

**Excerpted from:**

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Table 21.1: A Psychological Vision of the Person Consistent with the Theological and Philosophical Premises of the Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person.

The following eleven psychological premises represent a psychological understanding of the person consistent with the theological and philosophical premises of the CCMMP and with the psychological sciences. They serve as an outline that will be augmented with sub-premises that further elucidate the Meta-Model's theoretical and clinical implications for psychology and counseling. Together with the CCMMP's theological and philosophical premises, they deepen and help fill out our understanding of the person for use in mental health practice. (In parentheses is found the name of the corresponding theological and philosophical premise.)

I. The person has an essential core of goodness, dignity, and value and seeks flourishing of self and others. This dignity and value is independent of age or any ability. Such a core of goodness is foundational for a person to value life, develop morally, and to flourish. (Created)

II. The person commonly experiences types of pain, suffering, anxiety, depression, or other disorders in his or her human capacities and interpersonal relationships. The person is also distressed or injured by natural causes and by others' harmful behavior. People have varying levels of conscious and non-conscious distorted experience, which express that they do not respect and love themselves or others as they should. Moreover, they often do not live according to many of their basic values. (Fallen)

III. The person, with the help of others, can find support and healing, correct harmful behaviors, and find meaning through reason and transcendence, all of which bring about personal and interpersonal flourishing. In short, there is a basis for hoping for positive change in a person's life. (Redeemed)

IV. Each human being is a body-soul unified whole with a unique personal identity that develops over time in a sociocultural context. This unity pertains to the person's whole experience. For instance, physical abuse affects the person's bodily, psychological, and spiritual life. (A Personal Unity)

V. The person flourishes by discerning, responding to, and balancing three callings: (a) called as a person to a value-guided life while focusing on love and transcendent goals; (b) called to live out vocational commitments to others, such as being single, married, or having a distinct religious calling; and (c) called to participate in socially meaningful work, service, and leisure. (Fulfilled through Vocation)

VI. The person is fulfilled and serves others through the ongoing development of virtue strengths, moral character, and spiritual maturity, including growth in cognitive, volitional, emotional, and relational capacities. Through effort and practice, the person achieves virtues that allow the attainment of goals and flourishing. For example, a father or a mother who develops patience, justice, forgiveness, and hopefulness is better able to flourish as a parent. (Fulfilled in Virtue)

VII. The person is intrinsically interpersonal and formed throughout life by relationships, such as those experienced with family members, romantic partners, friends, co-workers and colleagues, communities, and society. (Interpersonally Relational)

VIII. The person is in sensory-perceptual-cognitive interaction with external reality and has the use of related capacities, such as imagination and memory. Such capacities underlie many of our skills allowing us to recognize other people, communicate with them, set goals, heal memories, and appreciate beauty. (Sensory-Perceptual-Cognitive)

IX. The person has the capacity for emotion. Emotions, which involve feelings, sensory and physiological responses, and tendencies to respond (conscious or not), provide the person with knowledge of external reality, others, and self. The excess and deficit of certain emotions are important indicators of pathology, while emotional balance is commonly a sign of health. For example, when balanced, the human capacity for empathy can bring about healing for self and others, while a deficit or excess produces indifference or burnout. (Emotional)

X. The person has a rational capacity. This capacity involves reason, self-consciousness, language and sophisticated cognitive capacities, expressing multiple types of intelligence. These rational capacities can be used to facilitate psychological healing and flourishing by seeking truth about self, others, the external world, and transcendent meaning. (Rational)

XI. The person has a will that is free, in important ways, and is an agent with moral responsibility when free will is exercised. For instance, the human being has the capacity to freely give or withhold forgiveness and to be altruistic or selfish. Increases in freedom from pathology and in freedom to pursue positive life goals and honor commitments are significant for healing and flourishing. (Volitional and Free)