

MARRIAGE INSIGHTS®

discovering uniqueness, developing unity

*"Wisdom is in the presence of
the one who has understanding..."
—Proverbs 17:24*

John Doe

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Understanding Strengths and Blending Differences

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! You have just taken a significant step in the process of understanding the unique strengths that God has designed in you. This report will provide insight into your natural strengths and how those strengths are operating in your life. As you learn more about yourself and God's plan for the uniqueness of strengths, you will also begin recognizing and valuing the strengths in others.

There are several sections in this report and each contributes to the knowledge and understanding that will produce the greatest transformation in your relationships. Therefore, please commit yourself to read and explore this report completely.

In I Corinthians 12:12-18 we read that although the body is one, it is made up of many parts. Each part has a vital function and is no less a part of the body because it is different. As you study the passage, it is apparent that God not only intentionally created differences, but He designed them very specifically. God's desire in our relationships is for our differences to unite us not divide us. These Biblical principles establish a foundation for understanding ourselves, our spouse and God's plan for our differences. As we start to see that our differences are strengths when allowed to function as God designed it will be truly transformational.

The mission of Ministry Insights is to transform relationships worldwide. We believe this transformation takes place as you discover God's plan for your unique strengths and the unique strengths of others. As you learn more about yourself and others it is our prayer that your eyes will be opened to clearly see God's divine design for differences.

Additional supporting resources are available at www.ministryinsights.com.

THE SCALES

Interpreting Your Natural Strengths Chart

Let's begin with a look at your natural strengths. Your Natural Strengths Chart presents a visual picture of the predictable ways that you naturally approach or respond to problems, information, change and risk. In each of these four scales, there are two different strengths that you may possess; therefore, there are eight strength possibilities.

There is a vertical line in the center of the chart that is referred to as the energy line. Proceeding in each direction from that line is a 10 point scale. The number on the scale indicates the intensity of the strength. There may be situations in which you utilize a strength different from your natural strength, but it will require energy for you to do so. (This will be discussed further in later sections)

If your score on any scale is within 1 point of the energy line, it is indicated as neutral. This means you can move towards either of the strengths outlined in the scales based on the current situation. As opposed to someone that exhibits a clearly observable strength in an area, it will not require as much energy for you to move from one strength to the other in that area. You will tend to take a neutral position until you understand clearly what strength is required.

These strengths are a part of who you are and will remain relatively consistent over time. Typically only very small changes in your natural strengths are observed throughout your life. It is not often that we see major shifts in someone's natural strengths, but it is possible. Such a shift is normally due to a major life changing event.

The Problem Solving Scale (L Scale)

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is more reflective or aggressive in the way in which you approach problems. If you plot on the reflective side of the scale, we can predict that you will take a more reflective or calculating approach to solving a problem or challenge. If you plot on the aggressive side of the scale, it is predictable that when a problem or challenge arises you will take a more aggressive or assertive approach to solving that problem. Depending on the problem or issue, each side of the scale can highlight an important strength.

THE SCALES

The Processing Information Scale (O Scale)

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more optimistic or realistic in the way in which you process information. If you plot on the optimistic side of the scale, it is predictable that when processing new information you will be more trusting and accepting. If you plot on the realistic side of the scale, you will be more skeptical and want to validate information before trusting. Again, each side of the scale represents a strength in processing information.

The Managing Change Scale (G Scale)

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more dynamic or predictable in the way you manage change. If you are on the dynamic side of this scale, you will tend to be fast-paced. You are comfortable managing many projects simultaneously, and you allow change to drive your plan. If you plot on the predictable side of the scale, you will lean toward a slower pace. You prefer to focus on one project at a time, and you tend to want to plan for change. Managing change effectively requires a combination of these strengths.

