. When we understand and respect these differences, we can work together more effectively and reduce unnecessary conflict.

Closeness — Affection

How we experience emotional warmth and closeness.

People naturally differ in how they express and receive emotional warmth, affection, reassurance, and closeness. Some are very expressive and feel most connected through affection and verbal encouragement, while others are more reserved and show love through practical support, consistency, or time together. Some desire frequent reassurance, while others feel secure with less verbal affirmation.

These differences don't mean one person is more loving, more committed, or more right than another. They simply reflect how each person is designed. When we understand these differences, we can give and receive love in ways that truly fit the other person.

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Three Areas, One Whole Person

How it all works together.

Connection, Direction, and Closeness are not separate parts of different people — they work together in every person. You can be highly social in Connection, prefer to take the lead in Direction, and be more reserved in Closeness. Or you might be quiet in Connection, flexible in Direction, and very expressive in Closeness. Each person is a unique combination, and it's possible to differ greatly across the three areas.

Seeing the whole picture helps us move beyond simplifications and understand that people are complex, beautifully designed, and not easily categorized.

MORE
AWARE
MORE KIND
A BRIGHTER
TOMORROW

Why This Understanding Matters

From awareness to a better way forward.

Understanding temperament is not just about knowing differences — it's about what we do with that knowledge. It should lead to greater humility, responsibility, compassion, and growth. It helps us relate with more grace, communicate more effectively, and create healthier, more life-giving relationships.

This isn't about judgment or excuses. It's about becoming more aware, more intentional, and more like the person you were created to be.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the three areas—Connection, Direction, or Closeness—helps explain a difference you have noticed between yourself and someone close to you?
2. Is there an area where you have sometimes assumed that your natural way of relating is the "right" way?
3. What difference in another person have you previously interpreted negatively that you might now view with more curiosity?
4. How could understanding your own design help you take greater responsibility for the way you relate to others?

One Next Step

Choose one of the three areas—Connection, Direction, or Closeness—and notice how it shows up in one relationship this week without judging yourself or the other person.

Continue Your Journey

This teaching was adapted from *The Individual Temperament Handbook*.



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