

Hippocrates 4 Temperaments

Hippocrates suggests that there are four fundamental personality types, **sanguine** (pleasure-seeking and sociable), **choleric** (ambitious and leader-like), **melancholic** (analytical and literal), and **phlegmatic** (relaxed and thoughtful).

We all have qualities from all 4 temperaments. Different qualities are developed through various stages of life. Childhood highlights the sanguine, early adulthood highlights choleric, parenthood highlights phlegmatic, older age highlights melancholic.

However, most of us have our real strengths (and weaknesses /blind spots) in one or two main temperaments. Through life experience we can lose sight of our natural temperament, but see it through reflections on how we were as young children, and how we are when life is going well. No one is 100% one temperament.

Look at your strongest qualities and look for a 70-80 % fit. Sometimes we recognize ourselves because of the negative aspects in our own temperament, sometimes because of the absence of qualities from the others.

Melancholic - Earth	Choleric - Fire	Sanguine - Air	Phlegmatic - Water
Abstract Non-practical Introverted Sensitive Pessimistic	Fearless Assertive Focused Intense Sharp	Enthusiastic Present-oriented Tactical Emotional Optimistic	Self-sufficient Slow Consistent Reserved Conservative
Analytical and literal	Ambitious and leader-like	Impulsive and pleasure-seeking	Relaxed and thoughtful
Pondering Considerate Self reliant	Aggressive Energetic Dominating	Sociable Charismatic Quick	Content Kind Accepting
Cold/dry	Hot/dry	Hot/wet	Cold/wet
Long response time-delay, response sustained at length, if not, seemingly, permanently	Short response time-delay, but response sustained for a relatively long time	Short-lived reactions	Longer response-delay, but short-lived response
Wakes up worrying	Wakes up goal focused	Wakes up looking for joy	Wakes up happy to doze
Give melancholics plenty of time and info	Get on with the job rapidly without small talk	Give sanguines an idea of immediate benefits	Don't involve them in hurry and fuss

While temperaments are different, pairs of temperaments share certain traits in common.

Sanguine

They tend to enjoy social gatherings, making new friends and tend to be boisterous. They are usually quite creative and often daydream and some alone time is crucial for those of this temperament. Sanguine can also mean sensitive, compassionate and romantic. Sanguine personalities generally struggle with following tasks all the way through, are chronically late, and tend to be forgetful and sometimes a little sarcastic. Often, when they pursue a new hobby, they lose interest as soon as it ceases to be engaging or fun. They are very much people persons. They are talkative and not shy. Sanguines generally have an almost shameless nature, certain that what they are doing is right. They have no lack of confidence.

Phlegmatic

The phlegmatic temperament is fundamentally relaxed and quiet, ranging from warmly attentive to lazily sluggish. Phlegmatics tend to be content with themselves and are kind. They are accepting and affectionate. They may be receptive and shy and often prefer stability to uncertainty and change. They are consistent, relaxed, calm, rational, curious, and observant, qualities that make them good administrators. They can be lazy because they are neither driven nor worrying, and can also be passive aggressive.

Choleric

They have a lot of aggression, energy and or passion, and try to instill it in others. They can dominate people of other temperaments, especially phlegmatic types. Many great charismatic military and political figures were choleric. They like to be in charge of everything. However, choleric also tend to be either highly disorganized or highly organized. They do not have in-between setups, only one extreme to another. Some people find them bossy and demanding. As well as being leader-like and assertive, choleric also fall into deep and sudden depression. Essentially, they are very much prone to mood swings.

Melancholic

Melancholic people often were perceived as very (or overly) pondering and considerate, getting rather worried when they could not be on time for events. Melancholics can be highly creative in activities such as poetry and art - and can become preoccupied with the tragedy and cruelty in the world. Often they are perfectionists. They are self-reliant and independent; one negative part of being a melancholic is that they can get so involved in what they are doing they forget to think of others.

When we are stressed, over tired, under sustained pressure or depressed, we can lose sight of our natural temperament, both the gifts and the challenges.

A melancholic can become rigid, pessimistic, inflexible and self-centred

A choleric can become bossy, uncaring, sharp, aggressive

A sanguine can become emotional, flighty, (air headed) and unable to finish things

A phlegmatic might be lazy and just not want to get out of bed at all.

In friendship we seek people of similar temperament to enjoy, feel affirmed and good about ourselves.

In relationship we gain from the opposite temperament to compliment us, and provide children with a wider landscape of support and modelling.