The Facing Risk Scale (B Scale)

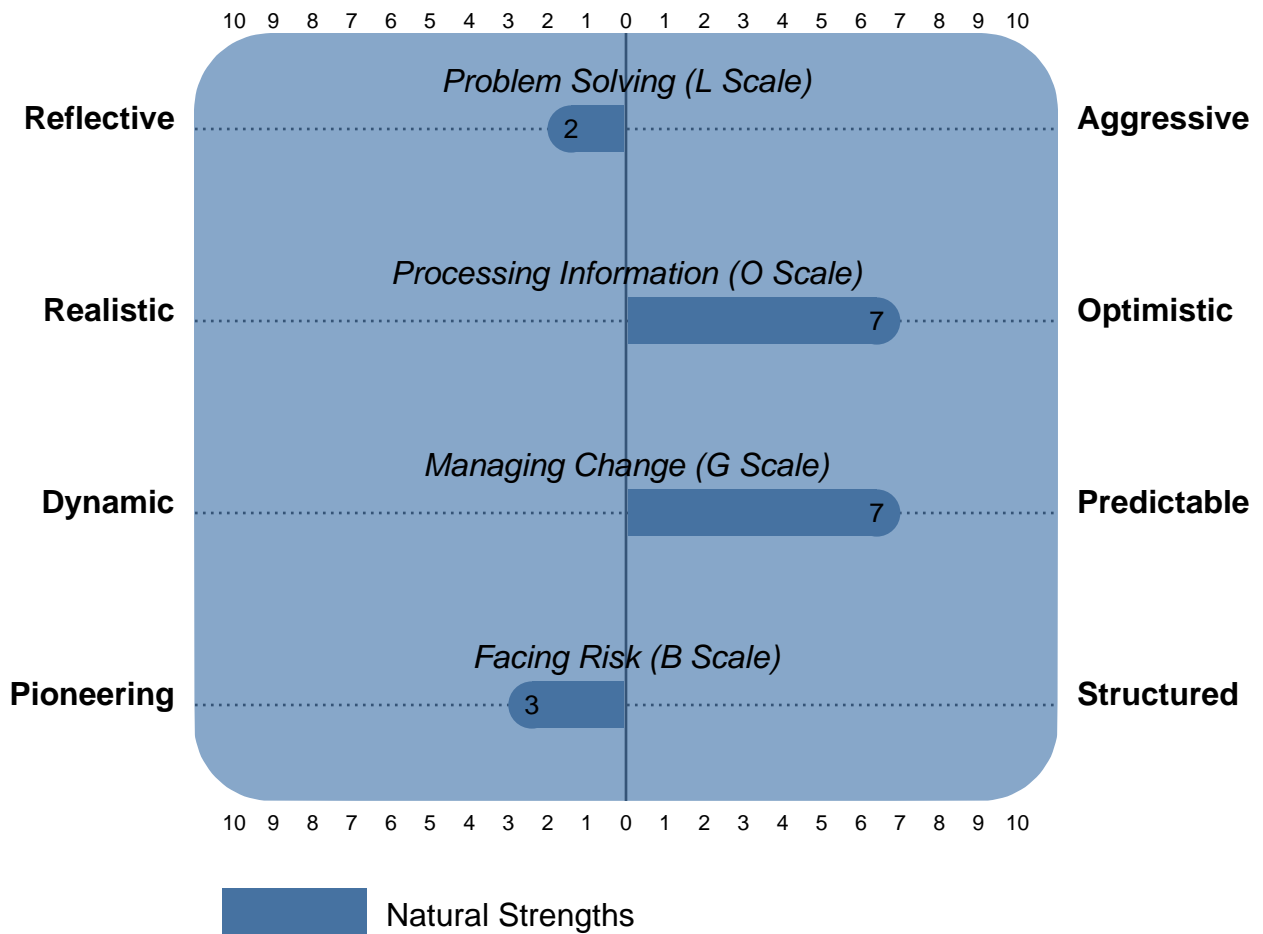
Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more structured or pioneering in the way you face risk. If you are on the structured side of the scale, you will tend to follow the established procedures and rules and see them as a source of protection. Therefore you will tend to be a lower risk taker. If you are on the pioneering side of this scale, you will tend to view rules and established procedures as broad guidelines and tend to push the envelope of risk. You may even view them as obstacles standing in the way of your progress. Each of these strengths is important and needed for balancing the risk scale.

In your relationship you'll find that understanding your natural strengths and those of others in these predictable measures is crucial to building trust, closeness, commitment and caring. In fact, by understanding where your spouse differs in these areas, you may even discover a "great secret" – that the differences of your spouse are actually designed to complement your strengths, enabling you to function in your relationship more fully.

THE SCALES

Here are some last thoughts before you examine and share your strengths chart. The order in which the information on the chart is presented is not an indication that one scale is more important than another. Also, you are a combination of strengths, so while each scale is important individually, they are not independent. Your unique combination of strengths will give you a better understanding of who you are. Therefore, the pages of text that follow your Natural Strengths Chart are essential to help you interpret your mix of strengths into a word picture that will give you a comprehensive understanding of your strengths. They will also serve as an objective platform to facilitate discussion with others.

YOUR NATURAL STRENGTHS CHART



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Based on your responses, the report has selected general statements to provide you with a broad understanding of your strengths and behavioral style. The statements identify the natural or core strengths and behavior you bring to your marriage. As you read the information, use this section to identify areas of your core strengths and style of relating with your spouse.

You may be rather emotional; that is, your spouse will generally know how you are feeling, whether good or bad, because you let her know your moods easily. You have a strong feeling of optimism, considered favorably by your spouse and most people around you. Your perception is that the glass is half-full rather than half-empty. You have a high trust level for others. Occasionally you may have trusted too much and were "stung" in the process. Your natural optimism, however, tends to pull you out of such slumps. The "life of the party" might characterize you when at parties or entertaining friends. You generally become involved with whatever social activities are taking place.

Often you will display a tremendous sense of urgency to solve a problem. You like to solve it and get onto the next activity. You can be intense when confronted with a tough problem. The intensity may not always fit the problem; that is, sometimes you can get intense over a problem that looks tough, but in actuality is not. You project a strong desire to help others. You give so much of yourself that your own life and marriage relationship can become disorganized. When working on plans for activities, you must feel that you are "in on things." You will generally offer creative ideas or suggest activities.

You are a natural communicator. You love to talk, offer jokes and make sure that everyone is having a good time. This trait is especially evident at functions and outings.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Poised, confident, persuasive and impressive are descriptors for you. You are usually capable of speaking in a comfortable manner. You could use help in controlling emotions--showing less impulsive reactions; less talk and more action. You show sympathy to the feelings and needs of your spouse and others. Your natural empathy style may draw others to you.

KEYS TO MOTIVATING

Understanding what motivates a person is often found by understanding what it is he wants or values. This section of the report can help understand John's wants and desires. Those statements that ring true, but aren't a current part of his marriage, can become goals to reach.

You may want:

- Frequent appreciation.
- To feel safe and secure in social situations.
- Support of your ideas and dreams.
- A spouse who practices listening and participation.
- Freedom from many controls and limitations of creativity.
- Status quo.
- Popularity.
- An audience to perform to and entertain.
- A support system to help you get things done.
- Identification with your social group.
- To feel important, but not be the leader.
- A friendly, favorable social environment.

RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHS

This section identifies specific talents and strengths that you bring to your marriage and relationships. Socially, we need people who have different strengths to offer. Use this information to share your thoughts, ideas and feelings about your relationship strengths.

- A good team player--positive participation.
- Good at reconciling.
- Motivate others toward positive goals.
- Excellent sense of humor; see humor in events spontaneously.
- Very patient with others.
- Dependable spouse.
- Never a dull moment.
- Supportive of others.
- Sincere in what you say and do.
- Very optimistic; make others feel good about themselves.
- Work for others without taking a leadership role.
- An excellent "win-win" type of negotiator.

KEYS TO COMMUNICATION

This section of the report describes how you like your spouse and others to communicate with you. As with the entire report, most of these items listed will be extremely accurate for you. Identify 3 or 4 key items and encourage your spouse to use these items in everyday communication with you.

- Patiently draw out personal interests.
- Move casually, informally.
- Present ideas softly, nonthreateningly.
- Talk about expectations.
- Be responsive toward ideas and commitments.
- Start with a personal comment to "break the ice."
- Ask for opinions and ideas.
- Be stimulating, fun-loving, and fast-moving.
- Work to achieve mutual satisfaction.
- Find areas of common interest and involvement.
- Show sincere interest as a person.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

This section of the report describes what NOT to do when relating with you. As with the entire report, most of these items listed will be extremely accurate for you. Identify 3 or 4 key items and encourage your spouse or future spouse to ELIMINATE using them in everyday communication with you. And, if your spouse or future spouse has a report, you are encouraged to share this page of information with each other, as well as sharing information from the entire report.

- Don't be vague or offer strong opinions.
- Don't leave with a feeling of no support.
- Don't be domineering or demanding.
- Don't hide your emotions or feelings.
- Don't threaten.
- Don't keep deciding; give time to make decisions.
- Don't patronize or demean.
- Don't "stick to the agenda" too much.
- Don't talk down.
- Don't dwell on facts regarding activities or plans.
- Don't be cool, aloof or tight-lipped.
- Don't "dream" too much or you'll lose time.

HINDERING FACTORS

The list below is an analysis of possible hindering factors with regard to your marriage relationship. Not all of the limitations may apply, so cross out those limitations. Circle or highlight 1 to 3 limitations that may be hindering marriage or social interaction, and develop an action plan to reduce the effects of those limitations.

- You overestimate your ability to motivate people.
- You lose track of time when keeping dates and appointments; as a result, you may show up late or tardy.
- You trust others too much, sometimes getting "burned."
- You "oversell" ideas to your spouse.
- You are not attentive to detail; as a result, some small details might be ignored or forgotten.
- You make decisions based on surface analysis only.
- You overuse gestures and facial expressions in communications.

PERCEPTIONS

A person's actions and feelings may be quickly telegraphed to others. This section provides additional information on your self-perception and how, under certain conditions, others may perceive your actions. Understanding this section will enable you to balance your emotions to be successful in different situations.

"See Yourself As Others See You"

SELF-PERCEPTION

You usually see yourself as being:

Enthusiastic
Charming
Persuasive

Outgoing
Inspiring
Optimistic

OTHERS' PERCEPTION

Under moderate pressure, tension, stress or fatigue, others may see you as being:

Self-Promoting
Overly Optimistic

Glib
Unrealistic

And, under extreme pressure, stress or fatigue, others may see you as being:

Overly Confident
Poor Listener

Talkative
Self-Promoter

ACTION PLAN

To relate more effectively with _____, I need to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

To relate more effectively with _____, I need to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

To relate more effectively with _____, I need to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Communication skills I need to develop are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

I agree to practice the listed communication techniques and develop communication skills in the areas indicated.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

STRENGTHS MOVEMENT

During your response to the online questionnaire we were able to identify more than just your natural strengths. We also identified your strengths movement. Strengths movement is a measure of how the current environment impacts your natural strengths. Some environmental issues impact your strengths in a positive way and some negative. The Strengths Movement Chart illustrates this impact on your natural strengths.

As stated earlier, your natural strengths will typically remain stable over time. However, it is common for you to adapt to your current environment based on your perception of whether your strengths are being valued or discounted, or whether they are different than what may be required by your current role.

The Strengths Movement Chart provides a picture of how much you feel you need to "change" or "adapt" your natural strengths to match the needs or requirements of your current environment. You will see the same strength indicators from your natural strengths chart, but an additional indicator is overlaid that displays a measurement of your strengths movement. That movement can be positive or negative, or there may be areas where there is no movement.

Areas without any movement could indicate that your natural strengths are in alignment with your environment. Areas that have positive movement could indicate that the environment may require you to use more of that strength. In both of these scenarios, you will typically feel valued and comfortable.

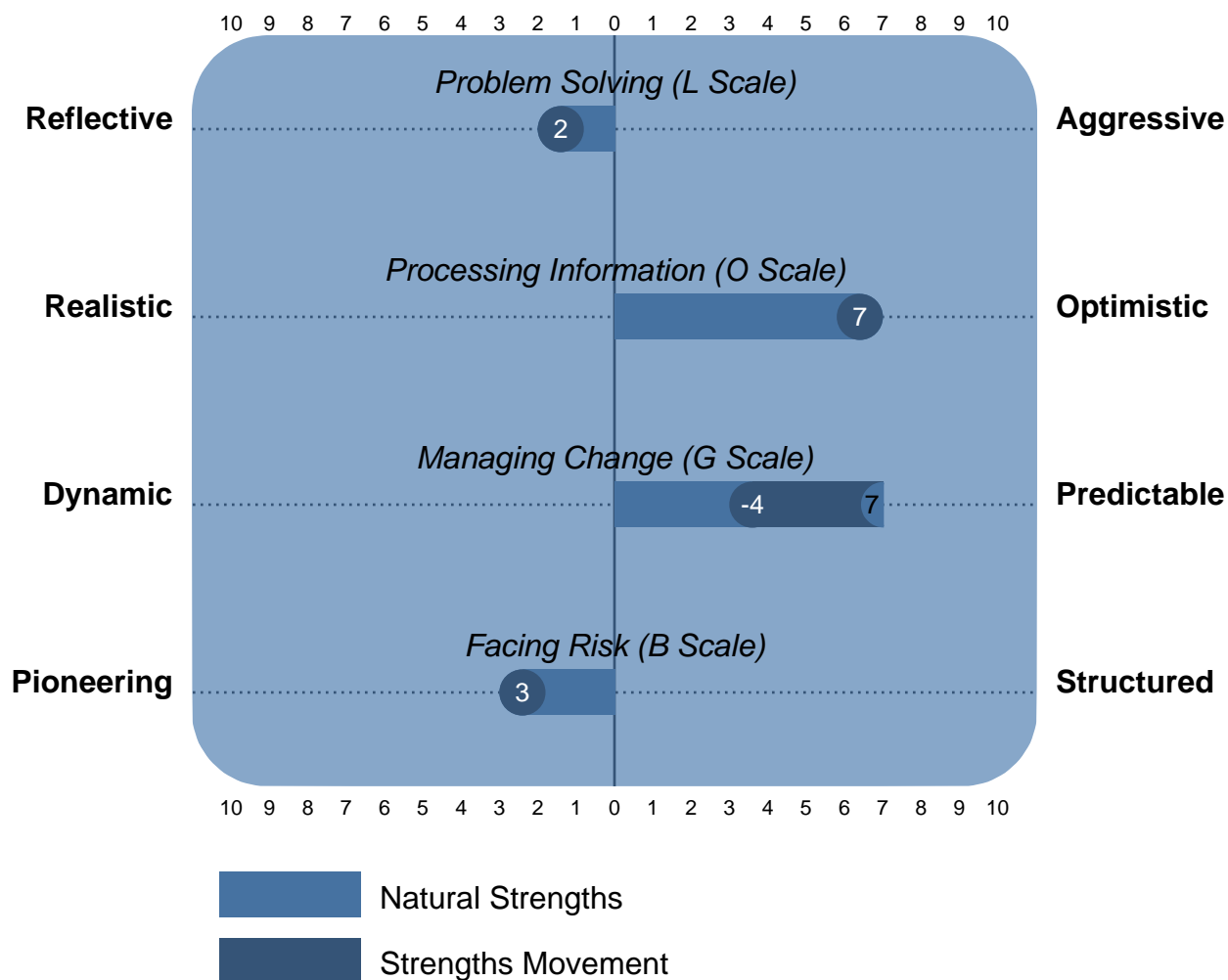
If there is negative movement in a scale, you may feel that your environment requires you to be something other than what you naturally are. You may want to explore these areas further. As you do, keep in mind that some adaptation is good and also necessary. However, long term adaptation consumes energy and can lead to stress and frustration. The greater the degree of movement away from your natural strength, the greater the degree of energy you are expending to adapt.

Changes in your current environment can dramatically impact the movement in your strengths. Therefore, it is our recommendation that you retake this assessment on an annual basis, or sooner, if there are significant changes in your current environment. This will provide an objective point of reference and help you to focus your natural strengths.

Following the Strengths Movement Chart are pages that interpret your strength movement mix into a word picture to help you explore this movement in your strengths. These subsequent text pages and the strengths movement chart can serve as an objective platform to facilitate discussion with others in your current environment.

YOUR STRENGTHS MOVEMENT CHART

As you review this chart, pay special attention to areas where the movement is away from your natural strengths. Negative movement of 5 points or more and especially movement across the center (energy) line are areas that could be costing you energy and should be explored further.



HOW ARE YOU HAVING TO "ADAPT?"

This list of descriptions can give you a picture of the way you feel you may need to respond to the current environment to be accepted. If these statements DO NOT sound related, explore the reasons why as a key to understanding your current situation and need to "adapt" to be accepted.

- Positive, outgoing, friendly behavior.
- Consistency of task performance at home.
- Diplomatic cooperation in family interaction.
- Limited or prepared changes in routine.
- Making tactful decisions.
- Motivating your spouse to accomplish desired goals.
- Being more flexible.
- Using creativity in communicating with your spouse.
- Exhibiting patience and good listening skills with your spouse.
- Striving faithfully to meet the expectations of your spouse and family.
- Motivating your spouse to take action by using persuasive skills.
- Logical solutions.
- Participative decision making with your spouse.

CORE AND ADAPTED STYLE

John's Core Style of dealing with problems (L), people (O), pace of events (G) and procedures (B) may not always fit what the home environment needs. This section may provide valuable information related to the pressures John may feel when he Adapts his style to the home environment.

Core Style	PROBLEMS - CHALLENGES	Adapted Style
John is somewhat conservative in his approach to solving problems. He will accept challenges by being quite calculating in his response to the problem or challenge. John will be quite cooperative by nature and attempt to avoid confrontation as he wants to be seen as a person who is "easy" to work with.		John sees no need to change his approach to solving problems or dealing with challenges in his present environment.

Core Style	PEOPLE - CONTACTS	Adapted Style
John's Core Style is to use persuasion and emotion to the extreme. He is positive and seeks to influence his spouse and family by the virtues of his personality and verbal skills. He will convince you that what he is saying is not only right, but is exactly what is needed. He displays enthusiasm for almost any project.		John sees no need to change his approach to influencing others to his way of thinking. He sees his Core Style to be what the environment is calling for.

Core Style	PACE - CONSISTENCY	Adapted Style
John is comfortable in an environment in which there are few projects going on concurrently. He is appreciative of the team concept and feels quite secure in an environment where the need to move from one activity to another quite quickly is held to a minimum.		John feels the environment is calling for a relaxed demeanor, or one in which patience is looked at as a virtue. He is predictable and stable and places an emphasis on follow-up and follow-through.

Core Style	PROCEDURES - CONSTRAINTS	Adapted Style
John is independent by nature and feels comfortable in situations where the constraints are few and far between. He will follow rules as long as he feels that the rules are his. He has a tendency to rebel from rules set by others and wants input into any constraints.		John shows little discomfort when comparing his Core Style to his response to the environment Adapted Style. The difference is not significant and John sees little or no need to change his response to the environment.

THE STRENGTHS WHEEL

The Strengths Wheel is a powerful visual tool to help you see the natural strengths of your relationship or family. It can also help you understand how the relationship or family is moving their strengths collectively to meet the demands of the current environment.

To take advantage of the Strengths Wheel create a master Strengths Wheel that contains each person's "Natural Strengths" and "Strengths Movement". This allows for quick identification of potential issues and alignment.

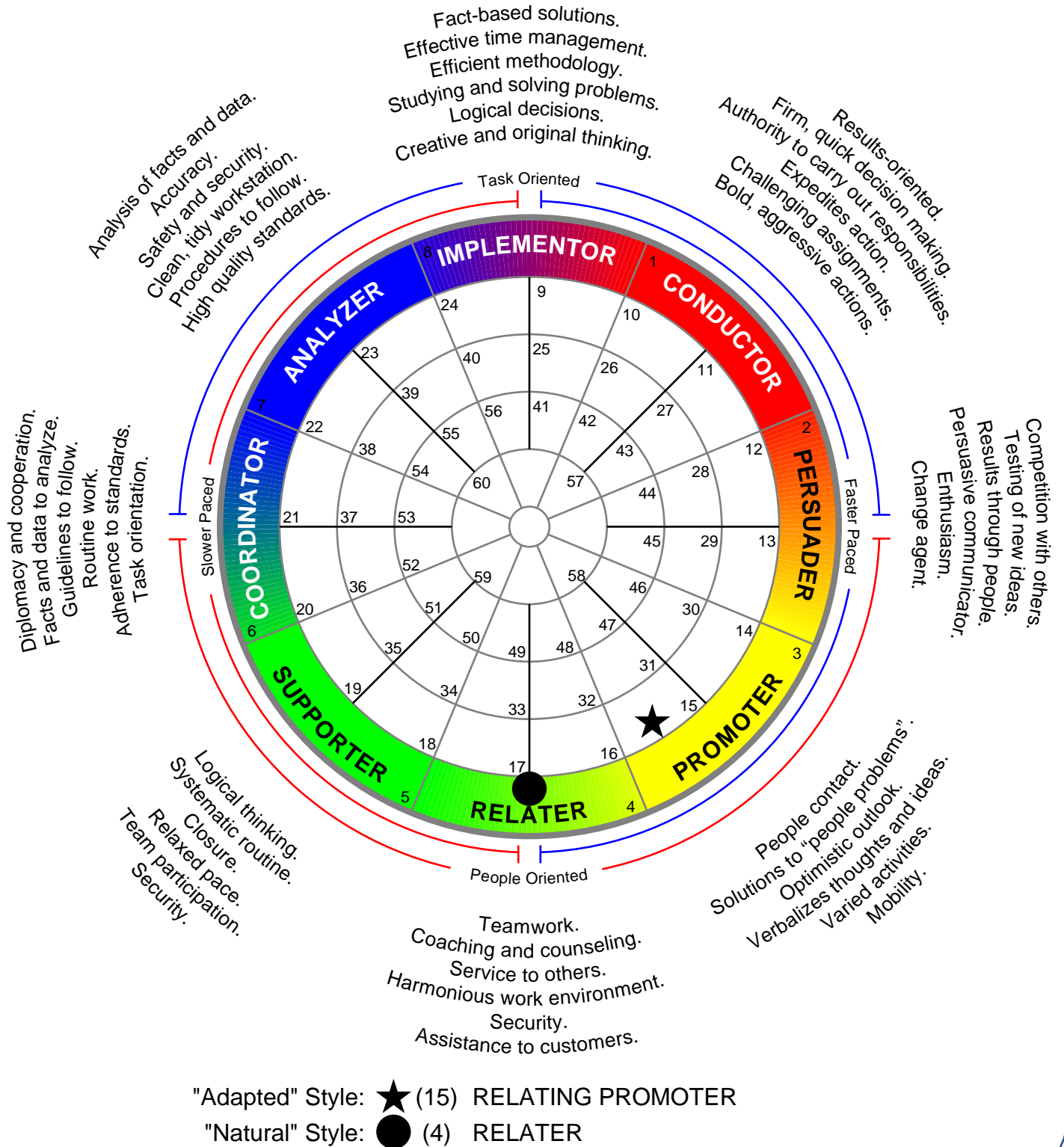
The circle represents your natural strengths. The star represents your strengths movement. The Strengths Wheel is divided down and across the middle. By looking at the top of the Strengths Wheel you will see that the L and B scales have something in common. They both represent task orientation. At the bottom of the wheel you will see that the G and O scales represent people orientation.

Taking another look at the wheel and you will see on the left side the B and G scales have something in common as well. They are slower paced. The opposite side of the wheel you will see that the L and O scales are faster paced.

Putting all the pieces together can give us a powerful picture of your relationship or family. It can drive objective discussion about what the natural strengths are and how each person feels they need to move, as a whole, to succeed in the current environment.

Remember this is not designed to be absolute but to drive discussion.

THE STRENGTHS WHEEL



YOUR STYLE ANALYSIS GRAPH

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